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Mr. EARLY declared himself obliged to the gentleman for his suggestion, and withdrew his motion, with the view of moving in the House the resolution to the effect he had stated.

FRIDAY, January 24.

Mr. EARLY. I rise to comply with the promise I made yesterday. I have waited some time before offering this resolution; in hopes that the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. Dawson) might have taken his seat in the house. I regret that he has not taken his seat; as I should wish him to be present at the time of offering the resolutions which I now hold in my hand, and which I will read:

Resolved, That the President of the United States cause to be laid before this House any information which may be in possession of the executive department, relative to the state and condition of the fortifications which may have been erected within the several ports and harbors of the United States; and also the amount of monies which has been expended on each, as well as the probable expence of completing the same; and also any information of which said department may be possessed relative to the practicability of defending by land batteries such ports and harbors, as have, by any former law, been directed to be fortified.

Resolved, That the President cause to be laid before this House a statement exhibiting the amount of money which has been disbursed on account of the navy in each year, since its establishment, and stating particularly the cost of each frigate.

Before I offer these resolutions, I will take the liberty of making a few observations in explanation of some things said by me yesterday, and the replies made to them by several gentlemen. I observed that we were not possessed of that kind of information on the subject matter of the resolution then under consideration that would enable us to form a correct and judicious decision on it that we had no doubt on which to estimate the expence of the proposed measures, or their efficacy, if adopted. When I took the liberty of intimating a doubt of their efficacy, I did not mean to be understood as doubting the physical possibility of so fortifying our ports and harbors by land batteries as to afford them an effectual protection. But I meant to say that such was their physical situation as to require a quantum of revenue beyond the resources of the nation. I have no doubt but that it is completely in our power to defend New York and our other harbors, if we only possess the pecuniary means. I have no doubt that we might with ease make a Cronstadt of it, but I doubt whether any gentleman of the House would be prepared to adopt the principle which has prevailed at Cronstadt and other places, and the extent to which it would carry us. I doubt whether any gentlemen would be prepared to adopt the course pursued by the French government, with regard to Cherbourg and along her coast; a course which after the treaty of Amiens, they were obliged to suspend from the inadequacy of their resources.

I beg leave to state one or two other additional things. When I suggested the propriety of obtaining information; it was said, that my object was evidently procrastination; that it was unbecoming in the House, after so much time had been already consumed, to attempt further procrastination; for the sentiment of the nation was before us; it dictated our course; and if we hesitated to pursue, the public indignation would light upon us. In my opinion, all that can be deduced from what has been denominated the sentiment of the nation, in this and other cases, is this—That in this country, where the government and the nation are the same, the nation will repose its confidence in the government, and pledge themselves to support those measures which the government may adopt. All then that follows is, that the nation will repose its confidence on this, as on other trying occasions, in the government. But does it follow that, because the nation reposes unlimited confidence in this government, that the latter is to rush blindly into measures without a mature consideration of them? On the contrary I apprehend, in proportion to this confidence, there is a responsibility in the government not to abuse it; and notwithstanding the high degree of confidence reposed in this instance in the government, we ought not to doubt, because the experiment of former times proves it, that when this confidence shall be abused, the people will revoke it. In my opinion, at this time we are more bound to be cautious in exercising the powers reposed in us, than those who in former times held the reins of government; because they had not the experience that we have, and because the lesson exhibited on that occasion shows, that confidence improperly used will be withdrawn by the people. Do gentlemen mean to be understood as intimating that it is our duty, without enquiring into the extent of the grounds on which we proceed, to embark headlong into any measures, which the President may recommend, and which they may consider the confidence of the people pledged to support.

With regard to the second resolution, I will add a word or two. The report on which this discussion is founded, although I believe not so intended, is calculated to be, as I apprehend, a decoy. If we adopt it, we shall first begin with a small appropriation, and we shall afterwards be called upon to go the whole length that

shall be deemed necessary to carry the measure. We shall have taken into effect, and we shall be told unless we appropriate enough money to carry them into this full and complete effect, all that we have done will be lost. Sir, we have some warning monuments against pursuing such policy. If I am not mistaken, this very house in which we legislate, is one of these warning monuments; the fortification of our ports and harbors is another; and unless I much mistake, the appropriations which we have heretofore made for our naval armaments is also an awful warning. It is to guard against such a system, it is to guard against being decoyed into such a conduct that I now offer these resolutions. It is that we may see the whole ground before us; and that, in the language of the honorable speaker, we may see the whole extent of the road. It is true the committee has given us the estimate of the cost of a 74 gun ship. An estimate! Yes sir, a naval estimate! And is it come to this—after the experience of this country in naval affairs, that this House is to proceed on a naval estimate. I hope not. I hope we shall have something more substantial; that we shall have the actual cost, and not a mere estimate.

Mr. J. C. SMITH. As the house is not much pressed in point of time, it is not perhaps to be regretted that the honorable gentleman has, on this occasion, given us a long speech; but it is to be regretted that he did not feel the want of information at an earlier period of the session.

Mr. DANA. It is unfortunate that the hon. gentleman from Georgia should assume a cause either too feeble to be sustained, or that it should be addressed to a body that he imagines incapable of feeling the force of argument. I presume that in deciding on measures in this House, the motives of particular gentlemen are not to guide our deliberations? but the intrinsic merit of the measures themselves, and if they can be supported by strong and fair argument, no gentleman would think of appealing to our passions for their support. Whatever may have been my opinion on the general course of measures pursued by the present administration is not now the question. The only enquiry proper for us to pursue, relates to the merits of the proposition before us. On the general subject of information, if the gentleman really desires to obtain it, there can be no exception to the call, however we may regret its not having been made earlier. When we, yesterday, considered the report, it was in the general principle whether any fortifications should be erected or repaired, without undertaking to say to what extent the business should go. I think we have abundant information to justify our voting on this principle, although when we descend into the details, we may require more particular information.

Mr. EARLY. I have but a word of reply to the gentleman from Connecticut, who first addressed you, who has expressed his regret at my not having made an earlier call for this information; and that is, that I have made the call as early as the subject matter of the report came into discussion. It was never before yesterday discussed, and, at the earliest period of the debate, I avowed my want of information.

[Some conversation here took place between Messrs. D. R. Williams, Clark, and Crowninshield on the amendments subsequently made in the details of the resolution.]

When Mr. Dawson said, that not being in the House at the time these resolutions were offered, he regretted that he had not heard the reasons assigned by the mover in support of them. He must, however, be permitted to observe, that it was made the annual duty of the secretary of the navy, which duty he performed, to lay before the House the several items of information, called for by the resolutions. He could, therefore only consider delay as the effect they were calculated to produce. This simple resolution before the committee yesterday, was, do the ports and harbors of the U. S. require protection? Has not every gentleman declared this to be the fact? Has it not been enforced by every paper in the U. S.? Does not every day's mail bring us the public sentiment, and is it not likewise enforced by the first authority in the nation? The general necessity of the measure can then admit of no doubt.

The next question then is, is the sum recommended by the committee too large? I believe, said Mr. Dawson, every gentleman will concur with me in opinion, that it is much smaller than was expected. If these are facts, what can the object be, but further delay? It can only be one of two alternatives, either to carry the resolutions calling for information, and thereby from the time which will elapse before it can be received, to give the whole business the go-by; or it must arise from a want of confidence in the executive in the disbursement of the monies appropriated. I say the object must arise from either one or the other of these two causes. I hold it my duty here to state, that the committee on their first meeting, directed their chairman to write to the secretary of war and the secretary of the navy for information to guide their decisions. The secretary at war informed us that the enquiry we called for could not be given in less than seven or eight weeks, and I venture to affirm that if the resolutions are agreed to the subject will not be taken up again for that length of time. Is this the wish of gentlemen? I trust that if it is their wish, a majority of

this House will be found to hold different opinions, and will be in favor of proceeding without delay, in a business so interesting to the public welfare.

Mr. D. R. WILLIAMS. As far as I, a fallible man, can understand the infallible ideas of the gentleman from Virginia; (Mr. Dawson) I must disclaim the motives he ascribes to the friends of these resolutions, and declare my total ignorance of any gentleman being influenced by them. Surely that hon. gentleman is not so devoid of charity, as to wish me to vote blindfolded on a subject which he allows to be highly important. What is the verbal communications of the secretary of war to me? They may have been satisfactory to the committee who heard them; but they surely cannot enlighten those who are altogether unacquainted with them. I hope we shall not proceed with a degree of precipitation that will oblige us to act blindfold.

(To be Continued.)

A LIST OF LAWS

Passed by the legislature of Maryland, November session, 1805.

- No. 1. An act to settle and ascertain the salary of the members of the council for the ensuing year.
- 2. An act granting leave to the trustees of Bethel congregation, in Harford county, to receive a deed for and hold the land therein mentioned.
- 3. An act for the relief of Thomas Webb, of Montgomery county.
- 4. An act for the relief of Benjamin Gushwa, Martin Rickart and John Manning of Washington county.
- 5. An act to change the names of Jacob Sedgwick, Matthias Sedgwick, George Sedgwick, and Christian Sedgwick, to the name of Jacob Adreon, Matthias Adreon, George Adreon and Christian Adreon.
- 6. An act for the establishment of a school in the city of Baltimore.
- 7. An act to authorise the justices of the levy court of Washington county to assess a sum of money on the taxable property of said county for the purposes therein mentioned.
- 8. An act to authorise and empower the levy court of Worcester county to levy annually a sum of money on the assessable property of said county, for the purposes therein mentioned.
- 9. An act to open a road from Barnsville, in Montgomery county, to Zachariah Maccubbin's mill, and from thence to intersect the main road leading from Frederick-town to George-town, at or near Logtown.
- 10. An act to vest temporary powers in the several clerks in the several counties of this state.
- 11. An act for the more effectual preservation of the breed of wild deer in Somerset county.
- 12. An act to enable James Walker, John Sprigg Belt and Archibald Dorsey, to complete the collection of the county tax in certain districts in Anne-Arundel county.
- 13. An act authorising James Hackett, and others, securities of James R. Pratt, late sheriff, and John B. Hackett & Richard E. Harrison, late collectors of Queen-Anne's county, to complete the collection of the money due the said sheriff and collectors.
- 14. An act confirming the title of Ignatius Davis to the land therein mentioned.
- 15. A supplement to an act entitled an act to incorporate companies to make several turnpike roads through Baltimore county, and for other purposes.
- 16. An act to confirm an act, entitled an act, to provide for the trial of facts in the several counties of this state, and to alter, change and abolish all such parts of the constitution and form of government as relate to the general court and court of appeals.
- 17. An act to lay out and open a road from the Pennsylvania line by John Frey's forge, on Octorara creek, to the tide water on the Susquehanna, in Cecil county.
- 18. An act granting additional compensation to the harbor-master of the port of Baltimore.
- 19. A supplement to an act, entitled, an act to establish a market, and to build a market-house, in the western precincts of Baltimore, and for the regulation of the same.
- 20. An act to repeal the second section of an act, entitled, an act to enlarge further the powers of the trustees of the poor in the several counties therein mentioned.
- 21. An act to lay out, open and clear, a road in Harford county, beginning at the end of Patrick Smith's lane where the Peach Bottom road crosses the York road leading to Rock run, to intersect the main road leading from the Black horse to the Pennsylvania line at Mier's mill on Deer creek.
- 22. An act authorising the laying out a road in Worcester county, from Mitchell's cause-way, to intersect the Soccum road leading to Broad creek.
- 23. An act annulling the marriage of Archibald Alexander and Susanna Alexander.
- 24. An act for the relief of William Thomas and John Carvill Hymson, jun. of Kent county.
- 25. An act to authorise and empower the levy court of Baltimore county, to assess and levy a sum of money for the purpose therein mentioned.
- 26. An act to lay out and open a certain road in Harford county.
- 27. An act for the relief of Henry Stevenson, of Baltimore county.

- 28. An act for the benefit of Amelia Chance, of Caroline county.
- 29. An act to continue the act therein mentioned.
- 30. An act to alter and change the name of William Santee, of Harford county, to the name of Carllir.
- 31. An act to prevent persons from staking out claims across the rivers Transquakin and Chickwicomico, in Dorchester county.
- 32. An act to authorise the issuing of a patent to Joshua Meredith and Thomas Meredith, for the land therein mentioned.
- 33. An act for the benefit of Grafton Duvall, of Prince George's county.
- 34. An act to straighten the road leading into Howard-street, in the city of Baltimore.
- 35. An act appointing Richard Cramphin, Benjamin Lowndes, and George Calvert, commissioners for the purpose therein mentioned.
- 36. An act authorising Jacob Schnebly, late collector of Washington county, to complete his collection.
- 37. An act authorising Lawrence Breggle, late collector of Frederick county, to complete his collection.
- 38. An act for the benefit of Anne Reynolds, of Talbot county.
- 39. A further additional supplement to an act, entitled, an act to establish a market in Frederick-town, in Frederick county, and for the regulation of the said market.
- 40. A supplement to an act, entitled, an act to provide the exportation of flour not merchantable, and unsound salted provisions, from the port of Havre-de-Grace.
- 41. An act to confirm a division of the real property of the Havre-de-Grace company.
- 42. An act giving further powers to the corporation of the city of Baltimore.
- 43. An act to authorise and empower the levy court of Baltimore county to assess and levy a sum of money for the purpose therein mentioned.
- 44. A supplement to an act, entitled, an act for introducing a copious supply of wholesome water into the city of Baltimore.
- 45. An act for the support of Solomon Jones and wife.
- 46. An act to lay out and open a road from the Pennsylvania line to the Susquehanna canal in Cecil county.
- 47. An act for an addition to the town of Rockville, in Montgomery county.
- 48. A supplement to an act, entitled, an act to incorporate a company to make a turnpike road to lead from the cross roads near Richard Cato's lime-kiln, in Baltimore county, nearly in the direction of Jones's falls, to the city of Baltimore.
- 49. An act for the support of Corenton Jones and wife.
- 50. An act to provide for recording certain papers in the register's office of Dorchester county.
- 51. An act to lay out and open a certain road in Baltimore county, to intersect the main road leading from Cromwell's bridge to Baltimore.
- 52. An act to lay out and make a public road in Frederick county.
- 53. An act for draining part of a branch of Tuckahoe, known by the name of Beaver Dam Branch, lying in Queen-Anne's county.
- 54. A further additional supplement to an act, entitled, an act for marking and bounding lands.
- 55. An act to lay out and straighten a certain road in Baltimore county.
- 56. An act for the benefit of Robert Williams a free blackman, and of his wife and children.
- 57. A supplement to the act, entitled, an act to lay out and make a public road from the Black-house, in Harford county, to intersect the Pennsylvania line.
- 58. A supplement to the act, entitled, an act to lay out, open and clear, a road in Harford county, from a place known by the name of Darlington, to intersect the road leading from Belle-Air to Havre de Grace.
- 59. An act authorising the trustees of the poor of Prince George's county to make an exchange of part of the lands belonging to said poor-house.
- 60. A supplement to an act, entitled, an act for the establishment of a new public road in Somerset county, passed at November session, seventeen hundred and ninety eight.
- 61. An act to extend the powers of the trustees of the poor of Montgomery county.
- 62. A supplement to the act, entitled, an act to straighten part of the road in Harford county, which leads from Underhill's mill to the city of Baltimore.
- 63. An act to authorise James Rice, & Mary Wolf to dispose of the land therein mentioned.
- 64. An act for the relief of Richard Gittings and Lambert Smith, of Baltimore county, insolvent debtors.
- 65. An act to provide for the organization and regulation of the courts of common law in this state, and for the administration of justice therein.
- 66. An act, entitled, an additional supplement to an act, entitled, an act relating to negroes, and to repeal the acts of assembly therein mentioned.
- 67. A further supplement to an act, entitled, an act to incorporate companies to make several turnpike roads thro' Baltimore county, and for other purposes.
- 68. An act for the benefit of Andrew Hamilton of Prince George's county.
- 69. An act authorising a lottery to raise a sum of money to purchase a fire engine.