

ON Thursday, about half an hour after three o'clock, Mr. Burke opened his conciliatory proposition. He began by presenting a petition from the gentlemen, clergy, clothiers, manufacturers, and other inhabitants, of the several towns of Westbury, Warminster, and Trowbridge, in the county of Wilts, complaining of the address of these places, which had entirely misrepresented the state of the trade, and the sentiments and wishes of the inhabitants, and praying the house to find some amicable method for terminating the differences between this kingdom and the colonies. He told the house that the signers of that petition were all men who manufactured for themselves; and he was authorized to say, that they possessed more than 500,000l. of English property.

He said, that he wished the prayer of that petition to be considered as the exordium of what he had to say to the house. He complained of the difficulties which in civil wars lay upon moderate men, who advised lenient measures; that their moderation was attributed to a want of zeal, and their fears for the public safety, to a want of spirit; that whatever they did to incline the house to lenity was construed into a countenance of rebellion; and so many arts, and so many menaces had been used, that if they had not been opposed with a good share of firmness, by the friends to the peace of their country, all freedom of debate, and indeed all public deliberation, would have been put an end to.

He said that, for his part, he was no way intimidated by all those machinations, from doing his duty; and that nothing that could be done by those, whose measures had brought this country into so deplorable a situation should hinder him from using his best endeavours to deliver it from its distresses.

The first step for this purpose was to get out of general discourses, and vague sentiments, which he said had been one of the main causes of our present troubles; and to appreciate the value of the several plans that were, or might be proposed, by an exact detail of particulars.

His speech was so very methodical, that it was not difficult to form a just idea of the outline.

He stated, that there were three plans afloat. First, simple war, in order to a perfect conquest. Second, a mixture of war and treaty. And third, peace grounded on concession.

As to the first plan, that of mere war, he observed, that it was proposed in two ways; one of direct conquest, the other indirect, by distress. In either of these ways he said, he thought it his duty, before he voted for a war, to know distinctly that the means of carrying it on were adequate to the end. It did not satisfy his conscience to say, that the resources of this nation were great; he must see them. That before he could trust to those resources, on the credit of what had been formerly done, he must find the situation of the country to be what it formerly was. He then examined what the ministers had laid before the house as the means of carrying on the ensuing campaign. That as to the force which they had made the house expect from his majesty's allies: all discourse of that had, for some time, entirely subsided: He could therefore, take credit for nothing more on that account, than a handful of Hanoverians, which only answered the purpose of an imperfect security to some of our foreign garrisons. That our national forces to be employed in America, by the account on the table, amounted to no more than 25,000 men: That in this credit was taken for the army now in America at full numbers. This he could not allow; as supposing that, if their reduction in future was to be estimated by the past, they must be reduced to little or nothing by the beginning of next campaign. That the troops here are only upon paper, and the difficulty of recruiting was acknowledged. On the whole, he saw reason to apprehend, that we should not be materially stronger, at the beginning of the next year, than we were at the beginning of the last; but that, if the number were entire, it did not seem to him to be sufficient for the purpose. That as to the predatory, or war by distress (on the nature of which he greatly enlarged) he observed, that it might irritate a people in the highest degree; but such a war had never yet induced any one people to receive the government of another. That it was a kind of war to distress an independent people, and not to coerce disobedient subjects.

But his great objection to it was, that it did not lead to a speedy decision; that the longer the war continued the greater chance there was for the interference of the Bourbon powers, which, in a long protracted war, he considered not only probable, but in a manner certain. That he was very sure that this country was utterly incapable of carrying on a war with America, and these powers acting in conjunction. He then entered into a long and particular enumeration of all the dangers and difficulties which must attend such a war.

He then observed that, as he saw no probability of success in the detail of any of the arrangements that were proposed, neither did he see any thing of authority to induce him to believe that they would succeed, not one military or naval officer having given an opinion in its favour; and many of the greatest, in both services, having given their opinion directly against it.

That as no man of military experience had vouched for the sufficiency of the force, so no man in the commissariat would answer for its subsistence from the moment it left the sea-coast; that therefore its subsistence and its operation were become incompatible.

To the objection, that at this rate the Americans might always reduce us to unreasonable terms, by the supposed impossibility of reducing them by force, he said that he could not help the difficulties which arose from nature and the constitution of things; that he could not make America nearer to us than it is, or a country of another nature than what God had made it. That people who cannot contrive to reconcile their quarrels, must suffer the evils that happen to a divided nation. That he was of opinion, that there was no dishonour at all in any kind of amicable adjustment of domestic quarrels; and that he would rather heal an hundred points, when it was Englishmen that gave and received, than a single point to a foreign nation; and that we were in such circumstances that we must yield to either one or the other.

The motion made by Mr. Burke was, "That leave be given to bring in a bill to compose the present troubles, and for quieting the minds of his majesty's subjects in America."

Lord North made a motion to the following purport: For leave to bring in a bill to cut off all intercourse between Great-Britain and the colonies of America, now in actual rebellion. To long as they shall continue in rebellion, and to repeal the Boston port-bill, the fishery bills, and another bill passed last session against the Americans; and to authorise his majesty's naval commanders to seize all shipping belonging to America as lawful prizes. He made a very long speech, to shew the propriety and necessity of this measure.

Mr. Charles Fox proposed an amendment, viz. to leave out that part of the motion which proposes to cut off all intercourse with the Americans. A warm debate ensued: Sir George Hay spoke next in support of the whole motion.

Mr. T. Townsend censured the severity and bad policy of thus declaring war against the colonies, at the moment administration would have it believed in the house, that they were inclined to peace.

General Conway also spoke against it, the attorney-general near two hours for it, and Mr. Burke against it.

At half after ten the house divided, when the numbers were, for lord North's motion 192, against it 64. Adjourned to Tuesday.

I R E L A N D.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, Thursday, November 23.

Sir John Blaquiere presented to the house a message from his excellency, signifying that "he had his majesty's commands to acquaint the house, that as the present exigencies of affairs required sending an additional number of troops to America, he had the firmest reliance on the loyalty of his faithful commons of Ireland, to admit his sending abroad a number of the troops on this establishment, not exceeding 4000 men, which shall no longer continue a charge on this kingdom, but be immediately on their leaving the same in the pay of Great-Britain."

"And to shew his majesty's gracious regard for the safety and defence of this kingdom, if the parliament shall desire it, he will replace the said 4000 men with an equal number of foreign protestants (subjects of the prince of Brunswick and the prince of Hesse Cassel) to be continued here, in the pay of Great-Britain, as soon as his majesty shall be enabled to send them, by his parliament of Ireland."

Saturday, November 25.

The house was called over, and resolved into a committee to take into consideration his excellency's message, and the instruction to consider on the best mode of defence for this kingdom. Mr. Malone in the chair.

The order for going into the committee, his excellency's message, and the order for the instruction, were read.

Sir Archibald Acheson rose, and made many eulogiums on his majesty, whom, he said, we ought to look upon as the father of a much favoured people, and then proposed to offer two resolutions, but they not being put into proper form, were handed to Mr. vice-treasurer; and as they took some time to arrange, Mr. Ogle said the committee had better adjourn till the resolutions were drawn. At length they were produced, in substance as follows:

1. Resolved, That it is the opinion of this committee, that in the present exigence of affairs, a number of troops, not exceeding four thousand, out of the number of twelve thousand, voted as necessary to be kept in Ireland for the defence thereof, be spared for his majesty's service abroad, provided that from their quitting this kingdom they shall be of no charge to the nation.

2. Resolved, That it is the opinion of this committee, that a number of foreign protestant troops, not exceeding four thousand, be received into this kingdom, to replace the like number sent abroad for the security and defence thereof, provided they shall be of no charge to the nation."

A N N A P O L I S.

IN COMMITTEE OF CORRESPONDENCE.

February 21st, 1776.

RESOLVED, That the general committee of observation of Anne-Strundel county be requested to meet at the house of Mr. John Ball, on Thursday the 29th of this instant, in this city, for forwarding and carrying into execution the resolutions of the last Convention, and they are desired to meet accordingly.

Signed by order, G. DUVALL, clk.

EXTRACTS from the PROCEEDINGS of the CONVENTION of the PROVINCE of MARYLAND, held at the City of Annapolis, on Thursday the 7th of December, 1775.

Thursday, January 4, 1776.

The Convention took into consideration the report from the committee appointed to consider what alterations and amendments were necessary in the regulation of the militia of this province, and thereupon came to the following resolutions:

That no minute-men be hereafter enrolled under the resolutions of the late Convention. That where minute companies are already formed, no commissions issue to the officers thereof, unless the officers desire to have their commissions. That no minute companies be continued beyond the first day of March next, and that a sum of money sufficient for the purpose, be lodged in the hands of the committee of observation in each respective county where a company of minute-men hath been enrolled, viewed, and allowed, to pay and discharge the expence of such company for the time past, and also for the time to come, if such company continues till the first day of March next, and that such committee receive the rolls of such companies, and the times of the attendance of the men, proved by the oath of some one at least of the commissioned officers, return the balance of the money, if any, into the public treasury, and render an account of their transactions herein to the next Convention; but no person chosen for a commissioned officer in any company of minute-men, shall be compellable to serve in the militia in a lower rank or station than he was elected to in the minute company.

That all public arms in the hands of the minute-

men, immediately after the first day of March next, or as soon as they disband where they disband sooner, be delivered to the committee of observation for their respective county, to be by the said committee kept and preserved for the public use.

That every able bodied effective freeman within this province, between sixteen and fifty years of age, (clergymen of all denominations, practising physicians, and the household of his excellency the governor excepted) who hath not already enrolled himself in the militia, shall on or before the first day of March next, enroll himself in some company of militia agreeable to the form of enrollment prescribed by the last Convention, and that every minute or artillery-man, except commissioned officers, shall in like manner enroll in the militia, within one month next after he shall cease to act as a minute or artillery-man. If any able bodied effective freeman shall refuse or delay to enroll himself in the militia as aforesaid, every such person shall pay for the present year, which shall be reckoned from the fifteenth day of September last, such sum of money, not less than forty shillings nor more than ten pounds, as shall be assessed by the committee of observation of his county, for the use of the public. And the committee of observation in each respective county, shall by warrant under their hands, appoint and empower any person or persons they shall judge proper, to collect and receive all monies by them so assessed, which shall be paid within one month after notice of such assessment, and in default thereof, the person or persons so empowered, may distrain the goods and effects of the defaulters, and sell and dispose of the same in the same manner that goods may be distrained and sold by law for county levies. And every collector shall on or before the first day of July next, pay the money by him collected, after deducting seven and an half per cent. for his commission, to the treasurer of his shire, and leave with the same treasurer an account containing the names of those from whom he hath received the same, and the sums from them respectively collected.

That every person who shall refuse and delay to enroll as aforesaid, shall on or before the tenth day of March next, deliver to the committee of observation for his county, all his fire arms, if he hath any, except pistols; and if any such person shall refuse or delay to do the same, then such committee shall empower some person or persons, by warrant under their hands, to seize the said fire-arms, and deliver the same to the said committee; and the said committees shall cause all the arms which shall come to their hands to be valued, by indifferent and honest men on oath, and shall keep a list of such arms, to whom they belong, and their respective values, and may deliver out such arms at their discretion, to the captains of militia in their county, taking the captains receipts therefor, and the captains being liable for the re-delivery thereof, may deliver the same to the unarmed men of their companies; and every committee of observation shall transmit an account of all assessments by them made, as well as of all arms by them received as aforesaid, and how they have disposed of the same, to every convention: But because some persons who do not enroll in the militia may be so poor that they cannot pay the said assessment of forty shillings, and their omitting to enroll may not proceed from disaffection to the cause of America or perverseness, it is provided, that where the real and personal estate of any effective freeman, who shall refuse or neglect to enroll himself in the militia as aforesaid, shall not, in the judgment and estimation of the committee of his county, be of the value of thirty pounds, the same committee may in their discretion omit to assess any sum of money on such person, the same committee certifying to the convention or council of safety the name of the person, and the reasons wherefore they do not assess him.

That all fines which have been already set and adjudged, according to the resolutions of the last convention, on militia officers or men, and have not been paid, or which shall hereafter be so set and adjudged, shall, if the same be on a field officer, be paid into the hands of the quarter-master of the battalion to which he belongs, and if on any officer of inferior rank to a field-officer, or on a non-commissioned officer or private, be paid into the hands of such person as hath or shall have been appointed to receive the fines for the company to which such person belongs; or if no such receiver hath or shall have been appointed, then the same shall be paid into the hands of the captain of such company; and on refusal to pay the same fine, and such refusal being certified to the committee of observation for the county where such person resides, the same committee shall grant a warrant under their hands, empowering any other person or persons of the same county to levy such fine by distress and sale as aforesaid, of the party's goods and effects; but the officers who set and adjudged the fine may commit the offender to a serjeant, according to the resolution of the late convention, if they choose that as the best method to compel payment.

That in cases where it may greatly promote the ease of the inhabitants, a number not less than forty nor exceeding eighty privates, may, with the especial permission of the committees of observation, enroll in any one company of militia, but any of those already enrolled in any company, where the privates do not exceed seventy four, shall not be permitted to leave such company, for the purpose of enrolling in a new one. That in those counties where only part of the militia are appointed to join in battalion, the respective committees of observation form the other companies into battalion, if there are sufficient in number for that purpose, and in those counties where there are not any battalions formed, that the said committees proceed, as soon as may be, to divide their militia into battalions, according to the resolves of the late convention.

That within the general description of able bodied effective freemen of this province, are intended to be included, overseers, and those who are bound by contract made within this province to serve in any particular quality or capacity, being able bodied effective men, between sixteen and fifty years of age.

That, to avoid a needless and insupportable expence, no person, after the tenth day of May next, wear any uniform at exercise, either in single companies or in battalion, but hunting-shirts, the officers distinguishing themselves from the privates by different feathers, cockades, or the like, as fancy may direct.

Tuesday, January 16.

On motion, RESOLVED, That two hundred and forty copies of the association ordered by the last Convention to be tendered to and sub-

ed by the... with printed... be sent to... Baltimore... committee of... of Frederick... in equal pr... several countie... of Baltimore... Frederick coun... to be tender... April next; to... of their cou... the said... by generally te... subscribed by t... of the late C... shall not sig... of tendering... days thereafter... as if the fa... according to the... refused or ne... and the com... county, shall leav... on papers in t... rions to be by... some house in... George-town an... county, and shall... advertisements, fo... province, who ha... scribe the same.

That every f... who hath not al... ay of April next... ation aforesaid... he said last me... committee of ob... re-arms, if he... every person who... may be disarme... observation for... those who ought... refuse to do so... tors shall and r... manner as the a... roll in the milit... ee of observati... ince, may in t... ny freeman of... aforesaid, found... such freeman b... not, to enter int... security, in such... payable to the p... the time being... such non associa... bly and quietly... be shall not dire... intelligence to... preparations of... or assembly, or... of this or any o... that he shall n... respond, by let... ing the said co... secretary of sta... any person out... office, civil or... crown, or with... these colonies... arms, then the a... If any such no... his province an... mittee of obser... belongs, ma... grant him a p... peace and go b... property, or an... refusing to sign... bond as aforesai... in this province... mittee of obser... such non-associ... until the Con... prisonment shal... in case any nor... and leave an ef... shall be burthe... the expence in... fence of Amer... tions are not t... excellency the... papers that sh... well as a list o... refuse or negle... original bonds... turned to the... where any per... fuse to subfer... have neglected... afterwards sig... of observation... disarmed for hi... any such bond...