

Congress

OF THE United States of America.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

FRIDAY, December 7.

Dr. Leib moved that the committee of Commerce and Manufactures be instructed to enquire into the expediency of so far amending the import and tonnage act as to allow the collector of the port of Philadelphia an additional deputy, and that they be authorized to report by bill or otherwise.

A petition from William A. Barron of the corps of engineers, praying a further allowance for his expenses in the military academy.

Referred to the committee of Claims.

Mr. Thomas said he rose with a view to propose an enquiry relative to the duty on salt. On this article a duty of six cents per bushel was first laid, in the year 1790 it was raised to twelve cents, and in the year 1797 eight cents more were added, making the duty twenty cents per bushel of 56 lbs. at which rate it now stands. But, as every measured bushel of good strong salt which is imported into this country, will weigh 80 or 90 lbs, this is in reality a duty of about 30 cents per bushel.

Three years ago, when the repeal of the Stamp Act excise and other internal tax laws, were before Congress, an attempt was made to reduce the duty on salt, and retain a part of that system.

At that time, although he was conscious the duty on this article of real necessary consumption was too high and fell extremely heavy on the agricultural part of the community, particularly those living back from the sea-board who were obliged to use large quantities of it, for their black cattle and other beasts of pasture, notwithstanding the increased price at which it came to them in consequence of the transportation and the profits charged on the amount of duty, as well as original cost, by the several merchants or traders through whose hands it passed, yet he did believe it better to allow this duty to remain as it was, a while longer, rather than not be enabled to abolish that expensive, inconvenient and anti-republican system of internal taxation.

And should it now be found, on due enquiry that a reduction of the duty on this article, at this time, would be incompatible with the great object of paying off the national debt and meeting the other exigencies of government, for his part he would not urge it. But he was persuaded this was not the case. He believed our finances are amply sufficient to authorize the measure.

On examining the report of the secretary of the treasury he found, that besides meeting all the calls of government, including the sum appropriated annually towards the reduction of the public debt, there is a surplus of 4,882,225 dollars in the treasury, and although there are several payments to be made out of this sum, there will still be a large balance remaining.

It also appears, from a comparative view of the bonded duties of the present with former years that there will be an increase of revenue coming into the treasury the ensuing year, and he believed there was no reasonable probability of any new causes for expenditure.

This being the case, he flattered himself, it would not be deemed unseasonable or improper to propose a reduction of the duty, on this article of necessary consumption, at this time.

With this object, however, said Mr. Thomas I will to couple another which I consider of equal importance, as it respects the reputation of our beef, pork, fish, and butter, put up for exportation, as well as the health of our seaport towns, and seamen employed on foreign voyages.

He said by the treasury accounts it appears that the aggregate amount of salt imported into the United States during the year, ending the 30th September last, was 3,858,195 bushels of 56 lbs each, of this about one fourth part or 868,355 were imported in foreign vessels. All this salt was brought from foreign places and no part of the salt prepared from the briny waters near the Onondago in New York, the various springs in the Western States, and the sea water at Cape Cod, Portsmouth, &c. are taken into this calculation.

Of this salt some parts came from the Swedish, Danish and Dutch West Indies—other parts were imported from the British West Indies, the other British colonies, from the French West Indies, from Spain, from Teneriffe, and the other Canaries, and the Spanish West Indies. Parcels of the same salt were likewise brought from Portugal, Madeira, Cape Verde Islands, and Italy, and about 50,000 bushels of a similar kind has heretofore annually been brought from Louisiana, which is now a part of the United States.

But notwithstanding all this trade in salt, to so many parts of the earth, the commerce in that article between the United States and Great Britain is very extensive and important. During the year he before mentioned, the proportion of imported salt which was furnished by England alone and of the manufactory of that country, amounted to 1,271,537 bushels of 56 lbs. So that it is evident at least one third of the salt consumed in our country is exported from that part of Great Britain called England, and chiefly from those countries of which Liverpool is the mart.

This salt, as he understood, was prepared by the process of boiling the brine of the rock salt from Cheshire, and the water of the sea. And on account of the great plenty and cheapness of coal in Lancashire, there being also as he believed, no export duty laid on it, this salt was produced in abundance and sold on very low terms. It is employed as ballast for British ships coming into our ports, and when arrived is sure to sell and pay freight and frequently afford a profit. Our own ships also very commonly take it in for ballast and often as part of the cargo.

This trade would be perfectly fair and convenient if English salt was of a strength and quality fit to preserve animal flesh for provisions. But he was clearly of opinion, from his own knowledge, this was not the fact, and he had lately observed a discussion on this subject in the British Parliament which confirmed that opinion.

The British government long ago made a distinction between English salt and foreign salt on their importation into Ireland. To encourage the introduction of salt from the Bay of Biscay and the Portuguese dominions, they permitted it to be imported into that Kingdom at the rate of 84 lbs the bushel, while Liverpool salt was charged with the same duty of two shillings on the bushel of 56 lbs—the reason of this distinction was undoubtedly wise & cogent—experience had proved that British salt, as brought to the market, was defective of that purity and strength, which was necessary to preserve animal flesh from taint and corruption, and fit for human food in hot climates and on long voyages.

The trade of Ireland in beef, pork and butter, was of great importance, not only to that country itself but to the whole navy and army of Britain; to keep up the character and who themselves of their provisions was a matter of immense national importance, and this could only be done by attention to have it preserved with salt of purity and strength. Experience had proved that the salt formed by crystallization in the open sunshine on the western shores and islands of Southern Europe, was vastly better than that produced by artificial concentration, in a boiling heat over a fire in the north. And the government had with prudent discernment favored the introduction of Bay salt into Ireland by permitting 84 lbs to be imported for the same duty that was paid on the introduction of 56 lbs of Liverpool salt.

The people of Liverpool have largely expressed uneasiness at this particular, and an attempt has been made in parliament, to equalize the duty, as to give to both Bay and English salt a fair competition in the Irish market. This, however, was repelled by the Irish members with manly discernment & spirit; on the ground, that Bay salt was of a stronger quality, & it is easy to dissolve, and indispensable to the preservers of meats. The English or Liverpool salt would not answer for this extensive and important branch of business. That the discrimination in favor of Bay salt was politic and proper, and especially connected with the provision trade and the health of the fleets and armies.

It is my wish, said Mr. T. that such a distinction should be made on the introduction of English salt into the United States, as has been made by the British laws themselves, on its importation into Ireland. There certainly exists the same causes for it. Like Ireland, our country abounds in provisions—beef, pork, fish and butter are great and staple articles of export; but their quality is very far inferior to the provisions of Ireland. The putrefaction of beef, pork and fish, to a very serious extent, has often occurred; the loss of property thereby was great, and the reputation of our provisions materially affected. But that was not the greatest evil—I here I, no doubt, but that the exhalation from tainted and corrupted meats and fish in our towns as well as on board our vessels, poison the atmosphere and excite malignant fevers and other diseases.

His object was to retrieve and establish the reputation of our salted provisions in foreign markets—to prevent the loss of property by those who put up provisions for exportation, and also to prevent the evils resulting to our citizens and seamen from tainted and spoiling meats and fish. With this view of the subject, he should propose, in the first place, an enquiry into the expediency of reducing the duty on salt generally, and in the second, the propriety of making a distinction, so as to encourage the importation of strong and pure salt, in preference to the weak and impure salt manufactured in England.

He therefore moved the following resolution:—

Resolved, That the committee of ways and means be instructed to enquire into the expediency of reducing the duty on salt, and also into the propriety of making a distinction in the duty, so as to encourage the importations of salt from the dominions of Denmark, Sweden the

United Netherlands, Spain, France, Portugal and the British West-Indies in preference to that of any other place or places; and that they report thereon by bill or otherwise.

Mr. J. Randolph said that the resolution which the gentleman from New York had submitted, and in relation to which he had favored the house with such copious details, embraced two objects—the reduction of the duty on salt, generally—and the encouragement of the importation of a particular description of that article. The last subject belonging to a class which was assigned to the committee of commerce and manufactures, he should confine himself to the first branch of the resolution: nor should he have troubled the house at all were not the motion of the gentleman from New York calculated to excite an expectation, which he wished to repress, because he feared it could not be gratified. It was not to oppose enquiry, but to apprise the mover and the public that the result was likely to prove unpropitious to his wishes, that he had risen. The country on which the salt duty fell with peculiar force was that middle region, near enough to the sea board to be supplied altogether by importation, but too remote to have its consumption diminished by vicinage to the sea. Those whose stock had access to salt water for the duty, but partially—those whose situation obliged them to use salt of some manufacture only, not at all. As an inhabitant of that district of country by which the duty was principally paid, and as a friend to agriculture, he had at an early period of the session, in conjunction with his friend the Speaker, turned his attention to the practicability of reducing the duty on salt—and you well know, Sir, (said Mr. R.) that the result of our enquiry satisfied us that this desirable object was not at present attainable. He mentioned this to show that other members felt an interest in this subject, as well as the gentleman from New York, although they had not brought it before the house. The necessary arguments on which that gentleman relied for the support of his position, that we can dispense with a portion of our existing revenue, establish the opposite opinion, beyond controversy. The estimated revenue of the ensuing year, after deducting the estimated expense, yielded only a surplus of 2,000,000 dollars, and the specie balance in the treasury, which the gentleman had brought to his aid, was large indeed, but charged with near four millions of dollars on account of Great Britain, Maryland and American claims upon France, whose payment we had assumed by convention with that power. The delay of these claims which were expected to have been paid and for which we had made provision accordingly during the present year, had swelled the specie balance in the treasury—but certainly had not liberated that resource. On this subject, what was the inference drawn by the head of that department?—presumably the result of that of the mover of the resolution. As the greater part of these demands will be paid in the course of the year 1832, the balance will not probably, at the end of that year, exceed the sum which it is always expedient to retain in the treasury. The house will recollect that by our last accounts our flotilla was bombarding Tripoli. Who could answer for its fate? who could undertake to say that, before the Christmas holidays, intelligence might not be received from that quarter (as was the case last year) which would render it necessary to employ new burthenes, instead of taking the vessel. He remarks which he had offered were not in opposition to the motion of enquiry. He thought it his duty, and was always ready to go into every profitable research whether it tended to diminish the public burthens or to promote the agriculture, trade or manufactures of the country. He had their interests much at heart. He was as much interested in lowering the import on salt as any member in that house could be, but he felt it to be his duty explicitly to state that the object at which the resolution aimed was illusory. If however the prosperous condition of our affairs should experience no reverse—if our Mediterranean warfare should have a speedy and honorable termination—if we should continue to maintain a pacific position between the belligerent nations of Europe, and no unforeseen calamity should befall us, he had well founded expectations that we might dispense with the additional duty of eight cents on salt, at the next session of congress.

Mr. Jackson impressed with the importance of the subject, hoped it would be referred to the committee, and he would assure the gentleman from Virginia, that the district of country over the mountains was greatly affected by the duty, for they did not procure salt in sufficient abundance in the interior to answer their consumption; salt usually sold there from \$1 3 dollars to 4, and when it is considered what the merchants and traders advance was a per cent upon the first cost, it would be readily allowed that the citizens in the western country did not pay less than one dollar per bushel. If however the public exigencies are absolutely such that the duty cannot be dispensed with, he would be one of the first to vote against the reduction. But the House will not refuse its assent to reduce the duty, because it is possible that dangers may occur, or that it is possible we may go to war with other of the Barbary powers, or even with all the world; for that too is

possible. So desirous was he of getting rid of this duty, that he would rather postpone the payment of the public debt a little longer, than oppress the people with such an unequal law. Unequal and oppressive, as it was to his constituents, yet he was satisfied they would willingly bear it, if it should prove an investigation that its repeal would endanger our finances, or create a failure in the payment of the public debt in a reasonable time.

Mr. Thomas had no objection to adopt the idea of Mr. J. Randolph in referring the second part to the Committee of Commerce and Manufactures.

Mr. Crowninshield said the effect of reducing the duties on salt would be the loss of 220,000 dollars annual revenue, which was more than its present excess, and as to the four millions in the treasury, that would speedily be required to pay the bills drawn upon the secretary on account of the purchase of Louisiana and the whole of it was appropriated. He called for a division of the question, whereupon the first part respecting the repeal of the duties was referred to the committee of ways and means.

After this question the second part could not be debated nor amended—and a question to refer it was lost.

A bill respecting the Post-road to lead from the Atlantic to the western waters was read and referred to a committee of the whole on Monday.

Petitions from Nancy Flinn, whose husband accompanied Major Trueman, killed by the Indians, and John Fenton, an old revolutionary soldier, both praying relief, were referred to the committee of claims.

The House resolved itself into a committee of the whole on the report in favor of the Georgia claimants of land lying South of Tennessee, having time to consider the evidence of their titles in the office of the secretary of State.

Mr. Varnum in the Chair. On a motion of Mr. Clark, three months were allowed for the purpose. The committee of the whole rose and reported and the House agreed to the report.

The committee of the whole was discharged from the farther consideration of the report of the Committee of Commerce and Manufactures on the petition of S. G. Ogden, and the House took the same into consideration, and resolved that the petitioner have leave to withdraw his petition.

A message was received from the Senate, informing that they would be ready to receive the articles of Impeachment against Samuel Chase, one of the associate Justices of the Supreme Court, at 1 o'clock to-day.

Mr. J. Randolph from the managers appointed on the part of the House, to conduct the impeachment against Samuel Chase, an associate justice of the United States, reported, that the managers, did, this day, carry to the Senate the articles of impeachment agreed to by this House, on the thirteenth ultimo; and that the said managers were informed by the Senate that their House would take proper measures relative to the said impeachment, of which this House should be duly notified.

NORFOLK, December 5.

LATEST FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE. By the arrival of the remarkably failing ship Thomas Wilson, capt. Tompkins, we have received papers 20 days later than those by the mail. Capt. T. left London on the first of October, but being detained at Cowes by contrary winds, until the 20th, we have been favored by Wm. H. Sargeant, esquire, who came passenger, with the London sun, star, and courier of the 18th October, from which we extract the articles which appear in this day's Ledger.

By those it will be seen, that war with Spain has been commenced with some effect. When the declaration was made, we are not, at this moment, able to state. Our regular files are on board the Thomas Wilson, but are not later (we suppose) than the date of her departure from London. Whether, they contain any precise intelligence, we cannot know. But we rather think that that which we should be pleased with having an opportunity to lay before our readers, is contained in some intermediate number.

An attempt, we learn, had been made to burn the flotilla in the harbor of Boulogne, but without effect; in this the British lost some of the fire ships employed.

Affairs with Russia had not been bro't to any conclusion; and the season was then so far advanced that it is not very likely any thing would be done.

We are sorry to notice such marks of renewed discontent in Ireland. But, from the nature of the account, we are much British legation in the United States—John Mills, jun. esq. of Alexandria, William H. Sargeant, and John Truley, esq's. of Petersburg.

Since writing the above we have seen and conversed with a gentleman who arrived in the Thomas Wilson; from whom we learn that no declaration of war had been made, but orders issued to detain all Spanish vessels until the armaments in Spain should be accounted for in a satisfactory manner. And by the COURIER we learn, that the four frigates mentioned in the extract from the SUN, were detached from the blockading squadron of Admiral Cornwallis with sealed orders. There is little doubt however, that a formal declaration will soon ensue the capture of those frigates.

By a gentleman from St. Thomas, we understand that just before he left that island (about 18 days ago) a vessel had arrived from Jamaica, with information that the French had abandoned the town of St. Domingo and had surrendered themselves prisoners to the English.

LONDON, October 13. We have seen a letter from Dublin, of the 13th, containing the following information, which we hope will prove exaggerated:—

Dublin, October 13.—At this very moment, 3 o'clock, a letter has been put into my hands from Leiglin Bridge, in the county of Kildare, which comes from a person with whom I am well acquainted, and whose veracity I have never had reason to doubt. The letter states that they are all in consternation at Leiglin Bridge in consequence of having discovered a horrid plot. One of the conspirators has made a discovery, and has declared that the number of persons organized is very considerable, 30,000, but that number is probably much exaggerated.

The letter adds, what we have certainly no knowledge of here, that a committee of 70 of the ringleaders has been sitting in Dublin. The person who has made the discovery has pointed out a wood which was to be cut down, to be manufactured into pikes. The intelligence from Leiglin Bridge has been transmitted to government, who are not ignorant of the particulars, but who do not participate in the alarm which seems to have occupied the mind of the persons by whom the account of the plot was sent.

Such is the substance of the letter that has been received from Dublin. We must believe that the account has been greatly exaggerated. At any rate, as government are in possession of the intelligence, they will of course take every step to defeat any treasonable attempt that may be made. [Courier.]

The intended motions of Emperor Napoleon do not seem to have been known at Paris, for it is doubted whether he was to return down the Rhine and through Flunders to Belgium, or was to proceed to Paris to the convention. As he left Leitz on the 24, and travels with a speedy, he may easily take another view of the British at Boulogne previous to the convention, for which the Parisians are making very great preparations.

We have been favored with the following extract of a letter from a naval officer on board the Foudroyant, admiral Sir Thomas Graves, off Brest, to a naval officer at Dundee, dated 7th September last. "I have included a list of the enemy's fleet in the outer road of Brest. They are extremely formidable, and the finest ships I ever saw. They appear to me to be ready for a start. I went in the Sirius frigate with Sir Thomas Graves, to reconnoitre, and the weather being fine, we had a very good view indeed. We stood in so close that we had the pleasure of being saluted from both sides of the entrance with shot and shells; two of the latter nearly fell on board of the frigate. A few days ago four French frigates came off in a boat. They belonged to the 4th brigade of marine artillery. One is a very intelligent man indeed, and had been one of the noblest. The French frigates have only 2d per diem, and a coarse suit of blue cloth once in three years. Bread and wine is very dear in France." \*FLOITE DE BREST.

Table listing ships and their armaments. Columns include ship names (e.g., Le Vengeur, Le Watigni), gun counts, and other details.

CHARLESTON, November 30. COMMUNICATION.—The effect produced by the September gale, on the vegetation in the vicinity of Charleston, is somewhat surprising. Shortly after, most of the trees budded out, and presented the appearance of a second spring. This was particularly the case with fruit trees; and we were yesterday gratified with a taste of some ripe mulberries, gathered from a tree a short distance from town.

Cheap Cut-Nail Warehouse. SLATER & ROY, 84, Market street, Have now on hand, and will be constantly supplied with, A large and complete assortment of CUT-NAILS & FLOORING BRADS, in quality equal to any ever sold in the city—in casks that may suit the purchasers, and at one cent a pound cheaper than any manufacturer or vender sells at.

Wanted, A Woman of color, who can cook and assist in doing the ordinary work in a small family—one who can come well recommended, will hear of a good situation by applying immediately at this office. December 11 d&est at new