

ditions of the letter referred to, in enforcing the non-intercourse against England, by the act of March, 1811. This act was in conformity with the tenor of the president's proclamation of the 2d November, 1810, declaring "the fact," that on that day the French decrees were repealed, so that they ceased to violate our neutral commerce. It has become abundantly apparent, since the date of that proclamation, that in point of *fact*, the French violations of our commerce were continued after that date, as in point of *form*, it has also appeared, that there was no absolute repeal until nearly six months subsequent to the issuing of the proclamation, and that this formal repeal, which, if timely used, might have produced the revocation of the British orders, so as to prevent the present war, was not officially announced to our government or to its minister at Paris, until more than a twelve-month after the period at which it is dated. In the report of the secretary of state, made to congress on this subject at the last session, it is stated, "that the light in which this transaction was viewed by this government, was communicated to Mr. Barlow in the letter of the 14th July, 1812, with a view to the requisite explanation." The notice taken of the subject in the letter of the secretary of state, to Mr. Barlow, of the 14th of July, 1812, thus cited, is to be found at the close of the letter, which concludes in these words.

"On the French decree of the 28th April, 1811, I shall forbear to make many observations, which have already occurred, until all the circumstances connected with it are better understood. The president approves your effort to obtain a copy of that decree, as he does the communication of it afterwards to Mr. Russell."

It is possible that Mr. Barlow might not have understood this paragraph as an instruction, "with a view to the requisite explanation." But as the report of the secretary further stated, that Mr. Barlow's successor had been also "instructed to demand of the French government an explanation," the people of the United States might have been induced to expect that this important matter would be fully developed; and we have therefore seen with serious concern, by the late message from the president to congress, "that the views of the French government have received no elucidation since the close of the last session." This concern is heightened, by the recollection, that for a series of years past, an unhappy mystery has hung over the communications with that same government, whose public outrages have violated all the rights of this nation, and have heaped upon those who administer its affairs, every species of contumely and insult.

A review of these circumstances, so remarkably characteristic of French fraud, furnishes, in the opinion of this house, strong additional inducements for terminating this disastrous contest with England. As soon, indeed, as the foul artifice of the French ruler was disclosed, and more especially after the revocation of the British orders was made known, we should have deemed it fortunate, if the government had availed itself of the propitious opportunity of reinstating the relations of peace with the power with whom we had been thus embroiled. The claim of impressment which has been so much exaggerated, but which was never deemed of itself a substantive cause of war, has been heretofore considered susceptible of satisfactory arrangement in the judgment of both the commissioners who were selected by the president, then in office, to conduct the negotiations with the English ministry in the year 1806, and who now occupy high stations in the administration.

Believing that this, & all other causes of difference, might be accommodated between the two countries, provided the agents on both sides are actuated by a sincere wish for a just accommodation, we cannot but feel anxious for an event which would relieve the people from the pressure of those burdens, and losses, and dangers, that are now to be encountered, without the prospect of attaining a single object of national benefit.

From the progress and occurrences of the war, as far as it has been conducted, it must be obvious, that the conquest of the Canadian Provinces is not to be effected without an immense effusion of blood and treasure. The conquest, if effected, we should be inclined to regard as worse than a doubtful boon. We want no extension of territorial limits; and the genius of our republican constitutions is not suited to offensive wars of ambition and aggrandizement. A war of this nature is calculated to introduce doctrines and habits, and evil passions, which are inimical and dangerous to the liberties and morals of the nation. To carry it on, the nation has been subjected to various impositions, which will be more oppressive, because all the resources of trade are suppressed, and agricultural enterprise is deprived of its reward. The taxes are multiplied, while the means of payment are diminished, and the ordinary comforts and necessities of life are greatly enhanced on the consumer. To carry on the war, it has been thought advisable entirely to cut off commerce, and the bitter tribulation of the Boston port bill of 1774, is again to be realized, on an infinitely more extended scale. Upon the poor gleanings and remnant of trade, the more precious for being all that was left, the complicate rigors of the embargo act, lately passed, will complete with an unsparring severity, the work of destruction which British cruizers could not accomplish.

The people whom we represent are suffering severely under the operation of this baleful policy, against which we would solemnly remonstrate. But when we cast our eyes further, and look to its effects in another part of the continent; when we consider the still greater miseries of the people of New England, accustomed to live on navigation, and now deprived of the ordinary means of subsistence; when we reflect also on the aggravated causes of disgust to that invaluable people, who perceive that, by the formation of new states out of the limits of our ancient territory, they must necessarily lose all share of influence in the national councils, where other interests, as they suppose, have already obtained an injurious ascendancy; when we meditate on the possible tendency of these irritations, added to all the difficulties of the immediate and general distress, although we have full confidence in the faithful integrity of our Eastern brethren, yet, as they are men, we are free to confess, these reflections render us deeply and doubly solicitous, that peace should be restored, without delay, for the relief of the people and the salvation of the union.

Convinced as we have been, that the war might have been avoided, and that peace might be re-