

CONGRESS.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 14.

The speaker laid before the House a letter from the Secretary of war transmitting a report in relation to invalid pensioners, which was referred to the committee of claims.

On motion of Mr. Stanton the memorial of the inhabitants of Stonington and Westerly, was referred to the committee of commerce and manufactures.

Mr. Boyle from the committee on the public lands, presented a bill making provision for the disposal of the public lands situated between the United States military tract and the Connecticut reserve and for other purposes, which was referred to a committee of the whole on Friday.

Mr. Butler presented a petition from a number of inhabitants of Barnstable, praying for a post-office, which was referred to the post-office committee.

On motion of Mr. Hastings, Resolved, that the committee on post-offices, &c. be instructed to enquire into the expediency of establishing a post road from Worcester in Massachusetts, to Providence in Rhode Island.

On motion of Mr. Jer. Morrow, Resolved, That the committee of commerce and manufactures be instructed to enquire into the expediency of extending to the revenue districts on Lake Erie and within the state of Ohio the provisions of an act entitled an act to extend jurisdiction in certain cases to state judges and state courts, and that they report by bill or otherwise.

Mr. Early from the committee of Commerce and Manufactures, presented a bill authorizing the erection of certain light houses, and the fixing of certain stakes, buoys and beacons therein named, which was referred to a committee of the whole on Monday.

Mr. Chittenden presented a petition from sundry citizens of Vermont praying for a new post road, which was referred to the post office committee.

The House resumed the consideration of the unfinished business of yesterday—when a debate, which occupied the whole sitting, arose on concurring with the committee of the whole in their agreement to the new section proposed by Mr. Bidwell to the bill for their punishment of certain crimes against the U. States.

Messrs. Dana and Early opposed; and Mr. Bidwell supported the section.

Mr. Epes suggested several amendments, with the view of obviating the objections urged against the section.

Mr. Elliott considered the section as so exceptionable as not to admit of amendment.

Mr. Alston was of a different opinion; but thought the section ought to go to a select committee for modification, and made a motion to that effect.

This motion was supported by Messrs. Alston, and Bidwell, and opposed by Messrs. Dana, Early, and J. Clay; and disagreed to—Ayes 32.

The question was then taken on Mr. Epes's amendment, and disagreed to—Ayes 16.

The question then recurred on the section.

Mr. Dwight spoke at considerable length against it.

Mr. Burwell admitted that contrary to his first impressions on hearing it read, it was objectionable, and said, that if it were not materially modified, he should vote against it.

When the question was taken by yeas and nays, and the section negatived—Yeas 2—Nays 145.

Mr. Dana moved to recommit the bill; which motion was disagreed to—Ayes 23.

When the bill was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading to-morrow without a division.

[A more detailed statement of these proceedings, with the debate, in a subsequent paper.]

The speaker laid before the House, a letter from the Secretary of state, with a statement of the names of the clerks, together with their emoluments, employed in the department of state.

THURSDAY, January 15.

The bill providing for the punishment of certain crimes against the United States was read the third time and passed without a division.

On motion of Mr. Fisk, the House resolved itself into a committee of the whole—Mr. GAZON in the chair—on the bill authorizing the President of the United States to accept the service of a number of volunteer companies not exceeding thirty thousand men.

The blanks were so filled as to bind the volunteers to continue for twelve

months, unless sooner discharged and to appropriate 500,000 dollars.

The committee rose, and the House concurred in these amendments.

After the insertion of a small verbal amendment, suggested by Mr. Tallmadge, he moved to recommit the bill for the purpose of introducing a provision for the appointment of field officers.

This motion was disagreed to—Ayes 43—Noes 47.

The question to engross the bill having been put, Mr. Elmer observed that in his opinion, it contained every provision on this subject that was necessary.

When the bill was ordered, without a division, to be engrossed for a third reading to-morrow.

On motion of Mr. J. Randolph, the House Resolved into a committee of the whole—Mr. GAZON in the chair—on the bill supplementary to the act entitled "An act to make provision for the redemption of the whole of the public debt of the U. States."

Mr. J. Randolph called for the reading of the letter of the Secretary of the Treasury on this subject, communicated the last session to the committee of Ways and Means; which he believed contained the most satisfactory and perspicuous reasons in favor of the bill which could be assigned.

This communication having been read, the bill was considered by sections. The various blanks were filled, and some amendments introduced touching the details of the bill.

The only part of the bill on which a division was called, was on filling the blank in the third section, so as to entitle the holders of the new six per cent. stock to a sum equal to "sixty five" per cent. of the amount of the sum subscribed for by them in three per cent. stock.

On this motion the House divided—Ayes 59—Noes 27.

The committee rose and reported the bill; the amendments proposed were immediately agreed to by the House, and the bill, without division, ordered to be engrossed for a third reading to-morrow.

The House resolved itself into a committee of the whole House—Mr. Bassett in the chair—on the bill prescribing the mode of taking evidence in cases of contested elections for members of the House of Representatives.

After a short debate, the committee rose and obtained leave to sit again.

Mr. J. Randolph, from the committee to whom was referred certain resolutions,

Presented a bill for the defence of the mouth of the Mississippi, and for the protection of New-Orleans, and its dependencies, which was referred to a committee of the whole on Monday.

Mr. G. W. Campbell, moved that the house should resolve itself into a committee of the whole on the resolution offered by him to make provisions for carrying into effect the treaty between the United States, and the Chickasaw tribe of Indians, which motion was disagreed to—Ayes 34 Noes 46.

The House resolved itself into a committee of the whole—Mr. Vanum in the chair—on the bill for continuing the act for suspending commercial intercourse with certain ports of St. Domingo.

After a short discussion, the committee rose and obtained leave to sit again.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 16.

Mr. J. Randolph. In the President's message, at the commencement of the session, he announced to us as follows:

"Having received information that in another part of the United States a great number of private individuals were combining together, arming and organizing themselves, contrary to law, to carry on a military expedition against the territories of Spain, I thought it necessary, by proclamation, as well as by special orders, to take measures for preventing and suppressing this enterprize, for seizing the vessels, arms, and other means provided for it, and for arresting and bringing to justice its authors and abettors."

So long said Mr. R. as the illegal movements of these persons were supposed to be directed against a foreign nation, although the interest of the U. S. and their honor too required that prompt and decisive measures should be taken for suppressing their designs, yet I believe, there is no gentleman in this House, but will agree with me in the opinion that the U. S. and this House in particular, could not feel so deep and lively an interest against a conspiracy of that kind, as against one for the subversion of the

union, and perhaps of the liberties of those who compose it. I have waited with anxious solicitude for some information in relation to this subject, that might be depended upon—for some official information.

I contented myself for a long time with the belief, inasmuch as no information had been given to the House, that there were imperious reasons connected with the public welfare which forbade a disclosure; but the aspect which affairs have taken on the Mississippi is such, that I can no longer reconcile it to my sense of duty, as the independent representative of an independent people, to rest satisfied in that state of supineness and

inactivity in which the House has been

months, unless sooner discharged and to appropriate 500,000 dollars. satisfied to remain for the six or seven weeks past, from the information I have been able to collect, and it is such that I am obliged to perceive, if not implicit reliance on it; it does appear to me that if the government of Spain is in any wise concerned in these measures, it is concerned not as the defendant, but as the plaintiff; as the aggressing party and not as the party on whom the aggression is made. So long as I was induced to believe that by withholding correct information from the legislature, the substantial interest of the nation would be more essentially subserved, than by laying it before them, so long, though not without reluctance, I acquiesced in its being withheld. But from the hostile appearances on the Mississippi, it seems to me that the state of things is such as requires the most prompt and efficacious measures for securing the union.

The bubble is said to have burst, and there no longer remains any reason why the information in the possession of the executive ought to be withheld. But to guard against all possible objection I have endeavored so to frame the motion, as to do away any objection arising from this consideration. It does appear—from the newspapers it is true—but under a much higher sanction than is generally attached to information received through such a channel—it does appear in evidence under the sanction of an examination before the legislature of Kentucky that ever since the peace of 1783, Spain has incessantly laboured to detach the western people from the union; that subsequently to the treaty of San Lorenzo she has carried on intrigues, and in the most faithless manner withheld acceding to its stipulations, in order to excite a spirit in the western country subversive of the union; that she subsequently made a proposition of the most flagitious kind to several leading characters in Kentucky,

and as I believe elsewhere. It appears indeed that she has never lost sight of this object; and I believe she never will lose sight of it so long as she shall find materials to work upon, or a shadow of hope that she will succeed. It appears to me that she has found those materials; that they are of the most dangerous nature; that they are now in operation; and that perhaps, at this moment while I am addressing you, at least for a time, the fate of the western country may have been decided.

Sir, this subject offers strong arguments, in addition to the numerous reasons presented during the present session of Congress, to justify the policy avowed by certain gentlemen during the last session, so highly condemned; and if I am correctly informed, the other branch of the legislature are now acting on that policy so contemned and despised.

[Mr. Speaker said it was not in order to allude to the proceedings of the Senate.]

Mr. J. Randolph—I shall say no more on that point, but I will say this in relation to our own proper business. We have had a bill before us authorizing the President to accept volunteers. A member of the committee, with whom I had the pleasure of consulting, minutely connected and done up with the secretary of war, did make a proposition before that committee, to augment the military forces to meet the pressing exigencies of the times, and which I presume must have had the sanction of that officer. Is there a man in this House, who at this day doubts, that if the government—I mean the executive and legislature—had taken a manly and decisive attitude towards Spain, and instead of pen, ink, and paper, had given men and arms—is there a man who disbelieves that not only Spain would have been overawed, but that those domestic traitors would also have been intimidated and overawed, whose plans threaten to be dangerous? Would any man have dreamt of alienating the Mississippi at the head of an unprincipled banditti, if New-Orleans had been fortified, and strong fortifications erected in its neighbourhood? What did we then hear? Money, dollars and cents! Is there not now every reason to believe, especially when we consider the superintendance under which the expenses are incurred, that the saving of the campaign on the Sabine, and the saving of the costly measures taken, by the commander in chief on his own responsibility, would have been equal to the expense of raising and maintaining for one year the additional forces proposed at the last session to be raised. There can be no doubt but that on the principles of economy, without taking into view the effect on the union, the United States would have been gainers. A spectator, not in the habit of reading our public prints, or of conversing with individuals out of doors, but who should draw his ideas of the situation of the country from the proceedings of this House during the present session, would be led to infer that there never existed in any nation a greater degree of peace, tranquility or union, at home or abroad, than in the United States at this time; and yet what is the fact? That the United States are not only threatened with external war, but with conspiracies and treason, the more alarming from their not being defined. And yet we sit and adjourn, adjourn and sit, take things as school boys, do as we are bid, and ask no questions. I cannot conceive this line of conduct to my ideas of the duty of a member on this floor. Among the state authorities, there appears to be one that has acted with a promptness and decision that does it great honor. Yes, the youngest member of the federal family has been found to be the first to ward off the impending danger, while the eldest members are sleeping, snoring and dozing over their liberties at home. Under this view of the subject, I beg leave to offer the following resolution:

RESOLVED, That the President of the United States be and he hereby is requested to lay before this House any information in possession of the Executive, except such as he may deem the public welfare to require not to be disclosed, touching any illegal combination of private individuals against the peace and safety of the union, or any military expedition planned by such individuals against the territories of any power in amity with the United States;—together with the measures which the Executive

has passed, and proposes to take for its protection or defeating the same.

Mr. Chandler said he had the honor to be a member of the committee alluded to by the gentleman from Virginia, and he believed by the propositions that were made by him, he was the member referred to. He believed he had made a proposition in the committee to augment the number of the present forces by adding to each company such a number of men as would enlarge it to an hundred instead of eighty. He made this proposition, because from the extension of our territory he thought it necessary, and because he thought, by thus adding to the number of our troops, without increasing the expense, the public would be as well served without incurring the expense attending the creation of additional officers. He believed the proposition went farther, and authorized the President to raise a certain number of troops, provided the public good in his opinion required it. He presumed, however, that the secretary of war had never known that such a proposition was made or intended to be made, and much less had mentioned it by his opinion. Mr. Chandler said he barely mentioned this circumstance, to show that the secretary of war did not communicate information in this way.

(To be Continued.)

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(To be Continued.)

NORFOLK, January 15.

FRENCH CORRESPONDENCE.

The article under this head, occupies a very considerable portion of our paper of this day, consisting of five letters from Admiral Villeneuve, viz. one to the minister of marine in France, three to general Turreau, the French minister at Washington, and one to commander Bancy.

It cannot be supposed that we should offer such documents to the public, without observation. With respect to the authenticity of these letters, we have no doubt; and our readers may be assured that we have not consented to their publication, but under a firm conviction that they are genuine; and the translations in some instances are too literal to be doubted, and the proper names in the originals are very difficult to make out; truth has been

more aimed at than elegance. These letters derive their interest from the circumstance of their being written without being intended for public inspection, and of course the sentiments of the writer are freely expressed. It may probably be remarked that a part of these letters do not interest the public, and might therefore have been omitted; but for reasons which we think are conclusive, such a course could not have been pursued without hazarding a charge of suppression. In one instance only has any part of the letters been omitted, and the cause of omission is fully, and we trust satisfactorily explained—the remarks which we have to offer, will come better after the reader has perused the correspondence; we shall therefore insert it here.

FRENCH CORRESPONDENCE. (Communicated for the Public Ledger.) TRANSLATIONS. No. 1. Dated the Havana, 30th Sept. 1806. To His Excellency the Minister of Marine at Paris.

MY LORD, I informed you of my intended departure from Martinique on the 29th June, but I was obliged to devote two days for the further accommodation of the vessels not ready for sea; meanwhile I hurried on the repair of the Vulture frigate, and she along with the other six ships of the squadron was ready to put to sea the 1st July.

The enemy well informed of the arrival of our squadron off the windward islands, rapidly appeared off Dominique, where they were well situated by their neighbourhood to St. Christopher's.

I was well aware that English convoys of West-India trade would not be ready to assemble before the 1st of August at Tortola, and after the departure of the French squadron. In the night of July the 3d I captured in my passage three merchant vessels—a fleet of merchantmen at anchor on St. Christopher's cut their cables and joined—enjoy under admiral Cochrane—they were in number 33 ships. I sailed along the coast of this island within half cannon shot, but found I could effect no important service, for I presumed the fleet from St. Christopher's had been thence escorted to form a junction with the merchantmen at Tortola. I formed the design of going in there, but my Martinique pilot was not capable of carrying in the squadron; I therefore resolved to go to St. Martin's and I proceeded with my prizes towards that island.

On the 4th in the morning, being at the entrance of Tortola, I had already taken the Fly, a small vessel belonging to the English admiral, which I sent to reconnoitre, and by her was informed there were no vessels in the road. During the day the enemy having passed out, I resolved the next morning to pursue the convoy thro' the straits of St. Thomas de St. Croix. In the course of these last 24 hours the squadron repaired the damage it had suffered in the night. In the morning I saw right to windward 12 sail 4 leagues off, consisting of 4 sail of the line, 5 frigates, and corvettes and brigs, not doubting it was admiral Cochrane's squadron, which were coming to collect the convoy. I lay by for him till 8 o'clock in the morning, not being able to give chase to the English, who were then to windward, without losing time. But, I formed my squadron in two columns, under topsail, only keeping the frigate ahead, and in this order I passed the straits. Admiral Cochrane followed me at a considerable distance, carefully

preserving the weather gauge. About three quarters past one, I was informed the Danish island of St. Thomas, I now hoisted my colours and my flag, and the enemy by 2 o'clock not more than three leagues off, lay to, at the mouth of the passage. I likewise gave the signal to the Pratique to Martinique in the Manche, (the Fly) and waited for the enemy, but he stood to the southward, and I proceeded to seek the convoy. Indeed, my lord, I expected to have seen mention of my name in the details of this affair, of which the English newspapers rendered a very incorrect account.

On the 9th I boarded a brig of the convoy, which had been separated from the rest at leaving the land. I made diligent search, but without success, during several days, for the bulk of the fleet of merchantmen, until I found myself in the latitude of 28, 30, without seeing a sail; I therefore concluded this little convoy had proceeded to unite itself with the grand Jamaa convoy, towards which I repaired, in the hope by cruising in the Bahama straits, I should eventually fall in with the Jamaica fleet on or about the 1st of August, as the said fleet generally sails for England at two periods. By thus standing to the westward, I suffered the consequence of this proceeding, for heavy gales of wind came on, and my ships were several times struck with lightning, and my sails being all split or blown away, I did not see enough to put into the latitude of 78 degrees. On July 10th I saw we were 17 1/2 leagues from the land, and we were at the distance of 40 leagues, and that the second convoy could not have been far from sailing thence; but just at this time I heard that admiral Sir John B. Warren had arrived in the W. Indies, and only eight days after my first sailing. I conjectured that admiral Warren would proceed to Newfoundland, where I meant to let him go quietly. July 20th at sun set, we saw a large ship to windward and two brigs; supposed however these might be Sir John, and I made the signal to close the squadron and keep to windward, intending next day to engage this admiral to advantage. A schooner, however, which belonged to these vessels to windward, and which I hoisted at midnight, afterwards informed me that it was part of a convoy of Americans, consisting of 8 sail, under the escort of two small frigates, bound to New-York, laden with coffee, &c. &c. by the revolted negroes at St. Domingo. This news not being disclosed to me by the master of the schooner, till some days after the convoy had time to escape to the northward—indignant at the conduct of the Americans, I immediately put the master of the schooner in irons, and all his people, and made sail in search of said convoy, determined to hang at the yard arm the captains and supercargoes in the face of their countrymen, at New-York—but being nearly off Cape Labrador, the weather changed, and the gathering storm left me no hope of arriving at New-York in time to intercept these pirates; and on arriving off the Cape a gale of wind obliged me to haul to windward, and wait till it was passed, which when it was over, enabled me to speak a vessel by which I was informed that the said convoy had put into the Chesapeake and Delaware. By this time I had arrived within 10 leagues of Long-Island. I then made sail for my rendezvous in lat. 27, and 67 long, which might prove the route of admiral Cochrane proceeding from the Windward Islands with his convoy for Europe, in the course perhaps of the first fifteen days of August. On the 16th of August, being nearly in the proposed rendezvous, I invited on board my ship all the captains to celebrate Napoleon the first, and now learning the condition of their ships, I consented from the disabled state of all the vessels to proceed on the 20th to St. Jean Porto Rico, from whence I proposed sailing the 1st of October.

My design was to proceed direct to Newfoundland to destroy the English Fishery, &c. making my rendezvous afterwards off the Sale Bank distant 100 leagues E. and in the latitude 52 N. to steer for some port in France, where I hoped to arrive by the end of October, but this plan was disconcerted by an horrible tempest which overtook us on the 19th and 20th Aug. The Veteran which was missing, I hope met better fortune than the rest of my squadron. Many vessels of the enemy perished, others were greatly damaged and their convoy dispersed. I got down my top-gallant-masts, and all my ships in sight by 5 o'clock, were lying under their foresails and mizens only, but in less than one hour afterwards every sail was blown away and by 7 o'clock the violence of the gale increasing we scudded before the sea. Such of my ships whose rudders were damaged broached too, and were the first-dismasted; such were the fate of the Foundroyant and Impeteux, which by 9 o'clock were entirely dismasted, viz. without a single stump left—after blowing thus for 26 hours a hurricane (which I have never known any thing more dreadful) the wind abated, but the sea which was tremendous frequently fell on board our vessels. Under these circumstances, it was impossible for me to save any part of the wreck, so as to enable me to rig jury masts; consequently it was not before the 28th that I was at all able to direct the course of the Foundroyant towards the S. S. W. About two leagues