

solely to the future intercourse of the two nations as relating to commerce and navigation; and had they been entirely omitted our differences would have been nevertheless adjusted. It is agreed on all hands that, so far as relates to our commerce with Great Britain, we want no treaty. The intercourse, although useful perhaps to both parties, is more immediately necessary to England, and her own interest is a sufficient pledge of her granting us at all times a perfect liberty of commerce to her European ports. If we want to treat with her it must be in order to obtain some intercourse with her colonies and some general security in our navigation. . . .

Whatever evils may follow a rejection of the treaty, they will not attend a postponement. To suspend our proceedings will not throw us into a situation which will require new negotiations, new arrangements on the points already settled and well understood by both parties. It will be merely a delay until an explanation of the late conduct of the British toward us may be obtained, or until that conduct may be altered. If, on the contrary, we consent to carry the treaty into effect under the present circumstances, what will be our situation in future? It is by committing the most wanton and the most unprovoked aggressions on our trade; it is by seizing a large amount of our property as a pledge for our good behavior, that Great Britain has forced the nation into the present treaty.

If by threatening new hostilities, or rather by continuing her aggressions, even after the treaty is made, she can force us also to carry it into effect, our acquiescence will be tantamount to a declaration that we mean to submit in proportion to the insults that are offered to us, and this disposition being once known, what security have we against new insults, new aggressions, new spoliations which probably will lay the founda-

tion of some additional demands on the part of the aggressor, and of some additional sacrifice on ours? It has been said, and said with truth, that to put up with the indignities we have received without obtaining any reparation, which will probably be the effect of defeating the treaty, is highly dishonorable to the nation. In my opinion it is still more so not only tamely to submit to a continuation of these national insults, but, while they thus continue uninterrupted, to carry into effect the instrument we have consented to accept as a reparation for former ones. When the general conduct of Great Britain towards us from the beginning of the present war is considered, when the means by which she has produced the treaty are reflected on, a final compliance on our part while she still persists in that conduct, whilst the chastening rod of that nation is still held over us, is in my opinion a dereliction of national interest, of national honor, of national independence.

But it is said that war must be the consequence of our delaying to carry the treaty into effect. Do the gentlemen mean that if we reject the treaty, if we do not accept the reparation there given to us, in order to obtain redress, we have no alternative left but war? If we must go to war in order to obtain reparation for insults and spoliations on our trade, we must do it even if we carry the present treaty into effect, for this treaty gives us no reparation for the aggressions committed since it was ratified, has not produced a discontinuance of those acts of hostility, and gives us no security that they shall be discontinued.

But the arguments of those gentlemen who suppose that America must go to war apply to a final rejection of the treaty and not to a delay. I do not propose to refuse the reparation offered by the treaty and to put up with the aggressions com-

mitted; I have agreed that that reparation, such as it is, is a valuable article of the treaty; I have agreed that under the present circumstances a greater evil will follow a total rejection of than an acquiescence in the treaty. The only measure which has been mentioned in preference of the one now under discussion is a suspension, a postponement whilst the present spoliations continue, in hopes to obtain for them a similar reparation and assurances that they shall cease.

But is it meant to insinuate that it is the final intention of those who pretend to wish only for a postponement to involve this country in a war? There has been no period during the present European war at which it would not have been equally weak and wicked to adopt such measures as must involve America in the contest unless forced into it for the sake of self-defence; but, at this time, to think of it would fall but little short of madness. The whole American nation would rise in opposition to the idea, and it might at least have been recollected that war cannot be declared except by Congress, and that two of the branches of government are sufficient to check the other in any supposed attempt of this kind.

If there is no necessity imposed upon America to go to war, if there is no apprehension she will by her own conduct involve herself in one, the danger must arise from Great Britain, and the threat is that she will make war against us if we do not comply. Gentlemen first tell us that we have made the best possible bargain with that nation; that she has conceded everything without receiving a single iota in return; and yet they would persuade us that she will make war against us in order to force us to accept that contract so advantageous to us and so injurious to herself. It will not be contended that a delay until an amicable explanation is obtained could afford even a pretence to Great Britain for going to war, and we all

know that her own interest would prevent her. If another campaign takes place it is acknowledged that all her efforts are to be exerted against the West Indies. She has proclaimed her own scarcity of provisions at home, and she must depend on our supplies to support her armament.

It depends upon us to defeat her whole scheme, and this is a sufficient pledge against open hostility if the European war continues. If peace takes place there will not be even the appearance of danger; the moment when a nation is happy enough to emerge from one of the most expensive, bloody, and dangerous wars in which she ever has been involved will be the last she would choose to plunge afresh into a similar calamity.

But to the cry of war the alarmists do not fail to add that of confusion, and they have declared, even on this floor, that if the resolution is not adopted government will be dissolved. Government dissolved in case a postponement takes place! The idea is too absurd to deserve a direct answer. But I will ask those gentlemen, by whom government is to be dissolved? Certainly not by those who may vote against the resolution, for although they are not perhaps fortunate enough to have obtained the confidence of the gentlemen who voted against them, still it must be agreed that those who succeed in their wishes, who defeat a measure they dislike, will not wish to destroy that government which they hold so far in their hands as to be able to carry their own measures. For them to dissolve government would be to dissolve their own power. By whom then, I again ask, is the government to be dissolved?

The gentlemen must answer—by themselves—or they must declare that they mean nothing but to alarm. Is it really the language of those men who profess to be, who distinguish themselves by the self-assumed appellation of, friends to

order, that if they do not succeed in all their measures they will upset government — and have all their professions been only a veil to hide their love of power, a pretence to cover their ambition?

Do they mean that the first event which shall put an end to their own authority shall be the last act of government? As to myself, I do not believe that they have such intentions; I have too good an opinion of their patriotism to allow myself to admit such an idea a single moment, but I think myself justifiable in entertaining a belief that some amongst them, in order to carry a favorite, and what they think to be an advantageous measure, mean to spread an alarm which they do not feel, and I have no doubt that many have contracted such a habit of carrying every measure of government as they please, that they really think that everything must be thrown into confusion the moment they are thwarted in a matter of importance. I hope that experience will in future cure their fears.

But at all events, be the wishes and intentions of the members of this House what they may, it is not in their power to dissolve the government. The people of the United States, from one end of the continent to the other, are strongly attached to their constitution; they would restrain and punish the excesses of any party, of any set of men in government who would be guilty of the attempt, and on them I will rest as a full security against every endeavor to destroy our union, our constitution, or our government.

But although I am not afraid of a dissolution, I feel how highly desirable is a more general union of sentiment; I feel the importance of an agreement of opinion between the different branches of government, and even between the members of the same branch. I would sacrifice much to obtain

that object; it has been one of the most urging motives with me to be in favor, not of a rejection, but only of a suspension of a delay. But even as a matter of opinion it is difficult to say which mode of proceeding in this house will best accord with the general sentiments of the people.

So far as relates to the petitions before us, the number of signatures against the treaty exceeds, at the moment I am speaking, the number of those in favor of the treaty. Amongst the last, some have come from one part of the Union, where it seems, both from the expressions in the petition itself and from the proceedings there, that a great inducement in the petitioners to sign was a wish to carry the treaty with Spain into effect, as they appear to suppose that its fate depends upon that of the British treaty. How they would act upon the British treaty alone and unconnected with the other I do not know, nor have I any evidence which enables me to form an opinion thereon. All I know is that until the Spanish treaty was made they were perfectly silent on the subject of the other treaty and never expressed an opinion upon it alone.

True it is that an alarm which has produced a combination has lately taken place amongst the merchants of this and some other seaports. What effect it will have, and how successful they will eventually be in spreading this alarm amongst the people at large, I cannot tell, but there are circumstances accompanying their petition which, in my opinion, much diminish the weight they otherwise might have had. They have undoubtedly a right to petition upon every public measure where they think themselves interested, and their petitions deserve equal regard with those of their fellow citizens throughout the United States.

But on this occasion, in order to create an alarm, in order

to induce the people to join them, in order to force the House to pass the laws relative to the treaty, they have formed a dangerous combination, and affected to cease insuring vessels, purchasing produce, and transacting any business.

A gentleman from New York, Mr. Williams, has been so much alarmed himself that he has predicted a fall in the price of every kind of produce, and seems indeed to have supposed that the clamors of a few individuals here would either put an end to or satisfy the wants of those nations which depend on us for supplies of provisions. Yet it has so happened, and it is a complete proof that the whole is only an alarm, that whilst we have been debating, the price of flour, which was of very dull sale two weeks ago, has risen in equal proportion with the supposed fears of the purchasers. I cannot help considering the cry of war, the threats of a dissolution of government, and the present alarm, as designed for the same purpose, that of making an impression on the fears of this House. It was through the fear of being involved in a war that the negotiation with Great Britain originated; under the impression of fear the treaty has been negotiated and signed; a fear of the same danger, that of war, has promoted its ratification, and now every imaginary mischief which can alarm our fears is conjured up in order to deprive us of that discretion which this House thinks they have a right to exercise, and in order to force us to carry the treaty into effect.

If the people of the United States wish this House to carry the treaty into effect immediately, and notwithstanding the continued aggressions of the British, if their will was fairly and fully expressed, I would immediately acquiesce; but since an appeal has been made to them it is reasonable to suspend a decision until their sentiments are known.

Till then I must follow my own judgment, and as I cannot

see that any possible evils will follow a delay, I shall vote against the resolution before the committee in order to make room either for that proposed by my colleague, Mr. Maclay, or for any other, expressed in any manner whatever, provided it embraces the object I have in view, to wit, the suspension of the final vote—a postponement of the laws necessary to carry the treaty into effect until satisfactory assurances are obtained that Great Britain means in future to show us that friendly disposition which it is my earnest wish may at all times be cultivated by America towards all other nations.