

H. OF R.

*Burr's Conspiracy.*

JANUARY, 1807.

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 labored 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 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 this bill originated, and with whom I had the pleasure of concurring—intimately connected and domesticated with the Secretary of War—did make a proposition before that committee, substantially the same with that rejected at the last session; 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 believes 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 so dangerous? Would any man have dreamt of descending the Mississippi at the head of an unprincipled banditti, if New Orleans had been fortified, and strong

fortifications erected in its neighborhood? What did we then hear? Money, dollars and cents! Is there not now every reason to believe, especially when we consider the superintendence 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 on the principle 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, tranquillity, 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 treasons, the more alarming from their not being defined. And yet we sit and adjourn, adjourn and sit, take things as schoolboys, do as we are bid, and ask no questions. I cannot reconcile 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 pursued and proposes to take for suppressing 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, from 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 a 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 officers, the public would be as well served, without incurring the expense attending the creation of additional officers. He believed the proposition went further,