[illegible] same recent occasion an alarm [illegible] [illegible] as to the probability of [illegible] engaged in war. But for himself he was ready to declare that he did not, [illegible] the smallest degree see the probability of such an event. On the contrary, so far as he was enabled to judge from official information, he did not recollect any period of the government when there was less cause for such apprehension. Whether, however, the measure was necessary or not, he presumed all gentlemen would agree in the propriety of obtaining information.

The motion to postpone was disagreed to—Ayes 40—Noes 58.

[To be Continued.]

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 13.

Mr. Early, from the Committee of Commerce and Manufactures, presented a bill supplementary to the act, entitled "An act to prohibit the importation of certain goods, wares and merchandize," which was referred to a Committee of the Whole House.

This bill specifies certain articles which shall not be considered as embraced by the provisions of the original act, and gives the Secretary of the Treasury and Comptroller power to decide, in case of doubt, whether any particular article is prohibited.

A bill was received from the Senate entitled an act in addition to the act establishing a mint, and regulating the coins of the U. S. which was referred to a Committee of the Whole House.

A bill was received from the Senate entitled an act to prevent settlements being made on lands ceded to the U. S. until authorised by law, and referred to the Committee on Public Lands.

The bill prohibiting the importation of slaves into the U. S. was read a third time, and passed.—Yeas 113—Nays 5.

The House resolved itself into a committee of the whole—Mr. TENNEY in the chair—on the bill extending the time for locating the Virginia Military land warrants, &c.

The committee rose and reported the bill, which was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading to morrow.

The House went into committee of the whole—Mr. VARNUM in the chair—on the bill for finishing the south wing of the Capitol, &c.

One of the items is 20,000 dollars for furnishing the various rooms in the south wing.

This was supported by Messrs. Lewis and Findley, and opposed by Messrs. Gregg and Jackson.

Mr. D. R. Williams moved to fill the blank with 5,000 dollars.

On 20,000 the committee divided—Ayes 36—Noes—61.

Mr. Cook named 18,000 dollars—which was likewise disagreed to—Ayes 41—Noes 54.

Messrs. Macon and Lewis advocated the making a liberal appropriation; the latter of whom moved, to fill the blank with 17,000 dollars.

Mr. Jackson opposed, and Mr. Smilie supported this motion, which was agreed to—Ayes 56—Noes 44.

The provision was then read for *altering and* repairing the east side of the north wing of the Capitol.

Mr. Lewis moved to appropriate for this purpose 60,000 dollars.

Mr. D. R. Williams moved to strike out "*altering and.*"

This motion was agreed to—Ayes 77.

Mr. Jackson moved to strike out "the east side of."

This was carried without a division.

Mr. Lewis moved to appropriate 25,000 dollars for this purpose, viz. generally for repairing the north wing of the Capitol. This was carried—Ayes 62.

The provision for repairing the President's House, &c. was on motion of *Mr. Lewis* filled with "15,000" dollars.

The committee then rose and reported the bill, which was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading to morrow.

An engrossed bill for the relief of Stephen Sayre, was read the third time, and passed—Ayes 74.

Mr. Mumford after a number of preliminary remarks, enforcing the propriety of fortifying and defending at this time the ports and harbors of the U. S. offered three resolutions, substantially as follows:

1. Declaring the expediency of appropriating ——— dollars to authorise the President of the U. S. the more effectually to protect the port and harbor of New-York.

2. Making an appropriation for Charleston and Norfolk.

3. Appropriating a further sum for the protection of the other ports of the U. S.

The Speaker declared the first resolution out of order, as a similar resolution was before the House.

Mr. Varnum, the mover of the resolution referred to, withdrew it.

On taking these resolutions into consideration the House divided—Ayes 69.

Mr. Mumford moved a reference of the resolutions to the committee of the whole instituted on the subject of fortifications.

Mr. Dana made a few remarks against making appropriations for any particular port, and in favor of a liberal appropriation to be placed under the superintendance of the President.

Mr. Mumford replied.

Mr. Masters spoke in favor of the reference.

Mr. Fisher declared himself against a large general appropriation, but in favor of a special appropriation for the defence of the harbor of New-York.

Mr. Quincy spoke on the opposite [illegible] and Mr. Varnum replied.

After a few words from Messrs. [illegible] and Masters, the question to commit the first resolution was taken, and carried—Ayes 63—Noes 20.

On committing the *second* resolution Messrs. D. R. Williams and Marion spoke against it. They both expressed a desire that the port of Charleston should partake only of the benefits of a general appropriation, and in a spirit of favoritism should not be selected from the other ports.

Mr. Mumford withdrew the second resolution.

Mr. Newton expressed similar sentiments, with regard to the port of Norfolk, with those avowed by Messrs. D. R. Williams and Marion.

Messrs. D. R. Williams and Marion spoke likewise against the commitment of the *third* resolution, as the subject embraced by it, was already before a committee of the whole.

Mr. Mumford withdrew the third resolution.

Mr. J. Randolph, in the name of the committee of Ways and Means, asked leave to report a bill in relation to the public debt, being an addition to the bill, passed at the present session, supplementary to the act, entitled an act making provision for the redemption of the whole of the public debt of the U. S.

Mr. R. observed that the object of the bill was to provide for the case of a refusal on the part of the holders of three per cent. stock to come into the loan proposed by the act recently passed. Its object was, to use a strong phrase, to coerce them into that loan; not, however, by any provisions that involved the least breach of the public faith. Its object was to make provision for paying off such part of the three per cent. stock as should remain unsubscribed to the new loan by an annuity of 4 per centum. Such an annuity would be worth something more than sixty-two per cent. Of course, as the new loan permitted the creditor to subscribe at the rate of 65 per cent. it would become obviously his interest to accept the terms of the loan.

Mr. R. then presented the bill, which was referred to a committee of the whole on Tuesday.

When the House adjourned to Monday.

MESSAGE

From the President of the U. States, communicating information of the effect of gun boats in the protection and defence of harbors; of the numbers thought necessary, and of the proposed distribution of them, among the ports and harbors of the United States, in compliance with a resolution of the House of the 5th instant.

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the U. States.

In compliance with the request of the House of Representatives, expressed in their resolution of the fifth inst. I proceed to give such information, as is possessed, of the effect of gun boats in the protection and defence of harbors, of the numbers thought necessary, and of the proposed distribution of them, among the ports and harbors of the U. States.

Under present circumstances, and governed by the intentions of the legislature, as manifested by their annual appropriations of money for the purposes of defence, it has been concluded to combine, 1st, land batteries, furnished with heavy cannon and mortars, and established on all the points around the place favorable for preventing vessels from lying before it; 2d, moveable artillery, which may be carried, as occasion may require, to points unprovided with fixed batteries; 3d, floating batteries; and 4th, gun boats, which may oppose an enemy at his entrance, and co-operate with the batteries for his expulsion.

On this subject professional men were consulted as far as we had opportunity. Gen. Wilkinson, and the late Gen. Gates, gave their opinions in writing, in favor of the system, as will be seen by their letters now communicated. The higher officers of the navy gave the same opinions, in separate conferences, as their presence at the seat of government offered occasions of consulting them, and no difference of judgment appeared on the subject. Those of commodore Barron and capt. Tingey, now here, are recently furnished in writing, and transmitted herewith to the legislature.

The efficacy of gun boats for the defence of harbors, and of other smooth and inclosed waters, may be estimated, in part, from that of gallies, formerly much used, but less powerful, more costly in their construction and maintenance, and requiring more men. But the gun boat itself is believed to be in use with every modern maritime nation, for the purposes of defence. In the Mediterranean, on which are several small powers, whose system, like ours, is peace and defence, few harbors are without this article of protection. Our own experience there of the effect of gun-boats, for harbor service, is recent. Algiers is particularly known to have owed, to a great provision of these vessels, the safety of its city, since the epoch of their construction. Before that, it had been repeatedly insulted and injured. The effect of gun boats, at present, in the neighborhood of Gibraltar, is well known, and how much they were used, both in the attack and defence of that place, during a former war. The extensive resort to them, by the two greatest naval powers in the world, on an enterprize of invasion not long since in prospect, shews their confidence in their efficacy, for the purposes for which they are suited. By the northern powers of Europe, whose seas are particularly adapted to them, they are still more used. The remarkable action, between the Russian flotilla of gun boats and gallies, and a Turkish fleet of ships of the line and frigates, in the Liman sea, (in one thousand seven hundred and eighty eight,) will be readily recollected. The latter, commanded by their most celebrated admiral, were completely defeated, and several of their ships of the line destroyed.

From the opinions given, as to the number of gun boats necessary for some of the principal sea ports, and from a view of all the towns and ports, from Orleans to Maine, inclusive, entitled to protection, in proportion to their situation and circumstances, it is concluded that, to give them a due measure of protection in times of war, about two hundred gun boats will be requisite. According to first ideas, the following would be their general distribution; liable to be varied, on more mature examination, and as circumstances shall vary; that is to say,

To the Mississippi and its neighboring waters, forty gun boats.

To Savannah and Charleston, and the harbors on each side, from Saint Mary's to Curratuck, twenty five.

To the Chesapeake, and its waters, twenty.

To Delaware bay and river, fifteen.

To New-York, the Sound, and waters as far as Cape Cod, fifty.

To Boston and the harbors north of Cape Cod, fifty.

The flotillas assigned to these several stations might each be under the care of a particular commandant, and the vessels composing them would, in ordinary, be distributed among the harbors within the station, in proportion to their importance.

Of these boats, a proper proportion would be of the larger size, such as those heretofore built, capable of navigating any seas, and of reinforcing occasionally the strength even of the most distant ports, when menaced with danger. The residue would be confined to their own, or the neighboring harbors, would be smaller, less furnished for accommodation, and consequently less costly. Of the number supposed necessary, seventy three are built or building, and the hundred and twenty seven still to be provided, would cost from five to six hundred thousand dollars. Having regard to the convenience of the treasury, as well as to the resources for building, it has been thought that the one half of these might be built in the present year, and the other half the next. With the legislature, however, it will rest to stop where we are, or at any further point, when they shall be of opinion that the number provided shall be sufficient for the object.

At times, when Europe, as well as the U. States shall be at peace, it would not be proposed that more than six or eight of these vessels should be kept afloat. When Europe is in war, treble that number might be necessary, to be distributed among those particular harbors which foreign vessels of war are in the habit of frequenting, for the purpose of preserving order therein. But they would be manned in ordinary, with only their complement for navigation, relying on the seamen and militia of the port, if called into action, on any sudden emergency. It would be only when the U. States should themselves be at war, that the whole number would be brought into active service, and would be ready, in the first moments of the war, to co-operate, with other means, for covering at once the line of our sea ports. At all times, those unemployed, would be withdrawn into places not exposed to sudden enterprise, hauled up under sheds covered from the sun and weather, and kept in preservation with little expense for repairs or maintenance.

It must be superfluous to observe, that this species of naval armament is proposed merely for defensive operations; that it can have but little effect towards protecting our commerce in the open seas, even on our own coast; and still less can it become an excitement to engage in offensive maritime war, towards which it would furnish no means.

TH: JEFFERSON.

February 10, 1807.

Extract of a letter from Gen. Horatio Gates, to Thomas Jefferson, esquire, dated October 18, 1804.

DEAR SIR,

I am charmed with your instituting gun-boats, for I believe them to be the properest defence for large harbors that has been hitherto imagined; these, co-operating with small batteries of heavy guns upon the projecting heights near the water, are much better, and infinitely less expensive than fixed and large fortifications. The French, who are the best judges of artillery and engineering of any nation in Europe, adopt this plan of defending their harbors: the effects of it are too well known in England. I know not if you have seen a publication which appeared in Paris in May 1802, entitled *lettres d'un observateur sur la marine*, it is well worth your perusal; much useful information may be derived from it for the defence of our harbors and our astonishingly increasing commerce; a paltry frigate dare not then insult us, as has been and now is done in the harbor of New York.

A letter from general James Wilkinson, to Thomas Jefferson, President of the United States, dated Washington, November 10, 1804.

SIR,

I regret that a variety of interruptions and engagements should have so long prevented my attention to the subject you did me the honor to mention to me.

On turning it in my mind the idea occurred to me that your proposition could not be better ascertained than by an examination of the system of defence heretofore adopted for our towns and harbors, & a comparative view of its merits, with those of the plan which you recommend. I have yielded to this suggestion, and shall be happy if the manner or matter of the enclosed reflections should meet your approbation, as they are for you and at your disposal only.

You will also find under cover an extract from the reflections of the Marquis of Santa Cruz, an author of great respectability, who wrote early in the last century, from which you will perceive gallies, in other words gun-boats, have been long held in high estimation.

I have only to add, sir, that these observations were committed to paper on the day of their date, and that I have not been able to have them copied sooner, so inadequate are my means to my duties.

With great consideration and respect,
I have the honor to be, &c. &c.

NOTE.—This letter was only the cover of general Wilkinson's opinion, and therefore shews only in general terms what that was. The opinion itself was on a former occasion communicated to a committee of the House of Representatives, and was read to the House for its information. This paper cannot now be found; which is the more regretted, as it went much at large into the reasoning on the subject.

A letter from commodore S. Barron, to Thomas Jefferson, President of the United States, dated Washington, February 8, 1807.

SIR,

In consequence of a conversation which I had the honor to hold with you yesterday, on the subject of gun-boats, I venture to state my reasons for supposing them the proper kind of vessels to afford the most effectual means of defence and annoyance within the bays and rivers of the United States.

The small draft of water enables them to take such positions, as to attack, in a measure with impunity, vessels of any size, and are enabled to approach or retire as may best suit to discomfit their enemy and protect themselves.

My residence having been always near the Chesapeake, enables me to remark more particularly on the effect of gun-boats opposed to ships within the capes of Virginia.

The middle ground, the Horse Shoe, and Willoughby's point, are proper positions for gun-boats to take to repel attempts to enter the bay and James river. York spit affords the same advantage in preventing an entry into that river, and near each river is a flat which affords a safe position to annoy, without fearing the near approach of large ships. Ten or twelve of these boats would probably be sufficient to compel to remove from her position, a frigate, and so on, in proportion to the size and number of the enemies ships. To do more than annoy would be difficult. With those vessels a great number and a long time would be necessary to capture a ship of war; but few commanders would feel secure while open to the attack of an enemy, which however inferior, he could not destroy. An attempt to board might be better opposed by small arms, cutlasses, &c. and in case of the necessity of retreat, the small rivers adjacent, &c. would be found of easy access to the boats, and inaccessible to the enemy. I do suppose that twenty gun-boats stationed in Hampton roads and its vicinity, would be sufficient to repel any predatory attack in that quarter, and be very formidable to a larger force. It is impossible for me to enlarge on this subject, being incapable of estimating the force which might be brought in opposition to this mode of defence. I can recollect perfectly the manner and by what means two, small boats belonging to the state of Virginia, during the revolutionary war, often intercepted, almost under the guns of large ships, the supplies which were frequently attempted to be afforded them. This was done by means of a light draft of water and good sailing. They were, however, deficient of heavy cannon. The gun boats building under my direction are so constructed as to sail fast and to mount one heavy cannon, and can, if necessary, mount some smaller guns in the waist, so that they can be used in attack on privateers or ships of war, and are competent to an employment (during summer) on the sea coast where the inlets will generally admit them, in case of tempestuous weather, or the necessity of retreat from a superior force.

I have the honor to be,
With great respect
Your obedient servant,
(Signed) SAMUEL BARRON

The efficacy of gun boats in the defence of coasts, ports and harbors, must be obvious to every person capable of reflection; when it is considered with what celerity they can generally change their position and mode of attack, extending it widely to as many different directions as their number consists of, or concentrating nearly to one line of direction. It hardly need be observed that the very small object which a gun boat presents to the attacking enemy, causes it always problematical whether it may be hit by the most expert and experienced marksmen, while on the other hand the enemy attacking is generally with large ships, mostly of the line of battle, and which from their magnitude may be struck by almost every shot. The advantages of gun boats for the defence contemplated are numerous; they cannot easily be surrounded, be the force of the enemy what it may; consequently very few, if any, are likely to fall into the enemies hands. Their capability of retiring into shoal water, thereby keeping the adversary at long gun shot distance, where nought but a charge of single round shot will reach, in which they will almost always have the advantage, or taking their station behind shoals, where they cannot be pursued by the smallest class of frigates, or even of sloops of war. And in many cases they may have opportunity of annoying an enemy when sheltered themselves by low points of land, where nought but their masts can be seen; of course in a situation comparatively safe, when that of the enemy is considered.

Such indeed is believed to be the great utility of gun boats for defence, that notwithstanding the gigantic power of the British navy, in its present state, a judicious writer in the British naval chronicle, after advising a plan for raising a fleet of 150 or 200 gun-boats to assist in repelling the threatened invasion of that country says "A gun boat has this advantage over a battery on shore, that it can be removed at pleasure from place to place, as occasion may require, and a few such vessels carrying heavy guns, would make prodigious havoc among the enemy's flat bottomed boats crowded with soldiers." Respecting those particular ports and harbors in the United States, which may be defended, or essentially assisted in being defended by gun boats, it is believed they would essentially assist in the defence of all the principal ports in our country. For the only place where gun boats could be of no avail, must be such a one where the enemy under sail could advance uninterrupted by shoals, rocks or narrow channels, to the immediate point of attack within pistol shot of the shore.

The above cursory observations are respectfully submitted.

(Signed) THOMAS TINGEY.

*Navy Yard, Washington,
February 9, 1807.*

WASHINGTON CITY.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18.

SUPREME COURT of the UNITED STATES.

On MONDAY Messrs. Bollman and Swartwout were brought before the Court by virture of a writ of Habeas Corpus.

MR. LEE made an argument of three hours and half, in order to prove the illegality of the commitment of the Circuit Court; to prove that there was not probable cause that the prisoners had been guilty of treason; that there was no proof of their having committed any offence; and that they consequently ought to be altogether liberated, or at least admitted to bail.

MR. F. KEY followed on the same side, in a speech of about an hour, when the court adjourned about half past 4 o'clock.

On TUESDAY the court met at 10 A. M. The Attorney General, MR. RODNEY spoke against the motion about two hours.

He was followed by Mr. Jones, the attorney of the district, who delivered an argument of about the same length.

Mr. Harper then spoke in support of the motion about one hour and a half.

When the court adjourned about 4 o'clock.

The argument will be closed *this day* by Mr. Martin.

Having been for the two past days exclusively occupied by the proceedings in the supreme court, we cannot at present give any statement of the proceedings of the legislature.

General JOHN SMITH is re-elected Senator of the United States, for the state of New-York for the term of six years from the 3d of next March.

Argument of Mr. HARPER in the case of Messrs. Bollman and Swartwout.

On the 10th instant, Mr. Charles Lee moved the Supreme Court of the United States for a writ of Habeas Corpus, to bring Messrs. Bollman and Swartwout up, and to enquire into the legality of their commitment on a charge of high treason, by the Circuit Court of the District of Columbia. He also moved for a certiorari, to the circuit court of the district of Columbia, to send up the record of their proceedings on this subject.

After Mr. Lee's argument, the case stood over till the next day, when Mr. HARPER, as counsel for Dr. Bollman, was heard by the court in support of the motion. The substance of his argument was as follows:

The persons, may it please your honors, on whose behalf this application is made, having been committed by the circuit court of the district of Columbia, two questions arise under the motion now before this honorable court.

1. Whether the supreme court of the United States have, in general, power to issue the writ of Habeas Corpus, for enquiring into the cause of commitment? Or in technical language the writ of Habeas Corpus ad subjiciendum?

2. Whether admitting this court to have this power in general, it can ex-