

The Kentucky Advertiser.

WINCHESTER, (Kentucky)--Printed by NATHANIEL PATTER, Jr.

NUM. 187.]

SATURDAY MORNING, MARCH 16, 1817.

[VOL. III.]

CONDITIONS.

TWO DOLLARS paid in advance—FOUR DOLLARS & FIFTY CENTS in six months or THREE DOLLARS at the expiration of the year.
No paper will be discontinued until all arrearages have been paid.
Those who do not direct their papers to be discontinued at the end of the year will be considered as engaged for the next.
Subscribers at a distance whose papers are sent at our expense, will be charged 25 cents per annum in addition.
ADVERTISEMENTS, not exceeding a square, will be inserted for 50 Cents the first insertion, and 25 cents for each continuance. Those coming from the country must be accompanied by the CASH, or they will not be attended to.

CONGRESSIONAL

DEBATE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ON THE COMPENSATION LAW.

(Continued.)

Mr. WRIGHT said, I hope, Mr. Chairman, to be indulged while I present my view of the late compensation bill at the time of its passage, and also my objections to its repeal at this time, although I should still prefer its modification to a per diem at the rate of ten dollars—as it would be better understood and preferred by the people. Sir, in order distinctly to present my view of the subject, I must be permitted to take a review of the compensation given to the old Congress, prior to the establishment of the present constitution. A compensation was fixed by each state legislature, for its own members, at a time when money was of great value; when the finances of the states were humble, and in a body where the members of Congress had no control. Then the state of Maryland gave her members of Congress eight dollars per day, and the same legislature, at the same time, gave her own members two dollars per day, which she has long since increased to four dollars per day, a measure justified by the depreciation of money, ascertained by the rise of every necessary of life—so that, on the passage of the compensation bill, I really felt myself equal instructed by the conduct of the legislature of my own state to increase the compensation of the members. I never conceived, that the making the compensation commence with the session, the variable practice of the state legislatures, could be liable to reprehension. I therefore felt myself justified by the example of Maryland, in the commencement and extension of the compensation, also by my own knowledge of the services I had made, and the conviction on my own mind of the justice of giving the value of the sum fixed on in seventeen hundred & eighty nine. It was the substantial value of the compensation I felt myself entitled to, and did not believe that value would be exceeded by the compensation bill. Would any man in the community be satisfied with the price given in seventeen hundred and eighty nine, for any article of life he had to dispose of, nay, would he not laugh even at a member of Congress who should be simple enough to make him such a proposition, although backed by the remark of the unchanged state of his own compensation? Sir, was the six dollars, in seventeen hundred and eighty nine, considered a just compensation? Was the value of that compensation substantially increased by the late compensation bill? Are questions that irresistibly force themselves on the mind, in the consideration and just decision of the question. Sir, we have been charged with a want of delicacy upon the subject, and with the political heresy of raising our own compensation. By the constitution, it is expressly provided, that the members of Congress, shall receive a compensation for their services to be fixed by law, and they of course must in the first instance make that law. Congress in seventeen hundred and eighty nine, in the exercise of that power, thus necessarily and constitutionally devolved upon them, acted a modest and self denying part, and no doubt with an eye to the popularity of their infant republic, by reducing the compensation from eight dollars, heretofore given, as I have shewn, to six dollars per day, whose conduct upon that occasion justified the confidence that had been reposed in them. And here permit me to remind gentlemen, that an amendment was proposed to the constitution, "to limit the power of Congress in the increase of their compensation, so as to make it take effect only at a future Congress," and that amendment was rejected by the States; hence it appears that the very objections now urged by the Boston Hartford Convention gentry had been overruled by the people, who were not afraid to trust Congress originally, to their compensation, or to raise it, in their discretion, it became necessary, and refused to furnish the fair

name of their own representatives, selected by themselves, as the constitutional centinels of their lives, their liberties, and their fortunes, by the adoption of the amendment. Sir, at the time Congress fixed their own compensation at six dollars, they fixed the compensation of most of the officers of government, and, strange as it may be to tell, we are charged in the face of the world, in the passage of the compensation bill, with raising our own compensation and leaving the compensation of the officers of government as they were. Sir, I will detect and expose the unfounded calumny by shewing the state of the compensations then given to the respective officers of government, and their present compensations. In seventeen hundred and eighty nine the compensation to the President was fixed at twenty-five thousand dollars, when Washington, the favorite of the nation, presided with the use of the furniture, and other effects, then in his possession belonging to the United States. Mr. Adams at the commencement of his administration, in addition to the twenty five thousand dollars per year, was allowed fourteen thousand dollars for his term of four years to supply himself with furniture. Mr. Jefferson during his administration was allowed also fourteen thousand dollars for the same purpose. Mr. Madison, at the commencement of his administration, was allowed fourteen thousand dollars for the same purpose, and after the conflagration of the President's House, an additional sum of fourteen thousand dollars was allowed, which I understand has not been expended. Thus you see how the President's original compensation has been increased. In seventeen hundred and eighty nine, the Secretaries of the departments were allowed, some three thousand five hundred dollars, others three thousand dollars; those of the first class have long since been allowed five thousand dollars, and those of the second class, four thousand five hundred dollars; thus adding fifteen hundred dollars to each head of a department. In seventeen hundred and eighty nine the salaries of the Judges of the Supreme Court, were established, to the Chief Justice, four thousand dollars, to the Associate Justices, three thousand five hundred dollars each. These compensations were predicated on the labours contemporaneously assigned them, which have been reduced one half, and will therefore justify their present allowances it is conceived in the opinion of every man of reflection, who will examine into the case. At the time of fixing their compensation, the United States were divided into three circuits, and two of the six Judges assigned to ride each circuit, twice a year; and the Supreme Court, then directed to be held twice a year, at the seat of government. This was soon found impracticable, and to defy the physical powers of men of their age, and an imposition on men of their high standing and respectability. The United States were afterwards divided into six circuits, and one of the Judges of the Supreme Court was assigned to each circuit, to act with the Judge of the district, as a Circuit Court; and the Supreme Court reduced to one session per year at the seat of government.—And now by a bill on the table, it is contemplated to relieve the Judges of the Supreme Court, from the labor of circuit Judges, so as to enable them to perform the high duties of the Supreme Court, which they have been compelled to adjourn before half the important business of the nation was finished, in order to perform the less important duties of the Circuit Courts—which bill I hope and trust will soon become a law.

In 1789, the Attorney General, was allowed a salary of fifteen hundred dollars.—In 1792, four hundred dollars were added to his salary.—In 1797, five hundred dollars more were added to his salary.—In 1804, his salary was raised to three thousand dollars, and this day a bill from the Senate was received in this House, to furnish the Attorney General, with an office, fuel, and stationary.—In 1789, the Secretary of the Senate, and Clerk of the House of Representatives, had each fifteen hundred dollars, but they now each are allowed three thousand dollars; and yet after the increase of the compensation of all the officers of government, and of many, by adding to their compensation a sum equal to the whole compensation allowed by the bill to members of Congress; and after permitting our own compensation to remain at six dollars per day, more than a quarter of a century, we are charged by demagogues with raising our own compensations, and leaving the officers of government neglected—and the party printers from one end of the United States to the other, have been engaged in fanning the unhallowed flame, to

destroy the fair fame of patriots, not say warm but, though grown grey in the public service; who had just before, by their exertions, brought an honorable war to a glorious conclusion, and thereby obtained for this nation imperishable laurels. Sir, it will be recollected, that twice during the war, a proposition was made, to increase our compensation; which was twice rejected, and I perfectly recollect myself remarking, "that while our citizens were engaged in the tented field, in the defence of our common country, we ought to be content to fulfil our less arduous legislative functions, for the compensation then allowed, but as soon as peace was established, I should most cordially concur in its increase." Sir, I last session expressed my preference of raising the compensation, by an increase of the per diem, though I am satisfied, there do not exist any solid objections to the system, modified as it was by the bill.

Mr. Jefferson, that distinguished statesman, in his Notes on Virginia, advised their convention, to adopt such a system, for their judiciary and council; and I satisfied my constituents, that as to the judiciary, it would improve our judicial mode of a compensation, if it was not a preferable mode of paying the members of Congress. They admitted, that a member of Congress ought to have as much as a Judge per day, at least, as the Judge's duties were more at home, whereby they could better attend to their domestic concerns, and were not subject to half the expenses of members of Congress. I stated to them the vast number of cases of claims against the U. S. which could not be sued, which Congress had judicially to decide on, and the vast amount of these claims, exceeding in value all the controverted cases before all the Judges of Maryland; and I presented to them the last report made to the legislature of Maryland shewing the number of days each of the judges of Maryland had attended that year, giving in no case less than 25 dollars per day; and I pointed their attention particularly to the compensation which one of their judges had received, amounting to seventy dollars per day—who, on the 4th of July last had the temerity to drink the toast, "the Fourteenth Congress—Charity begins at home"—which, I understood, he had a hand in making too; and I informed them, that the district judge of Maryland, who drank and aided in making the said toast, had, I had no doubt, never received less than 25 dollars per day, which I had endeavored in vain to ascertain, by a letter to the clerk of the district court. I shewed them also, by the same report, that a judge in Baltimore had received at the rate of \$140 per day for his attendance the same years. I remarked to the people that if a jurymen was absent one day he lost his per diem, and that, per adventure, the very judge who had been absent a week receiving his compensation as fully as if he had attended, had to perform that extraordinary task of finding that jurymen for his day's absence. I remarked, that I represented thirty-five thousand people, who, if they were taxed, directly, to pay my compensation would not be compelled to pay four cents and a half per head—a sum not equal to the price of half a gill of whiskey—and that I never could believe that such a petty sum could ever induce one man to discard me, who had never been charged with a bad vote since I have been honored with a seat in Congress; and I well know how they appreciated my late conduct in opposing the specie payment bill, which had saved this nation from the most intolerable oppression, if not from a civil war. And I can assure you, gentlemen, that my remarks, which had a double aspect, had the desired effect. Thus, sir, we trace the clamors against the compensation bill to the union of such toast-makers with the Knights of the Lmaphlack, who ascended, the whirlwind to direct the storm, and who, gratify their political partizans, each charged the opposite party with the passage of the bill, and thereby got us between two fires.—Such a scene was acted near the Delaware line. On one side it was charged on the republicans, and on the other on the federalists—and this is what is called the evidence of the popular opinion. Sir, the liberty of the press is all-important to the preservation of the liberties of the people but its licentiousness is baneful to their happiness and dangerous to their liberties. And while I execrate the wretch who can pollute his press by the venomous shafts of slander from behind his masked battery, aiming their deadly poison at the fair fame of the most distinguished patriots of America, I am bound in justice to admire those printers who adopt the maxim—*ne quid falsi, audeat dicere, ne quid, veri non*

not say warm but, though grown grey in the public service; who had just before, by their exertions, brought an honorable war to a glorious conclusion, and thereby obtained for this nation imperishable laurels. Sir, it will be recollected, that twice during the war, a proposition was made, to increase our compensation; which was twice rejected, and I perfectly recollect myself remarking, "that while our citizens were engaged in the tented field, in the defence of our common country, we ought to be content to fulfil our less arduous legislative functions, for the compensation then allowed, but as soon as peace was established, I should most cordially concur in its increase." Sir, I last session expressed my preference of raising the compensation, by an increase of the per diem, though I am satisfied, there do not exist any solid objections to the system, modified as it was by the bill.

Mr. Jefferson, that distinguished statesman, in his Notes on Virginia, advised their convention, to adopt such a system, for their judiciary and council; and I satisfied my constituents, that as to the judiciary, it would improve our judicial mode of a compensation, if it was not a preferable mode of paying the members of Congress. They admitted, that a member of Congress ought to have as much as a Judge per day, at least, as the Judge's duties were more at home, whereby they could better attend to their domestic concerns, and were not subject to half the expenses of members of Congress. I stated to them the vast number of cases of claims against the U. S. which could not be sued, which Congress had judicially to decide on, and the vast amount of these claims, exceeding in value all the controverted cases before all the Judges of Maryland; and I presented to them the last report made to the legislature of Maryland shewing the number of days each of the judges of Maryland had attended that year, giving in no case less than 25 dollars per day; and I pointed their attention particularly to the compensation which one of their judges had received, amounting to seventy dollars per day—who, on the 4th of July last had the temerity to drink the toast, "the Fourteenth Congress—Charity begins at home"—which, I understood, he had a hand in making too; and I informed them, that the district judge of Maryland, who drank and aided in making the said toast, had, I had no doubt, never received less than 25 dollars per day, which I had endeavored in vain to ascertain, by a letter to the clerk of the district court. I shewed them also, by the same report, that a judge in Baltimore had received at the rate of \$140 per day for his attendance the same years. I remarked to the people that if a jurymen was absent one day he lost his per diem, and that, per adventure, the very judge who had been absent a week receiving his compensation as fully as if he had attended, had to perform that extraordinary task of finding that jurymen for his day's absence. I remarked, that I represented thirty-five thousand people, who, if they were taxed, directly, to pay my compensation would not be compelled to pay four cents and a half per head—a sum not equal to the price of half a gill of whiskey—and that I never could believe that such a petty sum could ever induce one man to discard me, who had never been charged with a bad vote since I have been honored with a seat in Congress; and I well know how they appreciated my late conduct in opposing the specie payment bill, which had saved this nation from the most intolerable oppression, if not from a civil war. And I can assure you, gentlemen, that my remarks, which had a double aspect, had the desired effect. Thus, sir, we trace the clamors against the compensation bill to the union of such toast-makers with the Knights of the Lmaphlack, who ascended, the whirlwind to direct the storm, and who, gratify their political partizans, each charged the opposite party with the passage of the bill, and thereby got us between two fires.—Such a scene was acted near the Delaware line. On one side it was charged on the republicans, and on the other on the federalists—and this is what is called the evidence of the popular opinion. Sir, the liberty of the press is all-important to the preservation of the liberties of the people but its licentiousness is baneful to their happiness and dangerous to their liberties. And while I execrate the wretch who can pollute his press by the venomous shafts of slander from behind his masked battery, aiming their deadly poison at the fair fame of the most distinguished patriots of America, I am bound in justice to admire those printers who adopt the maxim—*ne quid falsi, audeat dicere, ne quid, veri non*

by some purport, by members so nobly paid, what might not be the case in corrupt times, with a corrupt President when the corrupt on of one more than one third of the Senate, if the House of Representatives should be found incorruptible, would defeat all the salutary provisions of the constitution, and endanger the liberties of the people. But, sir, it is worthy our consideration, what may not be legislatively effected, when we see the President of this widely extended empire possessed of a greater patronage than any potentate in Europe, and when we cast our eyes across the Atlantic, and see a nation whose government was once the boasted palladium of English liberties, and which was as well calculated as a kingly government could be to secure them, if executed agreeably to the letter and spirit of the instrument, but by borough elections, and the patronage of the crown, that constitution has been declared, by Englishmen themselves, to have lost all its value in the preservation of their liberties. There, sir, we see the minister, always enabled to lead a majority by the power of the crown to appoint the members of Parliament, (who receive no compensation as members) to office to be held during the pleasure of the crown, and who are thereby as easily led by the minister, as a herdman would lead his pig with a basket of corn. And here although a member of Congress cannot hold an office while he is a member, his friend, by his influence, might, and even to the members own benefit; or he himself might be appointed to office, and, on resigning his seat, might hold the same. This bill, sir, securing the small patronage of fifteen hundred dollars per year, and with it the devotion of the Representative to the people, is now proposed to be repealed, as being obnoxious to the people, and we are told by an honorable gentleman from Pennsylvania, that the people from the mountains of that state have instructed him I am satisfied of at ; but I have no doubt their instructions have been predicated upon the misrepresentation of the meaning of the law, from the false clamors in circulation by the typographical gentry, who have made them believe, that the fifteen hundred dollars was to be paid, even if the members never attended a single day, and I much doubt whether they ever saw the law, or whether if they had, they could understand it, unless it was translated into Dutch. As to my own district, I am satisfied they wish their representative to receive the full value of the six dollars, at the time it was originally fixed. My successor approved of such an increase, and his federal competitor was the only man I ever heard publicly declare, in this district, that six dollars was enough, but his declaration had not there its intended effect. Sir, I am so well satisfied that the people do not wish to pay their representatives less than was fixed by the Congress of 1789, that they never were dissatisfied with that sum, and that they are too just to hold their representatives to a nominal sum, in discharge of a real one, that all that is necessary to their giving a just judgment, is to be perfectly in possession of the evidence, of which this discussion will possess them, and I am satisfied that any opinion the people may be presumed to have given, has been produced by false clamor, and misrepresentation. I therefore propose an appeal from the opinion of the sovereign people, irritated and misinformed and in good temper. We have heard of the appeal from King Phillip a sleep to King Phillip awake, and therefore we have a sovereign precedent for it. Sir, I am satisfied of the issue of this appeal, and that it would be a libel upon the people, to charge them with a disposition to pay their members of Congress less than the real value of the compensation, at the time it was fixed. And I would ask my honorable colleague from Baltimore, whom I understand stands quasi instructed to repeal the law, whether every necessary of life, compared with the like articles in 1789, do not bear two or three prices, and whether he would not regard it as a libel on his constituents, if they were charged with compelling their neighbors to take for any article they had for sale the same nominal price it bore in 1789. And I call on my highly respected friend from Virginia (Mr. Barbour) to say if he was called on to decide such a question, between two neighbors, whether he could without a violation of his honor and his conscience decide that six dollars now should be received for an article worth six dollars in 1789, which would now command two or three times that sum, and whether he will deny to his competitors, on this floor, that measure of justice, he would blush to deny to a neighbor? I intreat honorable gentlemen to dis-