

H. OF R.]

*Impeachment of William Blount.*

[JULY, 1797.]

other charge of improper conduct towards my country, has enabled me to hear with fortitude everything that has been said, and would, if it were necessary, enable me to vote in the case of my brother, now before the House, in the same manner that I should think it right to vote in the case of any other man under similar circumstances. I am, however, aware that any vote I could give on this question might be considered as proceeding, on the one hand from partiality, or on the other from fear or some other unworthy motive. I must, therefore, being too much affected to rely on my power of utterance to express this in my place, request you to ask the favor of the House to excuse me from giving any vote upon this question.

THOMAS BLOUNT.

~~Mr. Blount was accordingly excused.~~

The House then went into a Committee of the Whole on the resolution yesterday reported, proposing an impeachment of WILLIAM BLOUNT, when it was agreed to without debate or division. The House then took up the resolution and also agreed to it in the same way.

Mr. SITGREAVES moved,

"That a member go to the Senate, and, at the bar of that House, impeach William Blount, in the name of this House and of all the people of the United States; and to inform them that they will, in due time, exhibit articles of impeachment against him, and make good the same."

Mr. GALLATIN said he was not well acquainted with the business, but he did not think it would be right to go on and impeach at once, before they saw what articles of impeachment were to be preferred. He thought it would be best first to appoint a committee to prepare the articles of impeachment and present them to the Senate, at the same time that they sent them their determination to impeach.

Mr. SITGREAVES said that the mode which he proposed was the same which was practised in the case of Mr. Hastings. Mr. Burke went up to the House of Lords and impeached him in words similar to those now proposed to be used. Some time afterwards, the articles of impeachment having been drawn, Mr. Burke again went up to the House of Lords and exhibited them. Mr. S. spoke also of a work lately published, in continuation of Judge Blackstone's Commentaries, which had a chapter on Parliamentary impeachment, and pointed out this as the proper mode of procedure. He had also looked into the proceedings on the trial of the Earl of Macclesfield, and found the same course was taken. It was true that in the case of a public officer of the State of Pennsylvania, which perhaps his colleague might have in his eye, the articles of impeachment were exhibited at the same time that the impeachment was made.

Mr. S. thought, however, that there was a good reason for not doing more at this time. If a committee were to be appointed to prepare the specific charges against Mr. BLOUNT, it would create considerable delay, and it would be proper that immediate measures should be taken, in order to secure the person of Mr. BLOUNT. Besides, at present, the only evidence of this mysterious business was the letter of Mr. BLOUNT. Measures were ta-

ken to procure further evidence, but it could not be got till some time hence. When this was got it might considerably develop the plot. At present, everything was conjecture. In every point of view, therefore, he thought it would be best to observe the usual mode of proceeding in similar cases.

Mr. GALLATIN said, if his memory was right, all the specific charges brought against Warren Hastings, were first agreed to by the House of Commons, before impeachment was made.

There was one thing, however, fell from his colleague, which would seem to make the mode proposed desirable. Mr. G. said he had considered the question which had been agreed to as a mere question of form, and that they should have gone on to exhibit articles of impeachment; but it appeared, from what had fallen from his colleague, that the articles of impeachment were not intended to be exhibited till next session. If this were the case, he thought it was perfectly right in wishing to present the impeachment in general terms. Till now he thought it had been the intention to have gone further.

Mr. HARPER believed it would not be proper for the House to stop in the present stage of their proceeding. He thought the proper mode of doing the business was that recommended by Mr. SITGREAVES. Having come to a resolution to impeach, the Senate should be immediately informed thereof, as they then could take measures accordingly. It was not necessary at the same time to exhibit the particular charges. They might afterwards determine whether they would exhibit the specific articles of charge during this session or at the next. He thought the charges might now be made, and if any additional facts appeared before the next session, which might make additional charges necessary, they might then be made.

Mr. SITGREAVES believed his colleague might be right with respect to what took place on the trial of Mr. Hastings. He had not the particulars of the Parliamentary proceedings on that business before him. He had those in the case of the Earl of Macclesfield, which were as he had stated. All that he contended for was, that having taken the resolution to impeach, it became necessary, of course, that the resolution should be communicated to the Senate. In no instance had the articles of impeachment attended the oral communication. After it had been made, the House could determine whether the specific articles should be drawn now or at the next session.

Mr. GORDON said there might be different modes adopted in cases where the persons accused were not members of the Legislature. In the case of Lord Stafford, he recollected, that in half an hour after the vote passed resolving to impeach him, he was taken into execution.

The question was put and carried, without a division.

Mr. SITGREAVES proposed also the following:

"That the said member do demand that the said William Blount be sequestered from his seat in the Senate, and that they take order for his appearance to