

situation. He thought, that before a Bill of such consequence should be hurried thro' the Committee, there should be time given to the Members of that House to consider, of, and deliberate upon, every clause of it; but he intimated that it was impossible for the Members to have considered, it was unlikely that they had even read the clauses of a Bill of such dimensions as to take up 125 folio pages; he hoped, therefore, that there would be some further time given, in which Members might be prepared to make their objections, after having acquired every necessary information.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer was astonished that any thing should fall from the Hon. Gentleman which should impeach the principle of the Bill; a principle that was to rescue the revenue from the frauds which had been practised upon it by the smuggler. Any gentleman who had the credit and the prosperity of the country at heart, could not consistently oppose the general principle of a Bill whose tendency was so salutary. With respect to precipitating the Bill through the House, he denied the charge entirely. He only wanted to bring the proceedings upon it as soon as possible to that stage of maturity, when Members might be prepared with all the objections, which, upon the subsequent proceeding, they would be entitled to urge. He said, that the Excise Laws had been very important engines for the prosperity of the State, as they preserved the revenue more effectually than any other system could do, from the depredations which in most cases it was subject to. The persons who were principally concerned in the operation of the Bill before the Committee had not been taken by surprise; they had been for a long time, for many weeks, in possession of the clauses of it; they therefore were, or should be, ready to state their objections to, and to discover the imperfections of those clauses; and Members, if they chose, by attending at the time when these objections were thus stated, might have an opportunity of deriving much information in a Parliamentary way, upon which they might shape their opposition to the Bill, or which might satisfy them of the propriety of it.

The question of commitment was then put and agreed to; and the next motion from the Chancellor of the Exchequer was, that it be committed to-morrow.

Mr. Alderman Newnham deprecated the precipitancy of this procedure, and moved, by way of amendment to the motion, that, for the word *to-morrow*, there be substituted *Monday*.

Mr. Alderman Watfon seconded the amendment.

Mr. Sheridan thought it incumbent on the Right Hon. Gentlemen to acquiesce in the amendment; and if he should not, it would seem as if he wished to deprive Members of an opportunity of being masters of the Bill, from a consciousness that it would not bear the test of a scrutiny.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer expressed his hope, that, whatever conclusions the Hon. Gentleman might be disposed to draw, concerning his conduct upon this occasion, the rest of the world would do him more justice, and proceed upon fairer grounds. The Bill was of so much importance to the revenue of this country, that he could not, in conscience, suffer any delay to interpose in the completion of a remedy so much wanted.

Mr. Rolle said, he had reason to believe that the Bill was pretty well known in the country, because he had received information that the receivers had signified to the smugglers that they could not take any more of their tobacco.

A division now ensued on the amendment,

Ayes — 20

Noes — 77

Majority — 57

for committing the Bill to-morrow.

The House then went into a Committee on the Fisheries.

Adjourned.

*Thursday, June 25.*

The Order of the Day being read for committing the Tontine Bill,

The Chancellor of the Exchequer stated, that in consequence of a misunderstanding between him and the gentlemen who had contracted for the Tontine, it was necessary that an instruction be given to the Committee on that Bill. He said that it had been the usual practice in former loans, to allow the interest for the whole sum subscribed, from the date of the first instalment. It was, however, his idea at the time when this loan was agreed upon, that the interest should commence only from the date of the respective instalments, and only for the sum actually paid; but as he found that the Contractors had bargained upon the faith and upon the practice of former loans, he thought the public ought to give it up; and therefore he moved, that it be an instruction to the Committee on the said Bill, to provide for the interest of the sum of one million borrowed by Tontine, commencing from the 5th of July 1789, which he added, would make a difference of about one per cent. upon the whole sum.