

ty is at the mercy of the executive, and what is worse at the mercy of any instrument he may authorise to call out the military under the pretence of executing the embargo laws. I see in this bill several palpable and glaring violations of the constitution of the U. States which I am sworn to support, I consider it as laying the whole country under military law, as nothing less than a declaration of war on the part of the government against our own citizens. And has it come to this, sir? For the purpose of executing the embargo, are we ready to sacrifice, or at least to hazard every thing dear and valuable? Let me beg gentlemen once more to read the eleventh section of this bill, it enacts "that it shall be lawful for the President of the United States, or such other person as he shall have empowered for that purpose, to employ such part of the land or naval forces, or militia of the United States, or of the territories thereof, as may be judged necessary, in conformity with the provisions of this and other acts respecting the embargo, for the purpose of preventing the illegal departure of any ship or vessel, or of detaining, taking possession of, and keeping in custody, any ship or vessel, or of taking into custody and guarding any specie or articles of domestic growth, produce or manufacture; and also for the purpose of preventing and suppressing any armed or riotous assemblage of persons resisting the custom-house officers in the exercise of their duties, or in any manner opposing the execution of the laws laying an embargo, or otherwise violating or assisting and abetting violations of the same."

I am aware, sir, that it may be said we have in our statute books a precedent for this section, and that the fifth section, I think, (for I have no book before me) of a law further to preserve peace within the ports and harbors of the United States, may be resorted to, in justification of it. But it is a precedent only in verbage; the cases are essentially different... the authority there given to the President was for the purpose of preserving peace within our own waters, and could be exercised only against an offending vessel of war of a foreign nation. Is that the present case? Is it like it? No, sir... By this section you delegate to the President, and to his irresponsible agents, uncontrolled authority over all the naval and military forces of the United States now in service and about to be raised; not, give me leave to say, for the purpose of preserving peace...not to be exercised against a foreign enemy, but to be turned against the bosoms of your own citizens. Will freemen submit to this? Let me admit that the act will not be executed in this way; that even this inordinate and dangerous power may be safely confided to our present executive; yet I shudder at the precedent. It is in these days of political calms, and of blind confidence in a favorite, that we are in danger of establishing precedents that in more stormy times may be resorted to, by ambitious and desperate men, to subvert the constitution and liberties of our country. And I contend, sir, that whenever your executive chair shall be filled by a bold and ambitious man; supported by a blind and dominant party in the two houses of congress, and such a man shall wish to play the tyrant, if he first procures a sufficient army to be provided under any pretences,