

The GrEco Project

Grenville's Economics

Lord William Wyndham Grenville

Order in Council
(1812)

Source: Hansard, First series, vol. XXIII, cc. 9-11

ORDER IN COUNCIL

HL Deb 5 May 1812 vol 23 cc9-11

Lord Grenville concurred with his noble friend near him (lord Auckland) that an immediate repeal of the Orders would be preferable to an enquiry. That this would be the ultimate result he had no doubt; but every hour's delay was productive of infinite distress. This was no new opinion with him, nor adopted to pay court to any body of men. When he considered the national misery which had resulted from these Orders in Council, it was with infinite satisfaction he reflected that he had nothing to reproach himself with, as no efforts had been wanting on his part, to point out the mischievous tendency of such policy. Was it for those who had constantly refused inquiry, or when goaded into it four years ago, had refused to repeal the Orders, though the evidence was clearly against them, to impute to their opponents that they felt sore going into this inquiry? Those, too, who had even in this session negatived a motion for inquiry! This they now justified on the ground that there were no petitions at that period before parliament. He had on that occasion desired that a Petition to the executive, from the Staffordshire Potters, should be laid on the table; which was refused, because it had been presented to the executive. Without at present dwelling upon the principle of this [10] argument, he had only to remark with what propriety those who so refused a Petition rested on the fact that there were then no Petitions on the table against these Orders in Council: his noble friend behind him too (earl Fitzwilliam), having stated that a Petition from the manufacturers of Yorkshire was then in preparation. With regard to the commercial policy of the late government, he felt reluctant in again troubling their lordships upon the gross misrepresentation, with the repeated refutations of which they must now be completely wearied. But on this great day, when they were compelled to listen to the voice which they had before refused to hear-when they were forced to look at the evils which they formerly re fused to regard-when they were called upon for the remedy which they had before refused to apply; he could not but again deny having had any share in this ruinous system. During the whole time that he had served his Majesty, it

had uniformly been his policy to cultivate a good understanding between this country and America, and there were few acts of his life upon which he looked back with greater satisfaction than that of having signed the first commercial treaty with America. The prejudices and difficulties which he and the excellent man, Mr. Jay, with whom he negotiated that treaty, had to encounter, few could conceive. In the negotiation respecting the late treaty, he had the able co-operation of his two noble friends near him (Holland and Auckland,) and never had a negotiation been conducted with a more sincere desire, he believed on both sides, to come to a good understanding. Could there be a more solemn refutation of the absolute calumny about the Order of January, 1807, than that the treaty was signed after the issuing of that Order? It had nothing in common with the orders of his Majesty's pre had produced a temper in America which | information on a topic of great importance, probably could not be satisfied without a repeal of this Order: and he had no hesi- tation in saying, that this, as well as the others, ought to be repealed, if the friend- ship of America could be obtained by this means, and at no less a sacrifice. Our es- sential maritime rights he would not give up, even for American friendship, but had it not been for the ruinous policy adopted by the present administration, he was con- fident that an amicable arrangement might have been formed in perfect consis- tency with the rights and interests of both nations. sent servants but the name. Their argument was this: "If our Orders in Council are mischievous, you are involved; for you, too, issued an Order in Council." It afforded them a gratification to say, your Order is put in the front of the battle. Aye, but by whom had it been put there? By the ministers, who in their intercourse with foreign states introduced their paltry, petty, party feelings. They had put this forward that they might have a miserable little triumph over their political opponents: and they had so far succeeded, for they [11] had produced a temper in America which probably could not be satisfied without a repeal of this Order: and he had no hesitation in saying, that this, as well as the others, ought to be repealed, if the friendship of America could be obtained by this means, and at no less a sacrifice. Our essential maritime rights he would not give up, even for American friendship, but had it not been for the ruinous policy adopted by the present administration, he was

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