No. 22.

DECEMBER 22, 1808.

Read the first and second time, and committed to a committee of the whole House, on Monday next.

A Bill,

To deprive, in certain cases, vessels of their American character, and to prevent, under certain disabilities, any citizen of the United States taking a license from any foreign power to navigate the ocean, or to trade with any other foreign and independent power.

Sec. 1. *BE it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled,* That every ship or vessel, which sailed for a foreign port or place on or before the day of 180 shall, in case such ship or vessel shall not return to some port or place under the jurisdiction of the United States on or before the day of one thousand eight hundred and nine, forfeit and lose all the benefits and privileges appertaining to a ship or vessel of the United States; and the register or sea letter, together with all and every other paper or muniment belonging to such ship or vessel, shall become utterly null and void: *Provided,* That nothing herein contained shall be construed to deprive any

13 ship or vessel of her American character, although the time limit-
14 ed for her return shall have expired, if her detention abroad has
15 been occasioned by capture, or the existence of an embargo: and
16 provided also, That such ship or vessel, reasonable time being al-
17 lowed therefor, shall return to some port or place under the juris-
18 diction of the United States, on her releasement from capture, or
19 the detention of an embargo,

1 Sec. 2. *And be it further enacted*, That if any person, being a
2 citizen of the United States of America, shall solicit, take, accept,
3 or use, or suffer any person, acting by or under his or her authori-
4 ty, to solicit, take, accept or use a license or permission, procured
5 from any foreign power whatsoever, for his or her vessel to pass to
6 or trade with any other foreign and independent power, such per-
7 son shall be considered as having committed a high offence; for
8 the commission of which he or she shall forfeit the right and pri-
9 vilege of owning or navigating ever afterwards any vessel pursu-
10 ant to the laws of the United States.

11 This section shall commence and be in operation from and af-
12 ter the day of one thousand eight hun-
13 dred and nine.