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DEBATE IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

SPEECH OF Mr. ROBERTSON, (OF VIRGINIA.)
On the Navy Appropriation Bill.

TUESDAY, APRIL 5.

Mr. ROBERTSON said he had desired to address the committee for the purpose of presenting his views, not so much in reference to the particular amendment now under consideration, as upon other more important and interesting topics introduced into the debate. We were now in Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union, and he should avail himself of the latitude allowed to others of reviewing, with them, the general policy of the Administration. He would endeavor to accompany his colleagues (Mr. Calhoun) in the late course he had pursued. He had the party in power had adhered to those fundamental principles which he, as well as his colleague, professed to venerate. He should compare the promises of that party with their performances, and contrast their acts with their professions.

Before entering on this examination, he would take occasion to say he would vote for liberal appropriations for every constitutional purpose for which he would do so on the ground of just economy. But he would sanction no expenditure beyond what the public interest and necessity required, merely to get rid of our superfluous treasure. He was desirous, especially, of placing the Navy on such a footing as would enable it fully to protect our commerce, and to add to the glory it had won for the country. The best method of attaining this object he must determine for himself. He would content himself with the practical information. But there were obvious limits to expenditures even for that object. Strong objections existed to a large and immediate increase of the Navy, which, at an early period after the commencement of the present Administration, had been fully presented by the President to Congress. In the annual message of December, 1829, the opinion was expressed that "in time of peace we have need of no more ships of war than are requisite for the protection of commerce; and that those not wanted for that purpose would, under the best precautions, soon become useless, and that we should discontinue building ships of the first and second class, and look rather to the collection of ample armaments."

Mr. R. said he was opposed to lavish appropriations, not for the Navy only, but to those which seemed to be contemplated for every object under the public service. They are not suited to the nature of our institutions, and are at war with the principles upon which the present party came into power. These principles were ably asserted in a report made to this House in 1828, by Mr. Hamilton, and one made to the Senate in 1826, (Mr. Benton's,) and had been reiterated again and again by the present Chief Magistrate. [Mr. C. read a brief and recommending rigid economy, and condemning all unnecessary expenditures.] Even in his last message, looking to the peculiar condition of the country, he had not seemingly contemplated an expenditure, unless war should actually take place, of more than about \$24,000,000. But now (said Mr. R.) all apprehensions of a war with France have vanished; with the cessation of the disturbances on our Indian border we are in the enjoyment of profound peace, the national debt is discharged; and what do we behold? An evident anxiety to get rid of the surplus revenue by unusual and wasteful appropriations. The report of the Secretary of the Treasury presents estimates for upwards of twenty-three millions and a half; to which add the unexpended appropriations of the last year, and we have an aggregate amount of nearly seventy millions. Do not sit still and see our national debt recede, but let us understand that any considerable reduction, notwithstanding the change in our foreign relations, is contemplated below the Treasury estimates; and the party who denounced the extravagant expenditures of the preceding Administration, averaging some ten or twelve millions per annum, will now gladly ask for the annihilation of that amount. Do not let us establish a precedent of thirty millions! Of this enormous sum, only about three millions are necessary for the civil list, foreign intercourse, and miscellaneous expenses. A very large proportion of the residue, is to be applied in procuring materials and labor for public works. May we not apprehend serious inconvenience, from the great demand which such appropriations will occasion for labor? It is probably the case in contemplation, already, of the United States disposable labor of the country, the increased demand will produce no other effect than merely to augment the wages of labor, without adding to the supply. An appropriation of twenty millions will in that case command little more labor than ten; or, if more labor shall be procured, it must probably be withdrawn injuriously from agriculture or the mechanic arts. Many and extensive works are now in progress and in contemplation of some of them carried on by individuals, and companies, with their own resources; some by States, receiving no aid from the General Government. [Mr. R. mentioned the improvement in his own State from the city of Richmond to the mouth of the Kanawha, the Ohio and Baltimore Railroad; the proposed connections between Cincinnati and Charleston, and between Nashville and New Orleans.] The United States coming into competition, and authorizing its agents to procure the necessary labor without regard to price, will necessarily withdraw it from those who can less conveniently afford to give excessive wages. The vast additional sums, therefore, proposed to be expended in the public works of the United States cannot fail considerably to increase the expense, and retard the completion of those carried on by the States and individuals. This will not be thought a needless apprehension, when it is recollected that Col. Grant has assigned as a reason for not using about \$100,000, appropriated for a fort on East river, New York, the impossibility of obtaining the requisite force to carry on the work, though materials and facilities of every kind had been procured.

After appropriating all that the public necessities require, or that can be sensibly and advantageously expended, there still remains a large surplus; and it becomes us at once to devise some mode for judiciously disposing of it. A variety of schemes have been suggested. Shall we permit it to be idle? waste it in unnecessary expenditures? invest it in stocks or loans? or distribute it among the States? These seem to be the only alternatives. To permit it to remain unused, besides the injury resulting from keeping so large a capital unemployed, we may reasonably anticipate heavy losses. To leave it in a deposit, for the banks to trade upon, must necessarily be attended with hazard. They will not keep it idle, and may find it very inconvenient to replace it when demanded. In proof of this, Mr. R. adverted to the condition of the public deposits in the Bank of Michigan. In that bank, having a capital of \$150,000, we have, it seems, nearly \$30,000 on deposit, and we are acquainted with the information of members present, that this deposit, or considerable portions of it, have been remitted to New York, and lent out at an interest of 4 per cent. Independently of the risk, there is great injustice in giving the advantage of the public deposits to favored States or favored banks, in the manner now practised. Supposing an amount of 10 or 12 millions to have been remitted to New York, as will probably be the case, unless the funds be distributed, that State may realize a profit of five or six hundred thousand dollars by its use, while other States derive no advantage, though they shall have contributed their full proportion to raise it. No one, I presume, expects that this vast sum can be hoarded up in specie. If such an attempt were made, the surplus over and above what is needed for the public service, would very soon absorb the whole metallic currency of the United States.

A want of the impolicy of keeping the public treasure unemployed, much ingenuity has been displayed in devising plans for consuming it. In addition to the enormous estimates from the Treasury Department, we have propositions to erect court-houses, custom-houses, and other buildings for the use of the United States; and to enter into contracts with railroad companies, for the privilege of transporting the mail. These schemes are all of them unobjectionable, as far as means desirable that the General Government should obtain more permanent footing upon the soil of the States, or become proprietors of expensive buildings, which must have superintendents and guards to preserve them, and consequently add to that patronage already so much deprecated. Nor should we desire to see the General Govern-

ment extensively engaged in contracts with chartered companies, and mingling with the private concerns of the States. It is scarcely to be credited that serious difficulties will be thrown in the way of the mails, and it would be strange, indeed, if this great modern improvement should, in the particular in which it is designed to increase the facility or expense of transportation.

Another expedient proposed is, the investment of the surplus in loans or stocks. This does not overcome the difficulty, but only postpones it. I trust the Treasury of the United States is not to be engaged in stock-jobbing, or converted into a great loan office. But, suppose this recommendation applied, how can the public money, be more judiciously or more safely invested than in loans to the States? If Congress may constitutionally lend, the States, none can doubt, can constitutionally borrow. There is an evident propriety, too, if such investments should be made, in giving them this direction. If lent to corporations or individuals, and lost, the States must make good the deficiency whenever it shall be wanted. These corporations or individuals would, in fact, be investing on their own account, at the public risk; but if employed by the States, though required to replace it, they would realize the benefit resulting from its employment. It may happen, however, that the ordinary revenue, for yearsto come, will exceed the necessary expenses of Government; and in that case, there will be no occasion to require the amount lent to be returned. In this case, it is nearly equal to the money to be returned to the Treasury, and to be distributed among the States, against which my colleague has so warmly protested.

But is there, Mr. Chairman, any sound objection to a direct distribution of the surplus revenue among the States? Coming from a State jealous of its rights, and distinguished for its strict construction of the Federal Constitution, I have gone into the examination of this measure with a scrupulous and careful attention. The result of that examination is a thorough conviction that, so far at least as regards the proceeds of the lands ceded by the States, it is not only not prohibited, but is expressly enjoined by the Constitution, and, under present circumstances, is the most expedient disposition that can be made. In support of this proposition, I might perhaps content myself with referring to an authority of most commanding influence in this House. At an early period after the commencement of the present Administration, Mr. C. spoke in the House of Representatives, in his own language, I fear, sir, in a short time to become familiar—the present Chief Magistrate, contemplating the probable accumulation of money in the Treasury, deliberately recommended to Congress a plan for disposing of it. After alluding to "the difficulties which had attended appropriations for internal improvement, and those which experience tells us will certainly arise whenever power over such subjects may be exercised by the General Government," he says, (Message of December, 1829.) "To avoid these evils, it appears to me that the most safe, just, and federal disposition which could be made of the surplus revenue 'would be its appropriation among the several States according to their ratio of representation; and should this measure not be found warranted by the constitution, that I should earnestly and anxiously recommend its adoption, and should authorizing it." The distribution, thus recommended, it will be observed, embraced the whole surplus revenue, and not that merely arising from sales of public lands. The passage just read was incorporated, and the principle reasserted, in the message of May, 1830, justifying his veto on the Maysville road bill. Again: In his annual message of December, 1830, he recurs to the plan he had just recommended, and the objections urged against it. The objections enumerated are—

1. An objection to the ratio of distribution.
 2. An apprehension that such a regulation would produce inequitable and oppressive taxation to raise funds for distribution.
 3. That it would lead to the construction of works of a local nature.
 4. That it would create a creditable and injurious dependence on the part of the State Governments upon the Federal power.

This enumeration, comprising all the objections, "so far as they had come to his knowledge," embraces none on the score of unconstitutionality, nor is any difficulty of that nature, or of other which he has suggested, likely to be raised by my colleague as a vile abomination. Sir, he could not be aware, in aiming his blow, on whose head it was destined to fall. But it may be supposed the President has changed his opinions; and hence it is that my colleague exclaims, with a holy horror, "Touch not, taste not, handle not!" How far his opinions have undergone a change, I cannot say, but I do not think it expedient to speculate on the case Congress should now adopt the measure, or himself so deliberately and repeatedly recommended. I perceive nothing in the message returning Mr. CLAY's land bill, to warrant the belief that he will withhold his concurrence from a bill authorizing the surplus funds arising from the sales of lands to be distributed among the States. Before noticing particularly the objections urged in that message, and the objection to the distribution of the surplus funds among the States, he has very briefly, to present to the committee the reasons which satisfy my mind that such a distribution is strictly constitutional.

I shall not detain the committee by a minute history of the causes that led to the acquisition of the public lands. It is well known that the immense territory stretching from the Ohio to the Texas, comprising the territories of the United States of Ohio, Illinois, and Indiana, and the territories of Michigan and Wisconsin, is held by the United States under a grant from the State of Virginia, made in 1784. The deed of cession, after making various reservations, explicitly declares "that all the lands within the territories so ceded to the United States, and not reserved for, or appropriated to, any of the before-mentioned purposes, or disposed of by the officers and soldiers of the Army of the American Army, shall be considered as a common fund for the use and benefit of such of the United States as have become, or shall become, members of the confederation, or federal alliance of the said States, Virginia inclusive, according to their usual respective proportions of the general charge and expenditure, and shall be faithfully and bona fide disposed of for that purpose, and for no other use or purpose whatsoever."

In most or all of the grants from other States there are similar provisions. The terms thus declared were accepted by the Confederacy. When the present Government was formed, the United States again acknowledged their obligatory force. The sixth article of the Constitution declares that "All debts contracted, and engagements entered into, before the adoption of this Constitution, shall be as valid against the United States, under this Constitution, as under the stipulations of the grant. This, indeed, is the view taken by the President in the message rejecting the Land bill. In objecting to the provision which proposed to give 12 1/2 per cent. out of the net proceeds to the new States, he says, "What more need be said to demonstrate its objectionable character, than that it is in direct and undisguised violation of the pledge given by Congress to the States, before a single cession was made, that if they consented to the condition upon which some of the States came into the Union; and that it sets at naught the terms of cession spread upon the face of every grant under which the title to that portion of the public lands is held by the Federal Government?" Again: alluding to the deeds of cession, he says: "The Constitution of the United States did not delegate to Congress the power for the purpose of dividing them, but to distribute that which nothing in it shall be construed to prejudice any claims of the United States, or of any particular State." These provisions of the Constitution leave no room to doubt the obligation upon Congress to respect the stipulations of the grant. This, indeed, is the view taken by the President in the message rejecting the Land bill. In objecting to the provision which proposed to give 12 1/2 per cent. out of the net proceeds to the new States, he says, "What more need be said to demonstrate its objectionable character, than that it is in direct and undisguised violation of the pledge given by Congress to the States, before a single cession was made, that if they consented to the condition upon which some of the States came into the Union; and that it sets at naught the terms of cession spread upon the face of every grant under which the title to that portion of the public lands is held by the Federal Government?" Again: alluding to the deeds of cession, he says: "The Constitution of the United States did not delegate to Congress the power for the purpose of dividing them, but to distribute that which nothing in it shall be construed to prejudice any claims of the United States, or of any particular State." These provisions of the Constitution leave no room to doubt the obligation upon Congress to respect the stipulations of the grant. This, indeed, is the view taken by the President in the message rejecting the Land bill.

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* Table referred to.

States, &c.	Jefferson. 1802 to 1809.	Madison. 1810 to 1817.	Monroe. 1818 to 1825.	J. Q. Adams. 1826 to 1829.	Jackson. 1830 to 1833.	Total in each State, Territory, &c.
Maine				\$47,176 27	\$108,177 74	\$155,354 01
New Hampshire				35,929 76		35,929 76
Massachusetts			\$37,019 23	170,322 61	148,307 10	357,539 93
Rhode Island				200 00	30 18	230 18
Connecticut				28,539 19	21,999 46	50,538 65
New York			4,156 79	170,025 11	272,089 86	446,271 76
New Jersey				100 00		100 00
Pennsylvania			14,420 19	28,243 49	12,200 00	54,863 69
Delaware				34,313 00	569,855 02	604,168 02
Virginia						
North Carolina				29,840 00	167,783 00	197,623 00
Georgia				7,514 68	10,400 00	17,914 68
Tennessee				200 00	27,000 00	27,200 00
Ohio		\$215,568 78	87,117 93	160,378 61	396,159 29	859,124 61
Louisiana						
Indiana			82,748 13	32,319 37	155,398 28	454,555 99
Mississippi			15,780 26	37,511 12	13,479 62	67,769 00
Illinois		1,208 51	6,791 49	500 00	72,876 00	81,376 00
Alabama			45,472 67	47,253 06	77,352 47	169,878 20
Michigan				6,425 00	40,118 00	46,543 00
Wisconsin				5,072 15	19,451 41	206,104 24
Arkansas			3,325 82	44,151 38	73,320 85	109,798 05
Florida			31,931 00	71,024 16	85,617 56	188,572 72
Columbia District						376,630 00
Totals		216,777 24	346,901 19	1,040,045 78	2,768,621 30	4,372,345 46
Annual average		27,097 16	42,962 65	260,011 44	692,155 30	
Cumberland Road	\$14,201 50			715,245 00		3,723,530 63
Chesapeake and Delaware Canal		659,048 30		1,054,961 00		450,000 00
Dismal Swamp Canal						

Mr. ROBERTSON resumed his remarks commenced yesterday.

Mr. R. said he had adverted yesterday to the intention of the House of Representatives to the public business, manifested in the failure of numerous important measures during the last session, many of which had been matured in the Senate, and especially in their neglect in regard to the Postmaster-General. It had been forcibly represented in the annual message of December, 1834. The developments of the investigating committee had demonstrated its necessity. Still (said Mr. R.) we have approached the close of another session, and nothing has been done to reform abuses unequivocally proved, or prevent their recurrence in future. So far from it, the chief clerk, to whom much of the business had been confided, had been retained in office, was permitted to retire, by a resignation, instead of being at once dismissed; and the Head of the Department actually promoted to one of the highest offices in the gift of the Executive. Sir, it is a bad precedent thus to reward official neglect. This officer has gone to his grave. I do not wish to war with the dead, or say any thing to wound the feelings of his surviving friends. I only wish to say that there is reason to believe that he was one "more sinned against than sinning." He was very probably the dupe of others. Indeed, the present incumbent tells us, as an apology for his failure, that "he was too good a man." It is a pity the public interest should suffer from such a cause; and fair to presume that, following out this idea, care has been taken to guard against a similar error, by selecting as his successor one who would be less likely to be so duped.

The minority of the committee appointed to examine into the management of the Post Office, desired to ascertain the reasons of the unexplained vacancies which were regulated by the Administration majority. They then limited their inquiries to specified cases. They called on the Postmaster General for information touching the removal of Stafford, the postmaster at Panama, Ohio. He sent them several letters, but he said that he desired to be put on file for the information of the House and the Public. But, on the motion of Mr. Beardsley, these letters were ordered to be returned to the Postmaster General, as containing "nothing which in the slightest degree impeaches the motives, or crimines any act, of the Postmaster General, or is in any respect material to any object of legislation, or of public interest or concern."

These summaries were then read to the committee, and Mr. C. says, Messrs. Whitley, Everett, and Wainwright. Yet we are informed that those letters proved that Stafford had been a friend of the Administration, and that an application was made for his removal, on the ground that he was not a real supporter of it; that his friends opposed his removal on the ground that he was, in fact, a supporter of the Administration; that his removal was assigned, not claimed by the Postmaster General to have taken place. Stafford was removed. Herron, of whose political faith, the report tells, there was no doubt, was appointed in his place. A member reminds me (said Mr. R.) of the sequel of the story. Herron, as might be expected of one who could seek or obtain office on such terms, considered the public money as his lawful spoils; and, in the brief space of twelve or eighteen months, he had accumulated a fortune of justice. I will not fondly consume the time of the committee in enumerating instances of similar persecution. I will only recall their recollection to the case of Mitchell, postmaster at Portland, Maine, and of Wyman, postmaster at Lowell, Massachusetts; both, it is said, removed to make room for partisans of the Administration at the instance of a republican committee, and a democratic committee. These summaries were then read to the committee, and those which are said to have occurred during the Spanish Revolution. Men were taken from their homes and shot; when the passing stranger inquired the cause, he was told, they were shot at the request of the People. Far worse; men here are hurled from office, they and their families turned adrift, perhaps for their breed, not at the request of the People, but of a democratic committee, and for the sake of their kindred. For difference of political opinion; not for opinions adverse to free institutions: not for differing about a principle, but about men. Sir, it is a vindictive policy; a grinding oppression. In my native State, some years past, the practice of duelling, notwithstanding the most rigorous penalties, prevailed to an extent which called for every effort to suppress it. It was thought occurred to legislators, of degrading all who were guilty of this crime, and of holding any office under the Commonwealth. The ardent youth, who had disregarded the threat of death, were yet unwilling to be stigmatized as a degraded caste, and deprived of the privilege of serving their country. The law produced an effect beyond what was anticipated by its warmest advocates. It was found that the practice of duelling, when it ceased within the limits of the Commonwealth, What should we think of a law making it an offence to speak freely of public men or measures, and excluding a citizen from office on that account? Yet, sir, under this republican Administration, those who will not bow down before it are subjected to this penalty—a penalty annexed in Virginia to a crime against the State.

Mr. R. said, practically, this was a franchise; a right denied to your statute book. The Government that does this is a practical tyranny. It is in vain that my colleague attempts to justify it by quoting Mr. Madison's authority in support of the power of removal. He ought to have recollected the reasons assigned by Mr. Madison for having no fears of the abuses which we now witness, and which no man can more justly or more boldly expose than my colleague to what Mr. Madison says: "It is contended," (says Mr. M.) "that the danger consists in this: that the President may remove from office a man whose merit requires that he should be continued in it. Let us consider what motive he can have for such an abuse of power, and what will be the check upon him. In the first place, he will himself be impeachable, and will be so as soon as any meritorious officer, and will himself be removed from his office. Again, he says: "I own it is an abuse of power which exceeds my imagination, and of which I can form no rational conception." No, sir, Mr. Madison is the last man who would vindicate the outrageous abuses practised by men calling themselves democratic republicans! He believed that that which has been done by the President and his Heads of Departments, and by the Executive, and by the Senate, and removal. But the Administration majority see nothing in it "in the slightest degree culpable, or even of any public interest or concern." He could not conceive, in the purity and simplicity of his heart, the possibility of that abuse which is now hourly practised, and shamelessly avowed and vindicated.

Among other subjects of great interest, touched upon by my colleague, was the removal of the public money from the removal of the deposits. I have no intention, Mr. Chairman, of entering at large upon the question of the legality of that measure, already so often and so ably discussed. It was condemned by my own State, on the ground that the President had transcended his authority. To say the least, he exercised a doubtful power, in violation of his own doctrine, without any necessity, and without any authority, in attempting the action of Congress soon about to be convened? Will it be said they would not have sanctioned the measure? Yes, this has been said by way of apology for his taking the law into his own hands. He has even been applauded for carrying this point by superseding the rightful authority of Congress; complimented for having achieved a victory as brilliant as that of New Orleans. The law organizing the Treasury Department required that the Treasurer should receive and keep the public moneys. Afterwards, they were directed to be deposited in the Bank of the United States, unless the Secretary of the Treasury should otherwise order. But this power was to be exercised by the Secretary, according to his own discretion, and was merely prohibitory. The former law was repealed, and such prohibition of the use of receipts, and keeping the public money again devolved upon the regular officer, the Treasurer, to whom it was originally assigned, and whose office has never been dispensed with. No power was ever given to the President to keep it, or transfer its custody to others. Such a power cannot be inferred from his implied authority to remove the Secretary of the Treasury. Sir, it would be as logical to say, and, in fact, he may remove the officers of the Post Office Department, that he has power to control them in all respects, and to require them to deliver your letters or mine into his hands, or those of his private secretary.

In his last message to Congress, the President tells us that the controversy with the Bank of the United States "has resulted in securing to some extent a dangerous concentration between a political power." Sir, I fear it has only cemented still more closely the bonds of that dangerous union. It has united a vast moneyed power to the political power of that department, in which the whole executive authority is wielded by one arm, and directed by one will. It has broken the connexion between the Government and a bank with thirty-five millions of capital, and formed one with upwards of forty banks, wielding nearly fifty millions of capital in public power. We have been long flattered with the promise of a hard money

currency. We were told, too, by the Secretary of the Treasury, in his report of the last session, that banks are by no means necessary to the fiscal operations of the Government. Little faith is due to the sincerity of these declarations. At least, no plan for effecting this object has yet ever emanated from the Secretary; on the contrary, various propositions at the last session to obtain his plan, and disperse with such agency—one of which I had myself the honor to submit—were all overruled by the Administration majority.

The condition of the public money since the removal of the deposits, it cannot be doubted, has given a vast accession to the power and influence of the Executive, and a corresponding curtailment of that of all the other officers and stockholders, is now deeply interested in the distribution and use of the public funds. They look for favors, and, to obtain them, must become supporters and partisans of the Administration. So important is the existing connexion between them and the Government, that some of them, it is said, have an accredited agent near the Treasury to represent their interests.

My colleague says, to deposit the public moneys in these banks; it was safer than to place them in the hands of individuals. But what occasioned this necessity? The President brought it upon himself by his own unlawful act. Sir, it is a startling position, that assumed by my colleague, that the President possesses unlimited authority, at his mere will, to transfer the whole public treasure to any place he may think or please to commit it to the hands of private individuals. That single remark is better calculated to show the enormity of the power he has assumed, than the most elaborate argument. No one distrusts the personal integrity of the President. But it is an unsound and a dangerous doctrine, which authorizes him or his successor to entrust the whole revenue of the country to the envoy extraordinary of a monarch, or to the directors of banks, or great for-profit societies, or to the Albany Regency.

Sir, it is manifest that there is impolicy and danger in the present system of managing the public treasure. The President seems conscious of this, or finds that he has taken upon himself a burdensome duty. As far back as suitable legislative provisions respecting the deposits in the State banks. But, urgent as the necessity appears, as yet no law has been adopted.

My colleague, Mr. Chairman, to notice another flagrant proof of the neglect of the public interests by the dominant party. I allude to the failure of the fortification bill of the last session. My colleague has, very properly, left that question to be settled by the parties concerned. I have but little to say upon it. It has been fully discussed. The loss of this bill has been made the subject of grave accusation, upon high authority, against the Senate, and incidentally against the Executive. It has been shown, that it had been met and repelled. It has been shown, to the satisfaction of every candid man, that the blame was with the ruling majority, and chiefly upon the chairman of our conference committee, (Mr. Cambreleng.) That gentleman was directed to report an agreement of the committee, but thought proper to remain silent, upon a gratuitous assumption that there was no quorum.

My colleague, Mr. Chairman, did not make a gratuitous assumption. The former Speaker would tell the gentleman there was no quorum. Mr. Robertson resumed. If the former Speaker were in his seat, he would say there was a quorum present when the gentleman returned, and long after. The gentleman had inferred there was no quorum, because only 113 members were present at the time of his return. Nothing is more common than a thing being done by a minority. It has been shown, to the satisfaction of every candid man, that the blame was with the ruling majority, and chiefly upon the chairman of our conference committee, (Mr. Cambreleng.) That gentleman was directed to report an agreement of the committee, but thought proper to remain silent, upon a gratuitous assumption that there was no quorum.

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We have heard much of the danger of standing military force; sir, a standing army of vent-edictors is far more dangerous to liberty. Force may be repelled by force; and the arm of the man who would be free, may prevail against the hand of mere mercantiles; but the press, subsidized by power, misleads the judgment, and corrupts the heart.

In further proof, Mr. Chairman, of our departure from sound republican doctrines, and of the increasing influence of the Executive, I beg leave to mention a practice which seems to me of dangerous tendency, worthy of our serious consideration. It has been found, that all the select and joint committees of the House of Representatives, members should be selected who are in habits of intimate intercourse with the President and Heads of Departments, or acceptable to them; if such a practice has prevailed, as it is said, or is now gaining ground, it is time to arrest it. The Executive has nothing to do with the organization of either House of Congress. Their functions are different; and, such an attempt to confine them would be equal to the annihilation of our institutions, and destructive of the best interests of the country. How would it sound, were it proposed to make a legal or constitutional provision, giving the nomination of our standing committees to the President, or his Cabinet? Would it not utterly prostrate the independence of Congress? And if so, ought a proceeding to be sanctioned, which would have the effect of establishing by law such a control over the Executive, the initiation of all laws. With the power to initiate, and the constitutional veto, what barrier is there against absolute power in the Executive department? This veto has been exerted with unusual frequency during the present Administration, and even rudely threatened in advance. By a document laid on our desks during the present session, the President has intimated, that he would be ready to apply it, unless Congress should adopt a particular course touching the Ohio and Michigan controversy. Sir, such an intimation ought to be regarded as an affront to the dignity and independence of Congress.

And what are the mighty services which the party have rendered to the country, to atone for all the abuses they have committed? What are the services which they have rendered, and of the victory over the Bank of the United States. For the military services of General Jackson none is more willing to tender him all gratitude and honor. I could retrace, too, sir, at his victory over the bank, had it not been secured by the assistance of the Executive power, and followed by a vast accession to the authority of the Executive. Can the design be doubted? But, sir, he goes farther. He points out plainly the manner in which that design is to be accomplished. It is true he professes to bow to the will of the People. Few men have ever attempted to control or sway the People, but by courting their confidence and inculcating their aid. Bonaparte, Cesar, Cromwell, all bowed to the People. It is true they could not resist the will of the People. The pretension is equally unfounded, that he will ascribe it to the clerk who paid the money at the counter. The idea is as ludicrous as that of the old man who ascribed the shoals in Sandwich water to the building of Terdentee's steeples. When Sir Thomas Moore inquired of this old citizen, (thinking him, from his great age, not likely to know), why Sandwich water was most likely to be known, he answered, "It is the water of Terdentee's steeples." And I think that Terdentee's steeples is the cause of the Goodwin sink. "And pray what is your reason, said Sir Thomas Moore, for thinking this?" "I am an old man, sir," said he, "and I may remember the building of the steeples, and I may remember when there was no steeples. And before the steeples were built, there was no man who could be so foolish as to have resisted it since. I can only say, my dear Sir, that I have resisted it since." "Nor can I assent," Mr. Chairman, to the high commendations bestowed by my colleague upon the high commission of the Administration in relation to the recent controversy with France; nor agree with the gentleman from Maine, (Mr. JARVIS), or others, who represent it as the universal belief of members towards the close of the last session, that they would ensue. If that was the opinion of members, I can only say, my dear Sir, that they are not so generally believed. It is true none could know how far such commendations either side might carry us; but, at the period alluded to, no immoderate collision was anticipated. It is forgotten that the Senate had unanimously adopted a resolution, declaring that "there was no occasion for any legislative measures in regard to the state of affairs between the United States and France, and that a resolution to the same effect had been offered by one of our members in the United States House of Representatives." Is it forgotten that our then Chairman of Foreign Relations himself, (MR. CAMBRELENG), in his report to the House, declared that there was "satisfactory evidence that the French Government desired that a convention should be made, and reason to hope that the Chamber of Deputies would be induced to discharge the obligations of the treaty, and that the Government would either on the 27th February, four days only previous to our final adjournment. Yes, notwithstanding the obvious propriety of affording some time for deliberation; notwithstanding the chairman had been spurred, goaded, I may say, by the venerable gentleman from Massachusetts, (MR. ADAMS), to do so; and that he had been assured by the President, of the constitutional termination of the subject, and of the confidence of the President had been made known, and circulated confidentially among some of the members of the House. This is another and a striking proof of the exercise of Executive influence over its deliberations. The Constitution requires open communications from the President to Congress. If the practice of influencing members through private messengers, to vote in a certain way, or to do otherwise, there is an end of the independence of the body. It will be as well to extend a little further the modern doctrine of expunging, and in addition to the clause requiring both Houses to keep a journal, to expunge that which declares that Congress shall assemble at least once in every year. It would be better at once to adopt the advice of Major Downing, and dispense with so superfluous a machinery.

No man can view without apprehension the rapid growth of Executive power and influence since the accession of the present Administration; nor without being struck with the contrast between the republicanism of 1798 and the Jackson democracy of 1836. I have already alluded to the celebrated reports made in 1836 and 1828, showing the progress of the party, and plans of retirement and reform. I beg leave to advert to some of their leading principles and views. [Mr. R. read passages from the reports of Mr. Benton and Mr. Hamilton, illustrative of the tenets of the republican party.] Yes, sir, the old republican party were the advocates of economy in expenditures; they apprehended danger from the enormous power of the Executive, resisted its encroachments, and were in favor of the independence of the press. They advocated the employment of a Government press. I ask the especial attention of the committee to the eloquent remarks of the author of the report of '28, whose sincerity none will question. [Mr. R. read a passage from the speech of Mr. Hamilton, delivered in the House of Representatives, in February, 1827.]

It was our aim and vision to the force of the argument here presented. But how have these doctrines been carried out? At the last session of Congress, a resolution was offered to exclude all persons concerned in public journals from any share in the printing required for the Government: another resolution (which I had myself the honor to submit) proposed to dispense with the office of printer to either House of Congress; to provide that all printing on public account should be done by contract; and to exclude, from any participation, all who held office under the Government. You will remember, sir, the fate of these propositions. In a report drawn by yourself, the proposed exclusion of the editorial corps, was described as an unconstitutional proposition. Yet to my mind it seems clear that if we have the power to create the office, we have the right to determine its qualifications, to admit or exclude all who are appointed, without violating the Constitution; and if we may, upon the same principle, exclude editors or officers of Government, if their appointment be incompatible with the nature of the office, or injurious to the public interests. These propositions, like most other attempts, during the present Administration, to carry into practice the doctrines of reform, so ably maintained by the old republican party, were all defeated. In France, it is in the view of the publicists, that paper, that to those of the Executive, its supporters, and its official organ. But we have peace; and rest the blame where it may of having endangered it, we have all cause to rejoice at its restoration: doubly so when we look to the manner in which the petty war in Florida has been conducted. Under this military administration we have seen three Major Generals, with a force of some ten or fifteen men, employed against a far inferior force of Indians. A gallant corps of upwards of one hundred of our countrymen has been cut off almost to a man. In the brief space of two or three months, we have appropriated upwards of eleven hundred thousand dollars; and if reports, apparently authentic, are to be credited, to such extremes have our troops been reduced, that they have been under the necessity of shooting away the traces of their wagons for ammunition, and using their horses for food.

Mr. Chairman, I am sensible of having too long trespass-

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TO THE EDITORS.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF WAR UPON FORTIFICATIONS.

Your complimentary notice of this report will induce many to give to it the attentive perusal it merits, who otherwise might have passed it by as one of the usual and customary efforts of the day.

It is certainly an able production, replete with sound reflections and judicious views. There is one point of it, however, which I think might have been dilated upon with greater force, and with a course of reasoning peculiarly applicable to the decided impressions of society, and the abundant means of the Government. We mean that which relates to the facilities of intercourse, by which distant parts of the Union are brought so near to each other, and can succeed each other with so much ease.

These various means of roads and canals are assigned as reasons for less expensive fortifications, and become thereby, in fact, a very essential part of the system of seacoast defence.

Either these roads must be made and maintained, or the fortifications must be erected. They become, then, national military roads, and their construction, or existence, is one of the leading arguments in favor of a less expensive system of fortifications than that recommended by the engineer.

The Government is, therefore, profiting enormously by these roads, and contemplates great reductions in its expenditures, from advantages, to the defence of its coast, which it already acknowledges can be derived from them. Should such communications, then, be left to individual enterprise, it should not be the Government, which sees such advantages in them, and contemplates such a consequent reduction in its expenses, aid in their construction?

The fortification is purely for the defence of a position. The money expended upon it adds to no branch of human industry, develops no sources of national prosperity, aids no commercial or agricultural interests. It merely defends the position, and the reach of its guns, and even in that office of the interior. But the canal, while it also renders its important auxiliary duty in defending the coast, at the same time develops the resources and wealth of the interior, opens the market to hidden treasures, and spreads prosperity and happiness over innumerable multitudes, and distant and hitherto unknown regions.

It is only in the case of the Government, which sees such advantages in them, and contemplates such a consequent reduction in its expenses, aid in their construction?

It appears to us, also, as an unequivocal inference from the views of the Secretary, that if the right to aid these roads and canals by the nation does not exist, then a right to prohibit individuals from doing so does not exist; also, that so essential a mean is placed beyond its support, and is left entirely to individual enterprise.

Now, we are not desirous of quarrelling about names—internal improvement, the American system, or defence of the coast and country. Take which you please, yet if the defence of the country carries with it all the advantages for the individual enterprise, on that account it ought not to be considered objectionable.

It is not the purpose of this paper to discuss the merits of the views of the Secretary, but to point out some of the reasons which induce us to believe that such a course is not to be considered objectionable.

Can a more judicious object be devised? Can one more necessary than that of national defence, or one better adapted to unite all parties in the contemplated disposition of the surplus revenue?

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THE NEWCASTLE GAZETTE, AND FARMERS' AND MECHANICS' ADVERTISER, published at Newcastle, Delaware.

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DEBATE IN THE SENATE.

REMARKS OF Mr. WEBSTER.

On the proposition of Mr. Benton to instruct the Committee on Public Lands to report a bill to prevent any thing but Gold and Silver from being received in payment for Public Lands.

Mr. WEBSTER said that he and those who acted with him would be justified in taking no active course in regard to this resolution, in sitting still, suppressing their surprise and astonishment if they could, and letting these schemes and projects take the form of such laws as their projectors might propose.

We are powerless now, and can do nothing. All the schemes affecting the interests of the country, and the security of the public treasury we have resisted since 1832. We have done so unsuccessfully. We struggled for the recharter of the Bank of the United States in 1832. The utility of such an institution had been proved by forty years' experience. We struggled against the removal of the deposits. That act, as we thought, was a direct usurpation of power. We strove against the experiment, and all in vain. Our opposition was disregarded, our warnings neglected, and we are now in no degree responsible for the mischiefs which are but too likely to ensue.

Who (said Mr. W.) will look with the perception of an intelligent, and the candor of an honest man, upon the present condition of our finances and currency, and say that this want of credit and confidence which is so general, and which, it is probable, may be long, overspread the land with bankruptcies and distress, has not flowed directly from those measures, the adoption of which we so strenuously resisted, and the folly of which men of all parties, however reluctantly, will soon be brought to acknowledge? The truth of this assertion was palpable and resistless.

What, sir, are the precise evils under which the finances of the Government and, he believed, of the country now suffer? They are these: the superabundance of the Treasury, and the insecurity of the currency. We have more than we need, and that money, not being in custody under any law, and being in hands over which we have no control, is threatened with danger. Now, sir, is it not manifest that these evils flow directly from measures of Government which some of us have zealously resisted? May not each be traced to its distinct source? There would have been surplus in the Treasury had the veto of the land bill, so called, of 1833, been resisted. It is, therefore, the security of the public money, it would have been, at this moment, entirely safe, but for the veto of the act continuing the Bank charter. Both these measures had received the sanction of Congress, by clear and large majorities. They were both negated: the reign of experiments, schemes, and projects commenced, and here we are. Every thing that is now aimed at financial concerns is the direct consequence of extraordinary exertions of Executive authority. This assertion does not rest on general reasoning. Facts prove it. One veto has deprived the Government of a safe custody for the public moneys, and another veto has caused their present augmentation.

What, sir, are the evils which are distracting our financial operations? They are obviously two. The public money was not safe: it was protected by no law. The Treasury was overflowing. The currency was more abundant than we needed. The currency was unsound. Credit had been diminished and confidence destroyed. And what did these two evils, the insecurity of the public money and its abundance, result from? They referred directly back to the two celebrated experiments; the veto of the bank bill, followed by the removal of the deposits, and the rejection of the land bill. Had either of these vetoes been granted, the public money would have remained safe in the Bank of the United States, if the Executive veto of 1832 had not disturbed it.

It was that veto, also, which, by discontinuing the National Bank, removed the great and salutary check to the immoderate issue of paper money, and encouraged the creation of so many State banks. This was another of the products of that veto. This is as plain as that. The rejection of the land bill, on the other hand, had the effect of a proper, necessary, and equal distribution of the surplus fund, had produced this redundancy in the Treasury. If the wisdom of Congress had been trusted, the country would not have been plunged into its present difficulties. They devised the only means by which the peace and prosperity of the People could have been secured. They passed the Bank charter: it was negated. They passed the land bill, and it was negated. They exercised the extraordinary exercise of power, in these two instances, which produced an exactly corresponding mischief in each case, upon the subjects to which it was applied. Its application to the bill providing for the recharter of the Bank of the United States has been followed by the present insecurity of the public treasury, and a superabundance of money not wanted had been the consequence of its application to the land bill.

The country (continued Mr. W.) is the victim of schemes, projects, and reckless experiments. We are wiser, or we think ourselves so, than those who have gone before us. Experience cannot teach us. We cannot let well enough alone. The experience of forty years was insufficient to settle the question whether a national bank was useful or not, and forty years' practice of the Government could not decide whether it was or was not. And yet, we have had of all considerations, that undue power has been claimed by the Executive. One thing is certain, and that is, there has been a constant and corresponding endeavor to diminish the constitutional power of Congress. The bank charter was negative, because Congress had no power under the Constitution to grant it; and yet, though Congress had authority to treat a national bank, the Executive at once exercised that power, and endeavored to place the public moneys in their hands on just such terms and conditions as he pleased.

There is not a more palpable evidence of the constant bias of this Government to a wrong tendency, than this continued attempt to make legislative power yield to that of the Executive. The Executive has been the object of Congress followed in every case by an increase of the power of the Executive. What was it that caused the destruction of the United States Bank, and put the whole moneyed power of the country into the hands of one man? Constitutional doubts of the power of Congress! What has produced this superabundance of money in the treasury? Constitutional doubts of the power of Congress! In the whole history of this Administration, doctrines had obtained, whose direct tendency was to detract from, settle, and long practiced power of Congress, and to give, in full measure, hand over hand, every thing into the control of the Executive. Did gentlemen wish him to exemplify the truth of this? Let them look at the bank bill; let the land bill and the various bills which have been negated, respecting internal improvements.

Gentlemen now are speaking on a specific basis. Did any man suppose it practicable? The resolution now under consideration, contemplated that, after the current year, all payments for the public lands were to be made in specie. Now, if (Mr. W.) had brought forward a proposition like this, he would at once have been accused of being opposed to the settlement of the new States. It would have been urged that speculators and capitalists could easily convert gold and silver to any use they pleased, and that the cultivator, who wished to purchase small farms, would be compelled to give the former his own price for the land, because he could visit large cities, or other places where it was to be found, and procure the specie. These arguments would have net him, he was sure, had he introduced a measure like this. If specie payments were to be made for public dues, he should suppose it best to begin with the customs, which were payable in large cities, where gold and silver could be more easily procured than in the interior. But whether from speculators, or settlers, what was the use of these specie payments? The money was dragged over the mountains to be dragged back again; that was all. The purchaser of public lands would buy gold by bills on the Eastern cities; it would go across the country in packers or wagons: the Land Office would send it back again by the return carriage, and thus create the useless expense of transportation.

He had from the very first looked upon all these schemes as totally idle and illusory; not in accordance with the practice of other nations or suited to our own policy, or our own active condition. But the effect of this resolution: what would it be? Let them try it. Let them go on. Let them add to the catalogue of projects. Let them cause every man in the country to take out a pocket book, and put in his pocket, to set off, post haste, to the bank, lest someone else should get there before, and get out all the money, and then buy land. How long would the Western banks stand this? Yet, if gentlemen please, let them go on. I shall dissent; I shall protest; I shall speak my opinions; but I shall still say, go on, gentlemen, and let us see the upshot of your experimental policy.

The currency of the country was, to a great degree, in the power of all the banking companies in the great cities. It was as much opposed to the increase of these institutions; but the evil had begun, and could not be resisted. What one State does, another will do also. Danger and misfortunes appear to be threatening the currency of the country; and although the Constitution gives the control over it to Congress, yet Congress is allowed to do nothing. Congress, and not the States, had the coming power; yet the States

issue paper as a substitute for coin, and Congress is not supposed to be able to regulate, control, or redeem it. We have the sole power over the currency; yet we possess no means of controlling it. Gold and silver currency necessarily bank, regulated by law, but the Executive can appoint twenty or fifty banks, without any law whatever. A very peculiar state of things exists in this country at this moment—a country in the highest state of prosperity; more abundantly blessed by Providence in all things than any other nation on earth, and yet in the midst of great pecuniary distress, its finances deranged, and an increasing want of confidence felt in the banks of the country, which are endeavoring to cure all this. A few select and favorite banks were to give us a secure currency, one better and more practically beneficial than that of the United States Bank. And here is the result, or rather, to use the expression of Monsieur Talleyrand, here is “the beginning of the end.”

We were told that these banks would do as well, if not a great deal better, for all the purposes of exchange, than the United States Bank. One would be established in each State, cheaply and with as much safety; and yet the rate is now one and a half, if not two percent, between Cincinnati and New York. Indeed, exchanges are all deranged, and in confusion. Sometimes they are at high rates, both ways, between two points. Looking, then, to the state of the currency, the insecurity of the public money, and the rates of exchange, let me ask any honest and intelligent man, of whatever party, what has been the result of these experiments? Do any gentleman still doubt? Let him look to the disclosures made by the circular of one of the deposit banks of Ohio, which was read by an honorable Senator here a day or two since. That bank would not receive the notes of the specie-paying banks of that State from the Land Office, as I understand the circular, or, at any rate, it tells the Land Office that it will not. Here are thirty or more than thirty miles of the public money, credit, and out of the whole number three were to be selected, entitled to no more confidence than the others, whose notes were to be taken for public lands. If gentlemen from the West and Southwest are satisfied with this arrangement, I certainly cannot regret their quiescent temperament.

It is said in the commencement of his remarks, he knew of nothing he could do to prevent the resolution from extending to sit still and see how far gentlemen would go, and what this state of things would end in. Here was this vast surplus revenue under no control whatever, and from appearances, though the session was nearly over, likely to remain so. Two measures of the highest importance had been proposed: one to diminish this fund; another to secure its safety. He wished to understand, and the country to know, whether any thing was to be done with either of these propositions. For his own part, he believed that a national bank was the only security for the national treasury; but, as there was no such institution, a more extended use should be made of this treasury, and in its distribution no preference should be given, as was the fact in the instance of the banks of Ohio, to which he had just alluded. In some way or other this fund must be distributed. It is absolutely necessary that the Government should be enabled to limit eminently calculated to effect this object; but that measure should not be adopted, he would give his vote to any proper and equitable measure which might be brought forward, let it come from what quarter it might. In all probability, there would be a diminution in the amount of land sales for some time to come. The purchases of the last year, he supposed, had exceeded the demands of emigration, and the speculation for the purpose of holding up lands for increased prices. The spirit of speculation, indeed, seemed to be very much directed to the acquisition of the public lands. He could not say what would be the further progress, or where the end, of these things; but he thought one thing quite clear, and that was, that the existing surplus ought to be distributed.

It is repeated, that he intended no detailed opposition to the bill now before the Senate, and he would give his seat, he should not have opposed the amendment to the pension bill. Let the experiments, one and all, have their course. He should do nothing except to vote against all these visionary projects, until the country should become convinced that a sound currency, and with it a general security for property, and the earnings of honest labor, were things too much importance to be sacrificed to mere projects, whether political or financial.

REMARKS OF Mr. EWING, OF OHIO, On the same subject.

Mr. EWING, of Ohio, said: I cannot forbear to say something in reply, not merely to remarks made here this day, but to others of some days past, which have been permitted to go uncorrected. It is, I think, a fair subject, Pennsylvania, near one, while speaking on another subject, said, “that a foreigner, who should have heard us in 1834, and should hear us now, would think us the strangest people on earth; that then we were predicting bankruptcy to the Treasury; now we were complaining that this same Treasury is full to overflowing; and simulating the woes of the country, which we now own, as of an exterior source, of their own, and consequent total arrangement of the money circulation of the country, things might return to a much better state than they are now in; though nothing like security could, he admitted, be found, unless in a system which enabled the Federal Government to regulate a machine which had a constant tendency to over-run its gear.” Reference (said Mr. P.) had been made in debate to the situation of our currency previous to the expiration of the charter of the late United States Bank. The contrast was most humiliating; but gentlemen on the other side need not expect that it would not be frequently presented to their contemplation. With our impressions, we should be faithful to our trust if we did not, on all proper occasions, place before the eyes of our American People, the cause of our present evils, and the proper remedy for them, as best found in the contemplation of the past. There could not be a doubt that if the United States Bank had been rechartered, we should be in a far different and better situation than we are now placed in. It was with great surprise (Mr. P. said) that he had heard the Senator from Maine charge on the Bank that it had been the means of demoralizing our currency, leading to the whole time it was in existence; yet, more, that it was, to him, an unsettled condition. He wished the Senator had given us his data for these assertions; he should have preferred facts to declamation on a question of this kind. Mr. P. said that the knowledge he possessed of the conduct of that institution had led him to a totally different conclusion. The Senator had said that, for the first four years after its establishment, it had totally ruined the circulating medium of the country. Nothing was more obvious, however, created at a time when that medium was entirely unsound; and it could not be restored in a day or week. It is the work of years to restore a healthy action to a depraved currency; all hasty and great changes only increase the evil. Under any management, therefore, the institution could not have accomplished such a great object at once.

He (Mr. P.) was, however, not satisfied that the Bank were not wisely conducted on its first organization. The fatal spirit of speculation which had seized the whole country at the close of the late war, had full possession of the minds of that portion of it which were first selected to administer the Bank, and the pernicious effects of their wildness were early seen in a derangement of its concerns, and a depreciation of the value of its stock. It soon, however, recovered itself, and, in the first year, it established, in relation to the public revenue, institutions of this kind, from their immense capital, always able to command the highest talents and purest virtue for the administration of their concerns. The Bank called them to its service; and from the period Mr. Cheves was placed at its head to the close of its affairs under the direction of Mr. Biddle, it fully and faithfully accomplished the purposes of its creation. Without referring to detailed statements to sustain the assertions made by the Senator, first bringing under the notice of the Senate the state of our currency at two periods—the one immediately after the Bank began to exercise its wholesome authority over State emissions, the other at the period when it was assailed by the Executive in 1820 and 1830. At the first mentioned epoch, according to the account laid on our tables this year, the Secretary of the Treasury, the circulation of the United States was \$14,000,000. At the second epoch, it was \$51,232,898, showing merely an increase of between sixteen and seventeen millions in ten years; an increase which every one must admit was but justly proportioned by the increase of our wealth and population during this space of time. I doubt (said Mr. P.) if the history of the world can show any thing which more strikingly illustrates sound management, than the history of the Bank of the United States. The steady and progressive increase of its value, and the fact, during the period just stated—its absence from all sudden changes—prove triumphantly how well the system worked.

Since the year, 1820, however, our circulation has doubled. The Senator from Maine says this increase is due to it, and to it alone; at one time increasing its discounts, at another time reducing them; and now the distress is owing to its contraction. (I said Mr. P.) the Bank is now calling in its husbandry, and its value is falling. It is now, while, at the same time, the circulating medium is increasing; it is not easy to see how his conclusion follows the premises he professes to base it on. I believe, however, (said Mr. P.) that all the changes made by the Bank during the four years' war waged against it were only such as were forced on it by the wild and furious attacks constantly made on the institution, and the uncertainty which they naturally produced in all financial operations.

One word (Mr. P. said) before he concluded, in relation to the hard money currency which the Senator from Missouri was laboring to introduce. He (Mr. P.) did not believe it was possible to introduce it; and if it could be brought back to it, he doubted its utility. It could not be degusted that the system, though the safest, was not the

best adapted to the wants of a commercial People. The two most eminently commercial of all nations, England and the United States, had used, as a means of becoming so, a paper circulation. Gold and silver currency necessarily wanted the capacity of extension, which was almost indispensable, to meet the fluctuations to which commerce was inevitably subject; and they could not be expanded to supply the wants of a country which, every twenty-five years, was doubling its population, and more than quadrupling its wealth. We should find, it was true, in a gold and silver currency, a complete exemption from the evils to which a paper circulation was subject. We should have the immense advantages which that circulation conferred; the energy it imparted; the enterprise it fostered and sustained. To it, even in its unhealthy and ill-regulated action, Mr. P. firmly believed, we are in a great measure indebted for an unmatchable progress in private wealth and public improvements of all kinds, during the last half century. He thought a well-regulated paper currency the best adapted to the wants of a growing country. Experience had shown us we could regulate it; and he trusted he would see to the day when it would be again well regulated. The habits of our citizens being now accustomed to it, he believed it would be almost impossible to change them. And if we could change them, that change could not be brought about by laws making gold and silver, only a tender in the fiscal transactions of the General Government. Because the still greater amount of private commerce would continue to be carried on in paper, and the State banks had a constant interest to take up the specie, and substitute their paper in its place. He was willing, however, the subject should receive consideration, provided the opinion of Congress could be at once obtained on it. He believed that every member of this body had his opinion on this subject made up, and was prepared to vote on them.

REMARKS OF Mr. PORTER, On the same subject.

Mr. PORTER said he could not agree in opinion with the honorable Senator from North Carolina. He was unwilling the party should have their full swing on the currency; certainly, it would be no more than political justice they should, if they were to be the only sufferers. But the country would be the principal victim. It was said by the greatest of English statesmen (Lord Chatham) that public credit was like the sensitive plant—*touch it, and it dies*; that public credit mainly rested on a sound and unfluctuating currency. The tendency of the resolution moved by the Senator from Missouri was to produce a great and sudden change in it. He (Mr. P.) thought that such an alteration, in these times of moderate expansion, would produce a great shock on the whole system, and on the Republic. He believed its influence would not be alone confined to the Western States; it would extend over the whole Union; and he, therefore, saw no reason for selecting the committee solely from Western members. The amount of the sales of public land last year was fifteen millions: the whole specie in the country forty-five millions. This specie, as we all know, was, or ought to be, the great basis on which the paper money of the country is made of paper. To subtract such a sum from their vaults, deposit it in land offices, or keep it in transitu between the several points where it might be required for Government uses, must necessarily produce an immense contraction in discounts; of a sum not less than thirty millions. Such a change, at this moment, would be absolutely fatal to public credit, and must prove ruinous to the country.

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best adapted to the wants of a commercial People. The two most eminently commercial of all nations, England and the United States, had used, as a means of becoming so, a paper circulation. Gold and silver currency necessarily wanted the capacity of extension, which was almost indispensable, to meet the fluctuations to which commerce was inevitably subject; and they could not be expanded to supply the wants of a country which, every twenty-five years, was doubling its population, and more than quadrupling its wealth. We should find, it was true, in a gold and silver currency, a complete exemption from the evils to which a paper circulation was subject. We should have the immense advantages which that circulation conferred; the energy it imparted; the enterprise it fostered and sustained. To it, even in its unhealthy and ill-regulated action, Mr. P. firmly believed, we are in a great measure indebted for an unmatchable progress in private wealth and public improvements of all kinds, during the last half century. He thought a well-regulated paper currency the best adapted to the wants of a growing country. Experience had shown us we could regulate it; and he trusted he would see to the day when it would be again well regulated. The habits of our citizens being now accustomed to it, he believed it would be almost impossible to change them. And if we could change them, that change could not be brought about by laws making gold and silver, only a tender in the fiscal transactions of the General Government. Because the still greater amount of private commerce would continue to be carried on in paper, and the State banks had a constant interest to take up the specie, and substitute their paper in its place. He was willing, however, the subject should receive consideration, provided the opinion of Congress could be at once obtained on it. He believed that every member of this body had his opinion on this subject made up, and was prepared to vote on them.

TWENTY-FOURTH CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION.

FRIDAY, APRIL 29, IN SENATE.

Mr. HENDRICKS offered the following resolution; which lies over one day for consideration:

Resolved, That the Secretary of War be directed to cause a survey to be made, by the route of the Meadowcroft river, in the Territory of Wisconsin, from its mouth to the Winnebago lake. Also, a reconnaissance on survey of the Fox river