

P 12943

SPEECH

OF

MR. PHILIP P. BARBOUR, OF VIRGINIA,

ON

THE NATIONAL ROAD BILL;

DELIVERED

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

MARCH, 1830.



WASHINGTON:

PRINTED BY DUFF GREEN.

1830.

STANDARD

THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS

WASHINGTON, D. C.

1917

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ON THE

Bill to construct a road from Buffalo, New York, through Washington City, to New Orleans, Louisiana.

This bill being under consideration in Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union, Mr. P. P. BARBOUR addressed the Chair as follows:

MR. CHAIRMAN: The gentleman from Pennsylvania, (Mr. HEMPHILL,) who led the van in this discussion, set out with the declaration, that the subject was one of great importance; in this opinion I fully concur; but the gentleman and myself differ in this interesting particular. He thinks it important, in relation to the *good effects* which it is calculated to produce; whilst I think it is part of a system fraught with injurious consequences to the well being of the country. Some of the most prominent of these consequences, I propose, in the progress of the remarks which I am about to make, to develop to the committee.

There are some positions which have been assumed by the gentleman, which I do not mean to contest; with a view, therefore, to present to the committee, and through them to the community, the great questions at issue between us, I will first state those points in which we *do agree*, and then proceed to the discussion of those in which we *do not agree*, but differ *toto celo*. He first told us, that this bill, which proposes to construct a road through several of the States, does not provide for procuring their assent, because he, supposing that we have power to legislate on the subject, considered it unnecessary. As to the truth of this proposition, my mind cannot for a moment entertain a doubt; indeed, it seems to carry with it almost the force of self-evidence.

There are some few of the powers of Congress, requiring the assent of the States, in the very terms in which they are granted; with the exception of these, (and the one in question is not one of them,) every power which is granted, operates by its own intrinsic force; it must, in the nature of things so operate, or it would cease to be a power. That which I have not a right to do, but by the assent of another, derives its authority, not from my will, but from that assent. The proposition may be put thus: If Congress possess the power, then the assent of the States is not necessary; if they possess it not, then that assent cannot impart it, but by the concurrence of three-fourths of the States, in the manner prescribed in the Constitution; for to give a new power, is, in effect, to alter or amend the Constitution, and the concurrence of three-fourths is required for the purpose of

amendment. Exemplify the argument if you please, by the case of the war-making power; would it not excite a smile to talk of Congress asking the assent of one or more States, to a declaration of war? I will not waste the time of the committee by another remark upon this point.

The gentleman tells us that the public debt will soon be extinguished; that there will be, then, a large surplus revenue, which he thinks ought not to be distributed amongst the States, and that the best disposition which can be made of it, is to apply it to the purposes of internal improvement.

Sir, I shall not now stop to discuss our power to distribute the surplus revenue amongst the States, nor to inquire whether, if we had the power, that would be a judicious appropriation: "Sufficient unto the day, is the evil thereof." Whenever these questions shall arise, I shall be prepared to examine them, with all the deliberation due to their importance; the view which I have taken of the subject, renders such an inquiry at present, wholly unnecessary.

The gentleman's argument upon this point, proceeds upon the hypothesis, that a large amount of surplus revenue will certainly exist. Now, Sir, it is matter of astonishment to me, that this idea did not occur to the sagacious mind of the gentleman, that it depends upon our will, whether there shall or shall not be such a surplus. I offer to him a solution of his difficulties, a relief from his embarrassment, by the simplest, the easiest of all remedies,—a diminution of the revenue. This idea may be forcibly illustrated by an example drawn from the common principles of household economy. What would be thought of a man, in private life, who was about to build, and whose family required but six apartments for their accommodation, who should erect a house containing double that number, feeling, at the same time, great difficulty as to the purposes to which he should apply the useless apartments? Surely, if his own mind did not suggest the idea, some friendly adviser would tell him, that he might obviate the difficulty, by building upon no larger a scale than the comfort of his family required. So, Sir, I offer to the gentleman this advice: let us so regulate our revenue as to suit

it for the wants of the Government, and we shall be thus happily relieved from the perplexing question, what shall we do with the surplus?

Mr. CHAIRMAN, let us for a moment examine the principles which ought to govern us in relation to revenue. Taxes are that portion of the substance of a people which they are required to contribute to the support of Government. True, Sir, the money power confided to Congress is, as it ought to be, indefinite in its extent; but why is it so? Simply because, as the exigencies of Government cannot be foreseen, if the power of supplying them were limited, there would be a *definite supply* where there was an *indefinite demand*. But, whilst this discretion is given to us, surely every principle of justice and sound policy imperiously requires that we should draw from the people the smallest amount of contribution, which will be sufficient to meet the demands upon the Treasury in the prudent and discreet management of their affairs. This is the principle which has been avowed even in monarchies, especially in the country which is our parent State. It was a maxim of Queen Elizabeth, acted upon by her minister, the celebrated Burleigh, that she did not wish to see her Treasury like a swollen spleen, and that her Treasury was in the pockets of her people; and, at the present day, after the lavish expenditure of millions, the Premier of Great Britain has recently assured Parliament that the taxes shall be reduced to the lowest amount, consistent with the safety and defence of the kingdom. Why ought this to be always and every where done? Because, to the extent of the taxation of any country, money is drawn from a condition where it is *productive*, and placed in one in which it is *unproductive*; and because this process diminishes the productive labor of the society, and by necessary consequences its wealth. And shall we, in this respect, be less attentive to the interests of our constituents, than monarchs and the ministers of monarchs? We, who are ourselves a part of the people, springing from them, representing them, accountable to them, and to whom they have with jealous caution entrusted the care of their purse—shall we not prefer a rich people and a poor government, rather than a poor people and a rich government? Sir, if we pursue the policy of imposing unnecessary taxation, we may call our Government a republic; we may boast of the freedom of our institutions; yet the people will have a right to say, and will say, we go not for names, but for things; not for form, but for substance; that oppression is oppression still, no matter from what quarter it comes, no matter by what political agents it may be exercised. We learn from a Treasury document, that the public debt will be wholly extinguished in 1834; and except the \$7,000,000 due to the Bank, and the \$13,000,000 of 3 per cent. stock, in June 1832. As to the debt due to the Bank, it may be considered as paid, because they owe us an equal amount. With so certain and speedy an extinguishment of the public debt before us, will it not be unnecessary and oppressive

taxation to continue the present amount of revenue, \$10,000,000 of which are now annually applied to that object. Let us, then, pursue the obvious, the just course of policy; let us graduate our revenue to our demands; we shall then have no surplus to perplex us in its disposition, and to lead us into a mighty scheme of expenditure, for no better reason than that we should otherwise not know what to do with it.

If my doctrine could prevail, I would reduce so much of the taxes as to have no surplus, even though it affected the protecting policy, commonly called the American system; but let not the tariff members of this House be alarmed; for an immense reduction may be effected without injury to their favorite bantling. The report from the Treasury informs us, that duties to an amount exceeding seven and a half millions of dollars may be repealed, upon articles not at all produced or manufactured in the United States, or in so inconsiderable degree as to be utterly unworthy of notice; and, indeed, I have reason to believe, Sir, that the repeal may be extended to ten millions, without materially affecting any manufacturing interest. To this extent, then, I have a right to expect the aid even of the tariff members of this House.

The gentleman has deemed it proper to discuss the constitutional power of Congress over this subject. In this particular, I have determined not to imitate his example, but purposely and studiously to avoid it. But let not any man suppose that I decline to enter the lists with the gentleman upon this ground, because I think the position indefensible; so far from this, Sir, I feel satisfied it may be maintained against all the batteries of argument which human ingenuity can level against it. The opinion which, at an early period, I entertained, has never undergone the slightest change; on the contrary, every additional year of my life, every additional hour of reflection, has but added to the strength of my original conviction, that it was not within the sphere of our constitutional powers. Why then do I decline this part of the discussion? Because I myself have, on former occasions in this House, exhausted myself upon it; because by others it has undergone repeated and elaborate discussions; has been so bolted down to the bran, that nothing short of inspiration itself could cast a new ray of light upon it; because my observation has satisfied me, that constitutional discussion upon any point, are in ill odor in this Hall, and more especially this, which would be "as tedious as a thrice told tale;" and because the various considerations of justice, and political expediency, are ample for all the purposes of my argument.

I cannot, however, forbear to present to the committee, a short retrospect of the progress of opinion on this subject, solely with a view to show the encroaching nature and onward march of power.

In the creation of the Cumberland road, Congress acted on the compact between this Government and the Northwestern Territory, stipulating that five per cent. of the nett proceeds of the sales of public lands should be applied

to making a road within and leading to that territory; they charged the amount expended in the construction of the road upon that fund, and procured the assent of the States through which it was to pass. During the interval between the year 1806, when that road was commenced, and the year 1817, the public mind was in much oscillation on this subject. In this last year, the subject was brought up and underwent elaborate discussion in this House, upon the following resolutions reported from the Committee of the Whole:

1st. That Congress has power to appropriate money for the construction of post roads, military roads, and other roads, and the improvement of water courses. This resolution was carried; ayes 90, noes 75.

2d. To construct post roads and military roads. Lost; ayes 82, noes 84.

3d. To construct roads and canals for carrying on commerce between the States. Lost; ayes 71, noes 95.

4th. To construct roads for military purposes. Lost; ayes 81, noes 83.

5th. A fifth resolution was moved, that Congress has power to appropriate money in aid of the construction of roads and canals, which shall be laid out and constructed under the authority of the Legislatures of the States, through which they pass. Negatived. Ayes and noes not taken.

Thus, we see, that by the solemn decision of this House in 1817, all power over this subject was repudiated in every form and shape, save only the power to appropriate money for the purpose of construction.

The bill now under consideration affirms the power to construct, in direct contravention of the recorded opinion of this House in 1817. Thus it is as true of the love of power as it is of another passion, "that increase of appetite grows by the very food it feeds upon." Under the appropriating power, let me say to the Committee, that it appears by a report made some time since, that in the session of 1827-8, three millions of dollars worth of public lands were given to States and individuals; and that, at this very session, we have applications for aid to the Portland canal, the Blackstone canal, a rail road in Georgia, another in South Carolina, and a third in Maryland; for aid to the Transylvania University, the Columbia College; and, finally, for an appropriation of \$40,000 to establish a filature of silk in Philadelphia. I might add, Deaf and Dumb Asylums, and a long list of other benevolent projects, including a memorial from the Colonization Society; but I forbear from a fear of wearying the patience of the Committee. And "last, but not least," comes this bill. As we are now about to take a new latitude and departure, it behooves us before we weigh anchor, to consider well what is the port of destination; in other words, to look along the line of time into futurity, and estimate the consequences of this system, some of the most prominent of which, it is my purpose to attempt to develop.

But first, Sir, allow me to inquire what are the advantages which are to recommend this

bill to our adoption? They must be, that it is beneficial, either to commerce, or military operations, or the transportation of the mail. I will examine the subject in reference to each of these considerations. And first, as to its commercial advantages. A glance of the eye at the map of the United States, will furnish, I think, an irrefragable answer to this argument, at least in reference to the States of New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, through which it is to pass. Nature has stamped upon the territory of each of these States, one common indelible feature. That the streams of every size, whether great or small, flow from the mountains, either Eastwardly into the Atlantic Ocean, or Westwardly through the Mississippi, into the Gulf of Mexico. Now, Sir, the road in question, at least throughout its whole extent, in the four States which I have mentioned, runs almost at right angles, with these natural channels of commercial intercourse. Whilst, then, the produce of the county seeks its market in one direction, this road passes in another; and, indeed, if it coincided with the direction of commerce and these natural channels, that would be a stronger argument against it, by all the difference between the facility of water and land transportation. This road, then, cannot stand upon the fact of its commercial advantages.

As little can it be supported upon the ground of its necessity for military operations. When the gentleman speaks of the exposure of Buffalo and New Orleans, the two termini of this gigantic road, I call upon him to say, has he forgotten the vast and expensive system of fortifications which we have created, and with which we are surrounded, as with a wall of circumvallation? After the millions which we have expended in these, are they to be abandoned as useless, for all the purposes of defence? or, will they not be supplied with ordnance, and garrisoned in time of war, for our protection? Does the gentleman suppose that troops are ever to be marched from Buffalo to defend Orleans, or from Orleans to defend Buffalo? Let the defence of Orleans during the late war answer the question; it was successfully—nay, gloriously defended by troops, not a man of whom was, I believe, marched from North of Tennessee and Kentucky. If, contrary to every rational probability, such a thing should ever occur, where are all the mighty rivers and canals which surround our borders and penetrate our interior country? Where, for example, is the Ohio Canal? Where that of New York? It is possible, that, in some twenty or thirty years hence, we may have war; say, if you please, in twenty years, for Ferguson, in his Treatise on Civil Society, thinks that a war in every twenty years is necessary to prevent a moral rust, and the dying away of the national spirit; in that event, it is also possible that troops may be marched on this road; but if this road be constructed upon these two possibilities, does it not strike the mind of every man who hears me, that the same thing may possibly happen to every road in the Union; and that, therefore, every road may be treated as being necessary for mili-

tary operations? Sir, the extent of the system, which this reasoning would justify, would be unlimited and illimitable. The gentleman alarms us with the enormous expense incurred during the late war in the transportation of provisions and the material of war, to our Northern and Northwestern frontiers. Does he not remember that the two great canals of New York and Ohio have both been constructed since that period; both leading directly to these points? Does he not also remember, that the frontiers of both of these States have, since that time, been overspread with an overflowing tide of emigration; covering the face of the country with arable fields, where the towering forests then stood, and intersecting it every where with the roads necessary for their own accommodation? Sir, the difficulties which then existed, have sunk beneath the enterprise of our people and the irresistible force of circumstances. Let us now, for a short time, examine this question in relation to the transportation of the mail.

The whole length of the road, we are given to understand, will be fifteen hundred miles, which, at the estimated cost of \$1,500 per mile, will amount to two and a quarter millions of dollars. This, Sir, is the supposed cost of making the roads of convex earth, without the use of either stone or gravel. My experience here, has satisfied me, that what is at first estimated as the whole cost, generally turns out to be but one of several instalments, necessary to the completion of any great work; let the road be constructed in the manner provided in this bill, and at some after time, we shall be told that it must be finished with stone or gravel; nay, possibly that it must be made a rail road; how many additional millions that may cost, I leave it to the committee to conjecture. Indeed, Sir, during this session, I have seen a report, which, if I mistake not, (and I speak from a doubtful memory, subject to correction,) estimates the cost of this road, constructed as a proper turnpike, at eleven and a half millions. But let us take even the sum of two and a quarter millions, the estimate of the cost of the plan now proposed; the interest of that sum, at six per cent, is \$135,000; I state the interest at six per cent., because, though the Government could borrow at home, probably, at four and a half, and in England or Holland, at three, yet, the legal interest throughout the United States varies from six to eight; as the amount will be drawn from the pockets of the people, it would be worth at least six per cent. to them. Now, Sir, I learn that the average cost of transporting the mail tri-weekly, in a stage coach, would not, in the more important parts of the country, exceed, if it equalled, fifteen dollars per mile. A report, however, of the Postmaster General, made in the year 1824, states the cost of thus transporting the mail from this city to Orleans, at \$52 76 per mile: even at this extravagant rate, the whole transportation of the mail from Buffalo to Orleans, would be less than \$80,000, whilst the annual interest of the cost of the road, without stone or gravel, has been shown to be \$135,000; thus exceeding, in annual interest, the whole

cost of transportation, by more than \$55,000. In this respect, then, I put it to the candid consideration of the committee, whether the proposed expenditure can be judicious? The answer must be obvious, to the minds of all who hear me. What, let me ask, is the equivalent promised for such a waste of money? Why, the mail will probably pass a few days sooner, between these two points. In the present condition of the road, however, if I mistake not, the message of the President to this Congress, was carried from Washington to Orleans in five and a half days; I am well aware that that extraordinary velocity was the result of a great effort, to communicate to the public a document in which they felt an intense interest; but if such speed as this be possible by any effort, the committee will be able to judge how much additional time is necessary, with that diligence, which, in the ordinary transportation of the mail, is now usually practised.

I have thus far, Mr. Chairman, been engaged in examining the supposed advantages of this road. Suffer me now, Sir, to present the other side of the question; a view of the disadvantages, of the many mighty objections founded upon the injustice, the inexpediency, the injurious political effects of this system of internal improvement, if persevered in. In doing this, I shall "nothing extenuate, nor set down aught in malice."

When I shall have finished this view, I shall only ask you to "look upon this picture and upon this;" and to say which of the two is the most accurate representation of the case, and to decide accordingly. Sir, I beg the committee to understand, that the objections which I am now about to urge, apply to the whole system of internal improvements, embracing this road as one link in the mighty chain; if the system, as such, is to prevail, then I feel no manner of interest or concern in the defeat of this or any other particular object; for though a single object may occasionally fail, by an accidental concurrence of votes, yet all the evils which I anticipate to my country would be realized; and in the general, nay, universal scramble for the spoils of the treasury, a few millions dilapidated here or there, would be but as a drop in the bucket; and the whole treasury, of minor importance compared with the injurious consequences which sooner or later, in my opinion, will follow, in the train of a system calculated to affect so fatally the destinies of the republic.

The first objection which presents itself to the action of this Government, has relation to the subject of economy. A knowledge of human nature will teach us, that the surest safe-guard in this respect, is the keen sighted vigilance of self interest. This principle burns with an inextinguishable ardor, in the heart of man; and if it does not point to its object, with as invariable certainty as the needle to the pole, it is only because we may sometimes mistake the direction; if, therefore, individual means were adequate to the effecting any given purpose, upon them we might always rely with the greatest safety; but if governmental aid be necessary, then we may rely that the object will

be most economically executed, under the superintendence of the States. Sir, the great advantages of embarking individual interest in such enterprises, are—1st. That they will never engage in them at all, unless they will probably yield a reasonable profit; and 2d, That when they do engage in them, they will use their utmost endeavors to reduce the expense to the smallest possible amount. The State of Virginia is acting mainly upon this principle, in her system of internal improvements; they have provided, that when, to effect any given object, individuals will subscribe three-fifths of the sum required, the State will furnish the remainder; thus securing the guaranty of self-interest, against the application of public money to any unproductive or visionary scheme. But the States, without the aid even of private interest, will most probably waste less than the Federal Government; they have much less scope for their action, and much fewer objects to which to direct their attention; they have fewer agents to whom to confide their management, and the supervising power is nearer the scene of operation; but, above all, the people, for whose benefit the money is expended, are the same by whose contributions the money to be expended is raised; whilst, under our system, it may happen, and often does happen, that whilst one portion of the community get the benefit of an improvement, they furnish no part of the means, as in the case of donations of the public lands; and even where money is advanced from the treasury, they may have furnished a very small and unequal share. If this policy be pursued by the States, as it usually is, of always having individual interest engaged, there is a fair prospect of the money invested producing a reasonable profit, and in that event, through the medium of dividends, there is restored to the public treasury a sum equal to the interest of the capital advanced. However this reasoning may apply to those cases in which the United States subscribe to works undertaken by individuals or corporations, it surely has no application to those which the Government undertake on its own account, to have executed; and in those works which the States themselves execute, by their own means, they endeavor by tolls to reimburse the treasury for the disbursement, which, in the case of the United States, is not done.

Self-interest, then, may be considered as the central point of economy; the State and Federal Governments as concentric circles drawn round that centre; the States being the smaller and the Federal Government the larger; and it is not more true in mathematics, that the radii which pass from a common centre must be longer to reach the circumference of a larger, than those which will touch the one of a smaller circle, than it is, that by how much the Federal Government is further removed from the point of self-interest than the State Governments, by so much is economy in the expenditure of public money diminished. For a practical illustration of this truth, I appeal to the Cumberland road, which, for a distance of about 130 miles, I suppose must have cost be-

tween a million and a half and two millions of dollars.

I come, now, to another serious objection; I mean the inequality in the distribution of our favors. The theory of our constitution, undeniably, is, that the contributions of the people of the United States should, as nearly as possible, be equal. Thus, it is provided that direct taxes shall be apportioned amongst the several States, according to their population; that duties, imposts, and excises, shall be uniform throughout the United States; and that no preference shall be given by any regulation of commerce, to the ports of one State over those of another; but of what avail is it, to secure equality in contribution, or to attempt to secure it, if the moment the contribution is made, the whole effect may be instantly destroyed by gross inequality in making appropriations? This idea may be forcibly illustrated by a familiar example, drawn from common life. Suppose, Sir, you and myself being about to embark in a common enterprise, each with great accuracy contributes precisely equal sums, and the very moment the fund was thus formed, you were at liberty to apply the whole amount to your own use,—would it not be mackery in such a case to talk of any *substantial* equality? In the execution of this system, it will be in the power of this Government, at its pleasure or caprice, to increase the wealth of one portion of the Union, and to diminish that of another, without any restraint whatever. Let me suppose a case or two. Suppose the Cumberland road had been extended to Baltimore, no one will deny that the commerce of that city would have been benefited; of this, Maryland seems to have been aware, because she has constructed a turnpike from Cumberland to Baltimore; but if, on the contrary, that road had been conducted from some point on the Ohio to Philadelphia, then that city would have received the advantage; and thus the one or the other city might be increased in prosperity at the expense of the other, just as the one or the other direction might be given to the road. I will put a still stronger case. Suppose New York had not been able, with her own means, to execute her great Erie Canal, and that State and Louisiana had both applied to this Government for aid at the same time, the one to have made the Erie Canal, so as to connect that Lake with the city of New York, the other to improve the Mississippi and all its tributary streams,—is it not obvious, that, according as we had executed the one or the other project, we should have built up the city of Orleans on the one hand, or that of New York on the other? Sir, from these examples, it is impossible not to see, that the relative wealth and importance of the different portions of the Union might be made to depend upon the favor which they might respectively find here. Mr. Chairman, our revenue being raised almost exclusively by imposts, the attention of the people at large is not drawn so closely to it. To test the justice and policy of this system, I appeal to gentlemen to say, whether they would venture to impose a direct tax to the amount of millions, and then apply the pro-

ceeds to the improvement of particular parts of the country? I undertake to answer no; and let me tell them, that if they were to try the experiment, their people would soon arrest them in their course. We sometimes hear it said, that as the United States are one great whole, whatever benefits one of the parts is a benefit to the whole. This, Sir, I acknowledge, is too lofty a magnanimity, too expansive a patriotism, for me to pretend to. Say what you will, reason as you will, as long as man is man, the States and the people of the States will never forget their individuality; they will never consent that the fruits of their labor shall go to enrich others — Let me test this principle by a case. I suppose that some five or six millions would probably improve all the important rivers in Virginia. I call upon the members from Massachusetts to say, whether they would impose a direct tax upon their constituents to effect this object? If they would not, and I am sure they have too much candor to say that they would, then this high minded disinterestedness will do well “to point a moral or adorn a tale,” but will not do for practical life.

Nor, Mr. Chairman, is the objection on account of inequality at all obviated, by the common remark, that our resources are to be applied to national objects. National objects! Where is the criterion by which we are to decide? What comes up to this standard, and what does not? We have none but the opinions of members here; and whenever the question comes to be decided, rest assured that each individual member will think that the project which he presents has the stamp of *nationality*. And what, Sir, will be the necessary result in practice? I make now no invidious distinctions between North and South, East and West; we are all men, and have all the feelings and passions of men. Many projects will be presented at a given session; the disposable funds will not be adequate to the completion of them all; then will come “the tug of war,” and the struggle who shall succeed and who must be disappointed. No one or two of the objects can be carried by themselves, but must get their passport by the company which they are in. Sir, the inevitable result will be, combinations and arrangements so as to unite a sufficient force to carry through a number of different objects, neither by its own intrinsic weight, but all by the united weight of all. This will generate feuds and heartburnings in those who are defeated. It *will*, it *must* be so; for it is not in human nature for either States or individuals, without murmuring and discontent, to stand by and see a fund divided, in which they have a common interest, and of which they are not allowed to participate. They will never be satisfied by telling them, that their objects were not national, whilst the others were. They will think otherwise; and they will tell the participators in the spoil, that they had decided the question of nationality in their own case, and then enjoyed the fruits of that decision.

Mr. Chairman, I am no apostle of disunion; I look to the confederacy of these States as to the ark of our political salvation; may God

grant that it may be perpetual! Sir, I go further and say, that I come not here with any language of *menace*; but as the representative of a portion of the people of this country, I have a right to use the language of *expostulation*. In that language then, Sir, let me warn this committee, that there are already points of difference amongst the States of this Union, enough to inspire us all with a spirit of moderation and forbearance. A minority, it is true, but a very large minority of the people, have calmly protested against some of the leading principles of policy of this Government; Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi, all tell you that they feel themselves to be oppressed. Will you turn a deaf ear to their complaints? Will you pay no respect to the opinion of a large and respectable portion of the community? Will you, because you are a majority, feel power and forget right? What more could the veriest despot do? Sir, the machine of government may, for a time, be propelled by a given momentum, though many of its parts work not at all in concert; but sooner or later it must be worn too much by excessive friction, or possibly it may become so disordered as to be unable to perform its functions.

What makes this system still more obnoxious is, that some of the States of this Union believe that this power does not reside in Congress, and therefore, cannot participate of the bounty of this Government, even if it were offered to them. Sir, I do not mean to violate my promise, that I would not discuss this question; but I may, consistently with that promise, urge upon this House the propriety of a principle recommended by two distinguished American statesmen, to abstain from the exercise of a doubtful power. Suppose that you may, as has been said, “by hanging inference on inference, until, like Jacob’s ladder, they reach to Heaven,” come to the conclusion, that the power is with you. I ask, emphatically, is it not reason enough to forbear its exercise, when so many of the States believe it to be a violation of the compact of their union with you? Will you, *can* you, consistently with justice, proceed in the distribution of a common fund, when so many of the joint owners must, according to their sense of duty, either be for ever excluded from their equal share, or procure it only by sacrificing their solemn convictions of what is right to their interest? Though you constitute a majority, yet let me remind you of this eternal truth, that the acts of a majority to be *rightful*, must be *just*.

Mr. Chairman, we seem to have reached an interesting crisis in our political history. During the war of the revolution, the whole energies of our people were concentrated in support of that great struggle, and they went together with *one heart and one hand*. During the interval between that and the late war, our strenuous efforts were exerted to repair the mischiefs of the first war; to build up a new government; put it into operation; restore our public credit, and by every means in our power, to acquire a stand amongst the nations of the earth. The late war again put into requisition all our civil and military energies in vindication of our national ho-

nor. Since its termination, a new era has opened upon us. With nothing seriously to disturb us from abroad, we are left to look at home. The action of the government has now turned inwards, with an overflowing revenue, and a near approach to the extinguishment of our public debt. New schemes of policy are devised; new principles of government avowed. I fear, Sir, that we may find, as other nations have found, that a period of peace, however desirable in itself, is precisely that in which our government is to be put to its severest trial. Amidst the din of arms, or in the great effort to build up political establishments, the selfish passions are in a great degree absorbed in the more important objects to be effected. These causes being removed, there is now full scope for their action, and it calls for all our firmness and all our patriotism to prevent the injurious effects. Sir, if this government would confine its action to those great objects, which, in my estimation, its founders intended, such as war, peace, negotiation, foreign commerce, &c. and leave every thing municipal in its nature to the States, we should go on in harmonious concert, and peace, content, and happiness, would prevail throughout our borders. In relation to these great questions, there is a community of interest throughout the Union; as, on the one hand, these *must* be acted upon by the federal government, so, on the other, its action upon them is not, in its nature, necessarily calculated to create strife and conflict amongst the different parts of this great whole. Sir, it is when we pass beyond this line and intrude upon the field of municipal legislation; when we act on subjects in which the different States have different and opposing interests; in which the benefit we extend to one is at the expense of another: and in which each State can best act for itself; it is by this course that we are converting *content* into *discontent*, *harmony* into *discord*, and bringing into direct conflict those different interests which, if acted on *internally* by the States, and *externally* by this Government, would afford the strongest cement to the Union. The natural pursuits of the North, for example, are those of commerce and navigation; that of the South, is agriculture. Let each be managed at home,—I mean in their internal operation,—and they are the allies of each other; the Northern merchants and ship owners are the buyers and transporters of Southern produce; and the South purchase the imported goods of the North; but the moment this Government attempts to control and regulate the whole, then the conflict begins; for then the regulation which advances the interest of one, by the same operation injures that of the other.

Sir, there are strong objections to this system, arising from the difficulty of executing it. If a road is to be constructed by our authority, we must have power to demand the land for its site—timber, stone and gravel for its construction. How are these to be obtained? The Constitution forbids us from taking private property without just compensation. To make this, we must, by our officers, summon juries, condemn the requisite land, value the stone, timber, &c.

Is this not municipal legislation? The bill in question makes no provision for this. Suppose the owners of the soil to refuse, by contract, to supply these things, you must go into this whole process. Again, Sir, after the roads shall have been constructed, they must be kept in repair. Shall it be done by a perpetual drain upon the Treasury, or will you proceed to erect toll gates? Sir, this has been attempted in the case of the Cumberland road, but we have not yet screwed our courage up to this point. Here let me remind you of the solemn conviction of some of the States, that you cannot erect these gates. Will you, in the face of this, press on and put such States in the painful dilemma of restricting your authority, or yielding up what they believe to be their rights? God forbid that the experiment should be made! I would not have one serious conflict with a single State for all the roads which you will ever make.

Sir, there is one argument addressed to the States, which charms like the Syren's song, which I beg leave to examine closely, and to expose to the people at large; I wish to prove to them, and think I can, to demonstration, that they are unear utter delusion in relation to it. The gentleman from Pennsylvania has given us a glowing description of the value of good roads, and other channels of communication; they enhance the value of land, they diminish the price of transportation, they almost annihilate time and space, and, in the fashionable figure of speech, they are to the body politic, what the veins and arteries are to the body natural. The gentleman, not content with a mere description of their value, has held up to us in bold relief, the thousands of miles of turnpike constructed by Napoleon; the splendid bridges, &c.; he might have added the eighteen thousand miles of turnpike in England; he might have gone further back, to the time of Louis 14th, the Grand Monarque, and described the Canal of Languedoc; he might have gone further back, to Henry 4th of France, and spoken of the splendid road constructed by Sully, from Paris towards Brussels, adorned with triple rows of elms; nay, Sir, he might have gone back further still, and spoken of the magnificent aqueduct of Rome, her Appian and Æmilian ways. This, Sir, is the splendid illusion which charms and captivates our people. Until this shall be dispelled, they can never be brought to dispassionate reasoning on the subject. I wish the gentleman had held up to our view, on the same canvass, the thousands of miles of turnpike in England, and the tens of thousands of people, who either go supperless to bed, or are driven by taxation to live on the least sustenance which will support human life; and the 7000 Irishmen, the most brave and the most persecuted people on earth, who subsist, as O'Connel tells us, each, upon three half pence per day: so, on the French canvass, he should have presented the roads, the canals, the bridges, and, at the same time, the ruinous, grinding, and oppressive gabelle and corvée: so, on the Roman canvass, he should have presented the splendid aqueduct and the paved ways, and, at the same time, he should have told us, in the

eloquent language of a modern writer, "that the pavement and ruins of Rome are buried in dust shaken from the feet of barbarians." Sir, let it not be supposed, that I am hostile to good roads and canals; the gentleman may exhaust himself in their eulogy, and I shall not object; by rightful means, let mountains be levelled, valleys filled up—even the Apalachian mountains, if you please, subdued by the hand of man. The value of all this concludes nothing against my argument; it does not at all touch the question at issue between the gentleman and myself; that question is, not whether these things are useful—for that nobody denies—but it is *how*, and *by whom*, these improvements shall be made? The gentleman says, they should be made *here*; I say, they should be made by the *States*; when thus made. We shall enjoy all their utility, and that only; when made by this Government, I fear, I believe, for the reasons I have already stated, and others, which I shall hereafter urge, that the system will eventually destroy the independence of the States; that the States, in their erect independence, are the pillars which support our great political fabric; that, if these be weakened, the whole fabric will crumble into atoms, and fall, with a tremendous crash; that, with it, will fall our political liberty, which, in the language of Cato, I value more than houses, villas, statues, pictures—and I will add, roads, canals, and bridges. Give me a people who are free, happy, and not oppressively taxed, though in the plain garb of republican simplicity, rather than one weighed down by oppression, though surrounded by all the monuments of the arts. A nation in this last condition, may be aptly represented by the description which has been given of a splendid city, that, when viewed at a distance, you behold only lofty turrets, magnificent steeples, and superb edifices; but when you shall have entered in, and taken a closer view, you find wretched hovels, dark and narrow alleys, which shut out the light of heaven, and, I will add, many of those who inhabit these abodes, with famine in their eyes, and ragged misery on their backs.

I now beg leave to address myself to the sober sense, the interest, nay, the pride of the States, and the people of the States, and to say, as I will clearly shew, that if, instead of heaping up their treasure here, they will keep it at home, they can execute for themselves all their splendid works, so eloquently described by the gentleman, without coming here, in the language of supplication, to beg us to do it for them; and that they will then maintain their independence, and continue to occupy their place as a respectable constellation in the political firmament, and not, like little twinkling stars, be so eclipsed by the meridian blaze of this Federal sun, as not to emit light enough even to make "darkness visible."

I ask the attention of the Committee, whilst I exhibit to them some plain and practical proofs of this proposition.

The revenue of the United States, which is the fund by which these improvements are to

be executed, is derived by the contribution of the people of the States. It unquestionably cannot be good policy for the States to furnish it to this Government, to be re-distributed by us, in the form of internal improvement, if that re-distribution be made in proportion to the respective contributions; for then it is apparent, that the portion which each State would thus receive back, would be less than that which it had advanced, by the amount of the expenses of collection. What, then, is the only remaining part of the alternative? Why, Sir, that the re-distribution must necessarily be *unequal*. To those States which may receive *more* than their proportionate share, I propound this solemn question: Is it reconcilable with the principles of justice, for them to make such a demand? To those which, on the contrary, may receive less than their due share, I put this question: Are you prepared thus to sacrifice your own interests, to give up the fruits of your own labor, to gratify the cupidity of those who, in the distribution of a common fund, clutch at more than the eternal principles of justice authorize them to ask? The demand of the one class would be as incompatible with the immutable principles of right, as the sacrifice of the other would be at war with their self-preservation. Sir, the force of this argument is infinitely increased by the consideration, that, as it has already happened, so it would most probably hereafter happen, that the States which contributed the *least*, would be precisely those which would receive the *most*—thus presenting the injustice of such a course, in the most vivid lights of contrast. And will the States which are to be the losers by this operation, continue longer blind to the plainest dictates of interest, and act as willing instruments in the promotion of the very scheme which is thus to injure them? *Do they not, must they not* perceive, that it can only be pressed for, by those States which are to profit by it? If they were to receive their *fair portion*, they would, at least, as I have said, suffer the loss of the expense of collection; if they were to receive *less* than their due share, this loss would be greatly increased; it is only, then, because they expect, and intend to receive more, that they can desire it; but whatever *they* receive *more* than that share, some other State, or States, must receive just so much *less*.

But, Mr. Chairman, I now beg leave to bring this question still nearer home, as to the interest of the States.

Sir, as soon as the public debt shall have been paid, if the present revenue shall continue, there will be an excess beyond the current disbursements of the year, probably of twelve millions of dollars per annum. This I will suppose is to be distributed in the form of Internal Improvements. Now, Sir, I will, to illustrate my idea of the practical operation of the system, take the case of some individual States. Supposing, *for the present*, that each State should contribute a share of the revenue in proportion to her population, and, with the exception of the South, which contributes much more, it may serve as a

tolerable basis for calculation, Virginia, containing at least one-twelfth of that population, would advance one million of dollars of this excess, each year. If this excess were left at her own disposition, in the course of ten years she could cover her whole territory with turnpike roads, and intersect the whole Commonwealth with improved streams and canals. What, Sir, has Virginia ever received from this Government? I believe the appropriation of \$150,000 to the Dismal Swamp Canal. Now this is less than one-sixth of *one year's surplus* of the revenue advanced by her people. Sir, let me put the case stronger. The annual amount of duty on coffee is about \$1,800,000, of which the twelfth part, the share paid by her, is almost precisely \$150,000, the amount which she has received; and yet I doubt not, many of my fellow-citizens in Virginia, and especially near Norfolk, seeing an immediate advantage from that single advance, have been charmed with the *benevolence* of this Government, and its *wonderful liberality*; though, as I have said, it is obvious that one year's excess of the revenue paid by that State alone, is between six and seven times the whole amount; that, in a few years, that excess, if kept at home, would pave all her roads, and improve all her rivers; and that, if you would even let her people *drink their coffee duty free, for one year*, when you do not want the money, that even that duty on coffee would be equal to the mighty boon which she has received.

Let me, Sir, say a word to my Kentucky friends, whom I value for their own good qualities, and on account of their descent; they are indeed well descended, coming, as they do, from the loins of the Ancient Dominion. She, too, "sees as in a glass darkly," in relation to this subject. For the sake of three or four cents per yard on cotton bagging, and a duty on hemp, which in practice does not much aid her, (for still Russian hemp drives her's for cordage out of the market) she has gone in support of the Tariff; though by its operation, I think her members here must admit, that she does not receive more than \$300,000, and pays an import duty of near a million. I ask pardon, Sir, for mentioning the tariff; but it crossed my current of thought, and I could not forbear to advert to this fact. But to come to her supposed great interest in internal improvement, education, &c.; she has gotten, I believe, \$100,000 for her Portland Canal, and is begging now, (I hope the term does not give offence) for another \$100,000, for that object, and some land for the Transylvania University. Suppose, by impertunate solicitation, in the general scramble, first for the loaf which adorns the Federal table, and then the crumbs which fall from it, she succeeds in her application, and thus, in two years, squeezes through with \$300,000 or \$400,000: Does not she perceive, do her members here not perceive, that one year's *excess* of the revenue, contributed by her alone, is equal to, nay, greater, than all she has, and will be able to get here, by two years supplication?

What, Sir, shall I say to the State of New York—yes, mighty New York—the strongest pillar of them all, upon which this Government

rests for its support? If she were to contribute in proportion to her population, which may now be estimated at near a sixth of the whole people of the Union, her whole contribution would approach four millions per annum, and her part of the annual excess, after the payment of the public debt, would be two millions—but call it a million and an half—and how much of the Federal loaf has she gotten? Sir, out of her own gigantic means, she has completed her great canal, by which the astonished Atlantic, if it has not heard Lake Erie roar, as was said by the poet of the Euxine and the Baltic, yet it has at least been made to communicate with that lake. And what, I repeat, has she gotten? Her members here can best answer the question. She, too, I believe, has some applications to us for aid. For how much? Is it for four, or five hundred thousand dollars? Suppose New York, too, to succeed in procuring this mighty sum, from this beneficent Government, can she be blind to the fact, that one year's excess of the revenue, paid by her own people, would be three times the amount? I could go on, and multiply similar examples, and propound similar questions; but these are sufficient to illustrate my views in relation to this branch of the subject. And now, Mr. Chairman, let me ask Virginia, Kentucky, New York, and, through them, all the States of this Union, are you willing blindly to give away your own means, *by wholesale*, and then come here, and humbly ask that a small part may be given back to you *by retail*? Are you willing to exchange the certain independent command over the whole excess of your own revenue, for a doubtful hope, that, by addressing the capricious will of this body, you may have a small part returned in the form of charity or beneficence? Every consideration of interest, of pride, of State sovereignty, conspires to forbid such a course. Mr. Chairman, must it not be humiliating to such a State as New York, instead of disposing of her own resources, by a *sic volo, sic jubeo*, to come here with an humble petition? Let us see, Sir, how it would read. The petition of the State of New York humbly represents, that whereas she has tamely and blindly poured forth her treasure into the Federal lap, by the contribution of millions, she begs that Congress will be pleased to restore her some three or four hundred thousand dollars, *ex speciali gratia*, and the petitioner, as in duty bound, will ever pay, &c. &c. Would she follow my counsel, Sir, I would say to her, that she owes it to her own character and dignity cheerfully to contribute to the Government, of which she is a part, her just share of the sum required to meet its necessary demands; that all beyond that she should retain, to be disbursed at her own sovereign will, and under her own exclusive control. Thus she would assume that lofty attitude for which God and nature designed her; and I would say to each and every of the other States, "go ye and do likewise."

Sir, when gentlemen talk to me about the *benevolence* of this Government, in this behalf, I tell them that their charity is at the expense of others: I tell them I cannot understand that

beneficence, which, by evaporation, draws all the moisture from *one portion of a common country*, (I say moisture without a figure, because the taxes are derived from the sweat of the brow,) and then pours all its fructifying showers upon *another*; thus converting the one into a waste of barren desolation, and imparting to the other extraordinary fertility. If they would take their rule of beneficence from the highest of all authorities, they would learn that the rain is made to fall equally upon the just and the unjust. They might surely so far emulate this great example, as to let their showers fall upon those portions of the country, the evaporation of whose moisture produced them.

Sir, another objection to this system is, that it utterly destroys the whole principle of representative responsibility. The whole efficacy of that principle, in relation to the disbursement of public money, consists in this: that we are to render an account of our stewardship to those whose money we expend. Is that the case in this system of Internal Improvement? No, Sir; it is one of its most unhappy, nay, fatal attributes, that the majority of the members here, by whose fiat the revenue is drawn from the minority of the community, owe no responsibility to that minority—but to the majority whom they represent. Of what avail then is it to make complaint of oppression? Will that complaint be regarded, though it be uttered in a tone of the deepest indignation? No, Sir; because the members who may practice the oppression owe their accountability to the very people who are benefitted by the oppression, and who constitute the majority. The prospect of relief, then, Sir, rests only upon this hope: that the people thus benefitted will discard from their service their benefactors, for the single reason, that they are their benefactors. They who live upon such hope, must, indeed, in the language of the adage, die of despair.

Let it not be said, Sir, that the same objection would lie against the action of State legislation; even if it did, I would say, that, because the people of the States must submit to *possible injustice*, on a small scale, it cannot be right that, therefore, this Government will force them to submit to it upon a much larger scale. But the argument is wholly fallacious. There is this striking and characteristic difference between the cases. The General Government, where it makes donations for this purpose to the States, or, as in the bill now before us, constructs the road itself, draws the means from a fund belonging to all the States, and applies it to the benefit of one or more, without even pretending to offer to the others any equivalent; whilst, on the contrary, in the case of a single State, whilst the minority, who contribute to an improvement of which they receive no benefit, though they cannot call the members representing the majority to account, yet find their equivalent in this. That, whenever the States do (what they do not often undertake) construct a road or canal upon public account, they impose tolls, which are equal to an ordinary profit upon the sum expended, and thus there is returned into the treasury, through the dividends, what is

equal to the interest of the capital. The minority are thus indemnified; and though, occasionally, improvident schemes may be engaged in, which fail to produce this result, yet this is the principle on which they act.

Another objection to this system is, that it has a direct and almost irresistible tendency to perpetuate upon us a revenue, having no reference to the ordinary demands upon the Government, but one which will always afford a large excess for the execution of these projects.

What State, or States, which expected to derive aid from the Federal treasury towards the improvement of their territory, would ever be found ready to reduce the taxes? Would not the inevitable effect be, that they would thereby defeat the very means by which, and by which only, their objects could be effected? And would we not, therefore, as soon expect, that a hungry man would destroy the only food by which his hunger could be satisfied, as that these States would contribute, by their votes, to dry up those fountains from which they expected copious streams to flow, for their particular use? Shall we, then, by a perseverance in this course, hold out a constant motive, which shall operate directly against any reduction of the taxation of our people? There are already motives enough of this kind; I hope and trust that we shall do nothing which will either add to their number, or increase their force.

Mr. Chairman, strong as are the objections which I have already urged, there are others, yet stronger, arising from the probable, I had almost said, inevitable political effects which this system is calculated to produce.

From the moment that the present Constitution was formed, the public mind was divided between two opposite opinions, as to the practical operation and tendency of our complicated scheme of government. The great object had been, so to distribute power between the State and Federal authorities, that each should be able, by its own intrinsic energy, to maintain itself, unimpaired, within its own sphere, and thus preserve the equilibrium of the political balance. The one party feared, that, notwithstanding the strength infused into the new Government, which was partly Federal, and partly national, yet, that the States which composed it, would, in the progress of time, become an overmatch for it, and, by encroachments upon its rightful power, produce, first weakness, then anarchy, and finally, disunion. They reasoned from history, which, as they supposed, proved the weakness of all former confederacies, in every shape; and from what they considered the advantages which the States would possess in any contest with the Federal head. The other party took the opposite ground; they argued, that, in the distribution of powers, all that were great and formidable, including, amongst others, the great powers over the purse and the sword, had been given to the Federal Government; and that, therefore, the danger was, not of encroachment on the part of the States, upon the head, but of usurpation, on the part of the head, of the residuary powers reserved to the States. Let

us now, Sir, consult the oracle of experience, and see how its response settles this great question. Let not the committee be alarmed with an apprehension, that I am going to violate my promise, and discuss the question as to the constitutional power over this subject. No, Sir; I have no such purpose; my purpose is, to show how even the great men of other days were in error, as to the advantages which they supposed the States to have in a struggle with this Government; and how powerfully this system, in its progressive course, will operate to deprive them of their power of self support, and still more decisively to turn the scale against them.

Let us examine some of the prominent advantages which were supposed to be on the side of the States, and on which they might safely rely for self defence, in the event of any collision.

One of these was, that more individuals would be employed under the authority of the several States, than under that of the United States.

Sir, whoever will examine the number of officers in the Army and Navy, the cadets, the midshipmen, the hosts of Registers and Receivers, and others employed in relation to the public lands, the Diplomatic Corps, with all its appendages, all the great Executive officers, including the President, Vice President, the heads of Departments, heads of Bureaux, with their hundreds of clerks, the whole tribe of officers engaged in the collection of the revenue, the Judges, Attorneys, Marshals, and others, constituting the Judicial Corps, the numerous mail contractors upon some 80 or 90,000 miles of post road, the eight thousand postmasters, besides others, not reducible to any particular class, and many of whom are to be re-appointed every four years, will find, that there is not a county, city, town, village, or even hamlet, in the United States, which the Federal arm does not reach; he will be led to doubt whether, even in numbers, this Government does not exceed those of the States; but, if to numbers be added the dignity of office, the character of duties to be performed, and, above all, the very high emoluments of Federal offices, compared with those of the States, he cannot for a moment doubt but that, in point of official patronage, that of this Government is immeasurably beyond that of the States.

But, Sir, if, in official patronage, the advantage be now on the Federal side, how much more is it on that side in point of pecuniary patronage, or the disbursement of money? Follow me, Sir, I beseech you, for a moment, whilst I make the comparison in this respect. I suppose that the annual revenue of the eight largest States does not average more than half a million each, and that, of the sixteen others, not more than an hundred thousand dollars each; some I know may considerably exceed it, but others fall greatly short; thus, for example, the revenue of Illinois, a few years ago, did not exceed \$16,000; I exclude from this estimate, county and town taxes for purposes of police; the aggregate then of the revenue of all the twenty-four States, is about \$5,600,000. Now, Sir, we know, that the ave-

rage of the United States' revenue, for many years, has not been less than \$24,000,000; here, then, the advantage is more than four to one on the side of the United States.

Another advantage which the writers in the Federalist supposed the States to possess, was, that the powers delegated to the Federal Government, were few and defined. Those which remain in the State Governments were numerous and indefinite. The powers of the first, say they, will be exercised principally on external objects, as war, peace, negotiation and foreign commerce. Those of the other, that is the States, extend to the lives, liberties and property, of the people, and the internal order, improvement, and prosperity, of the State. I give almost the very words, and in the last paragraph, I give them verbatim. Now, Sir, if it will not be thought a violation of my promise, not to make a constitutional discussion, I will remark, that the last paragraph quoted, if you will only omit the word "order," assigns internal improvements in so many words to the State authority—but no more of that. I quoted this extract, in substance, to shew, that one of the supposed advantages of the States was, that their powers were numerous and indefinite, whilst those of the United States were few and defined.

Now, Sir, to prove the egregious error here, I need only state this singular fact, that, whilst the laws of Virginia, being emanations of powers numerous and indefinite, are contained in two ordinary octavo volumes, those of the United States, having powers but few and defined, have swollen to five large ones, exclusive of two containing a general index, treaties, &c. The same writer has fallen into another error; he tells us, that the operations of the Federal Government will be most extensive and important in times of war and danger; as far as its legislative operations go, they are more extensive in peace. The writer then mistakes, when he supposes that the advantage, in this respect, is on the side of the States.

All these supposed advantages, then, on which the States were to rely for their own defence, are not on their side, but against them. Now, Sir, if to this you add, that upon the system of internal improvement, twelve millions annually are to be disposed of, by this Government, at its will, is there any man sanguine enough to indulge even the hope, much less the expectation, that the political equilibrium between our different governments will be preserved? Is there any man so blind as not to see, that the scale of the States will be made to kick the beam, by its comparative want of weight? Sir, let us, as a subject of curious speculation, trace the practical operation of this annual sum of twelve millions, to be distributed in favors, amongst the States.

In private life, Sir, it is a proposition which no man, who knows human nature, would even doubt, that the person having it in his power to confer an important benefit, will control, nay command, the will and the action of one who is desirous of receiving it. Where is the difference, in this respect, between individuals and States? Are States any thing more than large

masses of individuals, bringing together all their passions and infirmities? Sir, the only difference is, that the command of will and action, where States are the subjects to be acted on, is as much more extensive and injurious in its effects, than where individuals are the subjects, as the whole population of the State exceeds an individual in number; the evil is indefinitely increased, but the principle is the same.

I will suppose, then, Sir, that the period has arrived for one of those annual dispositions of twelve millions of dollars. Various States present their humble petitions; but, according to the principle contended for, this Government has the unqualified power to make that disposition as it pleases; to give to some *more*, to others less; to some or to one the *whole amount*, and to the others *none at all*. Think you, Sir, that the States, which are most firm and erect in the spirit of independence, will be most likely to succeed? Or will it not be rather those which assume the garb of the greatest humility; those which are most zealous in their allegiance; those, in fine, which are most decided in their adhesion to the powers that be? Let me put a stronger case. Suppose that there is some magnificent and favorite project to be carried, and the votes of a particular State are necessary to accomplish the object, and that State shall have been a little *impracticable*. Think you, Sir, that the time may never come when Philip's gold will be applied, and applied successfully too, by the *douceur* of a road or canal? Let our knowledge of human nature, let the experience of other nations, answer the question. Sir, that man had read deeply in the volume of human nature—if I mistake not, it was the man of Pella—who said, that an ass, laden with gold, would find his way through the gates of the strongest city. Look at the history of England, and learn thence a lesson of practical wisdom as to the influence of patronage. The Stuarts struggled hard to govern England by prerogative; but the sturdy spirit of that nation would not bow down before its power. No, Sir; instead of this, the result of the great conflict between prerogative and privilege was, that one of that family lost his head, and another his crown. But what the power of prerogative could not do, has been effected by the still small voice of *influence*, of influence derived from patronage. These historical facts are an exemplification, in actual life, of the instructive moral to be derived from the fable of the traveller, the wind, and the sun. The wind endeavored, with all its blustering force, to cause the traveller to throw off his cloak; by increasing efforts, he was able to retain it; but when the sun darted his rays, commencing with genial warmth, and continuing to pour upon him a gradually increasing heat, he was finally compelled to yield to the gentler force of the sun what he did not yield to the greater violence of the wind. Compare the condition of that country at the Revolution in 1688, when the whole National Debt was scarcely one million and a quarter of pounds sterling, with its condition at, and since,

the close of the last great European war, with a debt then of more than eleven hundred millions, and even now of eight hundred and forty millions. Look at the lofty independence of the Parliament of the Revolution, and the relation in which they now stand to the crown; that relation I forbear to describe, because it is matter of universal notoriety, and is to be found in the animated speeches of their own orators. And, tell me, what has produced the humiliating change? What has caused a parliament, whose unconquerable spirit once "*overawed majesty itself*," now to be *so tame, so pliant, so tractable*, that a reform of Parliament has been, and still continues to be, called for by the nation, in a voice which deafens the ears of the Parliament itself, and makes the Administration tremble "through all the classes of venality?" The cause is to be found in *influence*; in those streams of patronage which issue from the prolific sources of office, and the disbursement of countless millions, and which so copiously overflow that kingdom. Sir, her own illustrious Chatham said, that, entrench themselves as they pleased behind parchment, the sword would find its way to the vitals of the Constitution. I say that *patronage* has found its way to the vitals of her Constitution.

We, too, are men, and cannot claim to be exempt from the infirmities of humanity. The same causes, if permitted to operate, will produce the same effects *here, as there*. Let it be our part (the best service which we can render to our country) to avert from her borders, such a calamity.

Mr. Chairman, our Government is an experiment, now in the progress of trial, to solve this great political problem, whether it is possible to unite the liberty and happiness of a republic with the strength and energy of a monarchy? Should it fail, the hopes of mankind will be lost, and lost forever. Should the States of this Union ever be brought to lose their lofty spirit of independence, and bow down, in deferential homage, before the Federal Government, as supplicants for favors, our political fabric must fall, because the pillars which supported it, will have declined from their perpendicular, and given way. We shall then learn, from fatal experience, that the lever of a single Government, whose fulcrum is here, and whose length is sufficient to extend over this wide spread republic, will bear with a pressure so heavy, as to crush our liberty beneath it. That liberty is above all price; and, like the golden apples of the Hesperides, will be taken from us, whensoever the States, which are placed as the dragons to guard it, shall be lulled asleep, by the opiates which shall be poured out from the Federal Treasury. To preserve its spirit, requires as sleepless vigilance, as did the sacred fire of Vesta, which was committed to the charge of the Vestal virgin; the extinguishment of that, only *portended* great calamities; the extinguishment of this, would itself be the greatest of all calamities. That, we are told, might be rekindled from the rays of the sun; there is no sun to relume this, if it should be once extinguished; but a long night of darkness

will overshadow the land. I call upon you, then, as you love your country, as you value the rights of self-government, as you wish perpetuity to the Constitution, to make a pause,

a solemn pause, in this dangerous career. Sir, I have done my duty--the decision is with you--may God grant that it may be auspicious in its results!

APPENDIX.

Since delivering the foregoing speech, a report of the Canal Commissioners of New York, in relation to their great Erie and Champlain Canals, has been received, from which the following facts and statements are derived:

Whole amount expended in 1826, consisting of interest on the original cost, superintendence, repairs, &c.	\$1,121,388 96
<i>Cr.</i> By whole revenue derived from Canals during the same year,	715,245 89
Balance against Canals,	<u>\$406,143 07</u>
1827. Whole amount expended as above	993,436 59
Whole revenue from Canals,	846,651 73
Balance against Canals	<u>146,784 86</u>
1828. Upon same principles, a balance of expenses, over the revenue from the canals. Balance against Canals,	<u>92,369 81</u>
1829. Upon same principles, a balance of expenses over and above the revenue for this year. Balance against Canals,	<u>110,623 51</u>

It appears from that report, that the whole amount of the debt, which the commissioners

thought justly chargeable to the canals at the close of the year 1826, was \$10,272,316 76; and that this debt, instead of having been reduced by the tolls on the canals, has increased each year, so that, on the 1st of January, 1830, it amounted to \$11,398,796 22. Add the deficits for the four years, with interest on them, makes the whole debt, chargeable to the canals on the 1st January, 1830, \$12,237,399 70.

The report adds, that, supposing the canals to have increased the duty on salt thirty-three and one third per cent. and to have added two or three per cent. to the duties on sales at auction, still, regarding them in the most favorable light in which any reasonable calculation can place them, the canals have done nothing towards the extinguishment of their debt; and that they have not paid the annual interest of that debt, together with the moneys expended upon them for superintendence and repairs. That, with respect to the tolls on the descending trade, they cannot be advantageously increased, and they only estimate every increase which can be made of the tolls on the ascending trade at \$35,000.

If, then, in these canals, opening, the one to Lake Champlain, and the other through Lake Erie, the most extensive which can probably be constructed in the United States, and where the work has been done by State authority, this be the result, what must it be as to profit or actual benefit from those constructed by the United States? Here is a practical commentary upon the reasoning in the foregoing speech.

