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SPEECH
OF
HENRY A. WISE,
Of Virginia,

ON THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE IN THE HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES, DEC. 15, 1836
UPON RESOLUTION OF MR. HAYNES, OF GEORGIA, AS FOLLOWS:

MR. WISE said, I have risen to oppose this third resolution entirely. I object to the whole of it, and shall proceed to set forth my reasons.

This resolution now reads, that "So much of the said Message as relates to the *finances* and *every thing connected therewith*; to the *safe-keeping of the public moneys*, and *every thing connected therewith*," &c. &c. be referred to the Committee of Ways and Means.

Sir, I am glad that this Message is at length about to receive some little notice from this House. Poor, neglected thing! it has, thus far, in the progress of the session, received as little attention here from the friends of the President himself, as it has received from the country at large. It seems to have literally "fallen still-born from the press."

Sir, a patriot as well as a President may make his appeal to Heaven; and if two vile sinners may reverently unite in expressing their gratitude to the "Giver of all Good for his benign protection," I will devoutly, without malice, and with perfect charity towards an erring brother man, unite with the President of these United States in returning most humble thanks to that Gracious God, whose special providence I do believe has ever mercifully guarded and guided the destiny of this nation, for the unspeakable blessing that, notwithstanding our own unworthiness, and the wickedness and folly of those appointed to rule over us, and notwithstanding the wreck, the ruin, and abuse they have made of Heaven's best gifts to us, *we, the People*, have still left to us "the ELEMENTS of national prosperity!" We are not wholly cut off and destroyed; there is a hope left; there is something still worth preserving, thanks be to God! and not to those wicked rulers who have not had His fear before their eyes, or the good of His people in their hearts! Providence alone could have saved to this nation the little it has left of all its late abundance. Let us, then, render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things which are His. Let us leave to the just judgment of God that demagogue who could impiously dare, in the very act of a hypocritical expression of devout gratitude, to attempt to strip Him of His own honor and glory. Heaven cannot be flattered out of its prerogatives, though "*our citizens*," who are now complimented for their "*industry and prudence*," and who were of late so sternly reprimanded for their "*speculation*" and "*luxury*," may be cajoled and cheated out of their rights and power. So much for such *political devotions*, which it would be impious and profane thus to introduce, if it were not to reprimand them for their insincerity, hypocrisy, and pharisaism, and for their fraud upon both God and man!

Sir, on the first Monday of September last, the Congress of the United States were called together, by special proclamation of the President, to brood over a state of commercial and financial ruin. The President sent us a Message, in which he attempted to trace out the causes of the unparalleled distress. He told us in that Message to look any where, every where, rather than to Washington for those causes. He sent us abroad for them. He said all Europe was embarrassed—*overaction* had pervaded the world; our own people were accused of luxury, and extravagance, and overtrading; the Government's own pet banks were accused of the basest perfidy; our public domain was regarded as the cursed foster-mother of speculation; the distribution of the very surplus of our wealth was made to bear its portion of the blame of national bankruptcy; and Heaven itself was arraigned for bad crops of wheat, for an "*over-production of cotton*," and for its visitation of fire at the metropolis of our trade! Any and every thing on earth or in heaven was the cause, save and excepting the true cause—*mal-administration*.

But, whatever the cause, a *remedy* was needed. The President proposed but a single remedy for permanent relief. All tried remedies were repudiated and rejected, and another yet untried "experiment" was proposed in their stead. Every evil was to be remedied, every wrong redressed, every malady cured, by what was called *the sub-Treasury*. A little more power, a little more prerogative, a little more patronage to the Executive, and all would be right again, and right forever! To collect the public money in specie, to tax the People to pay their taxes, to destroy the credit system, to divorce the banks from the Government, and the Government from its citizens, was all that was to constitute the great panacea, the king cure-all for the diseases of the body politic; and, surely, hard money was the best money, and *Executive office-holders* were the most faithful hands to keep it!

With all due despatch this recommendation of the President was adopted by the Committees of Finance in both branches of Congress; they reported their bills *pari passu* with the Message; the measure was passed by an humbled, disarmed, and expunged Senate, converted, by instructions of the White House, into a most convenient instrument of Executive dominion, and it was sent down to this House of the People for its sanction and approbation. Here, sir, it met its fate—the fate it deserved! It was laid upon the table—laid there to sleep the sleep of death—never to be called forth from its sepulchre—never even to show our own power to reanimate it; it was laid as an unhappy ghost or an evil spirit, never more to rise to trouble us, or our heirs after us!

No other permanent measure of finance was proposed or recommended by the President. We passed the laws thought to be necessary for the temporary relief of the country, and we went home. We went home to report to the People, and to receive from them the expression of their will. We have seen our constituents, and heard the voice of the multitude. Have we not been instructed? How have the sovereigns declared? Are our rulers deaf? Is the voice of the People not to be obeyed? From Maine to Mississippi have the voices come up—they are *one voice*—not in murmurs, but as the sound of a tempest! What means that shout—that roar of artillery? that illumination? that festive jubilee? What mean these mighty gatherings of the People in their majesty, in every city, town, and hamlet? The People were yesterday in sack-cloth and ashes; they were mourning for their losses, and there was none to comfort them. Has light suddenly burst out of darkness? Has deliverance suddenly come whence they least expected it? Or, has some other great blessing made them forget their misery for the moment? Sir, *New York is an empire of freedom!* Is there any mistake? Who can cipher the People out of their will? Who can turn them aside from their hope? Surely, none will dare to attempt to turn this joy again into mourning! No, the President himself now will surely see his error, retrace his steps, and be afraid to meet this array of the people—the People united—the People opposing—more terrible than an army with banners! Surely he—he whom the breath of the People has made and can unmake; he who has professed so often and earnest to bow lowest to their majesty; *he will* obey "the supreme law of the Republic"—the voice of the People!

Such was the condition of things, Mr. Chairman, and such the state of public feeling, when we arrived here to take our seats this session: such was the expectation and the desire of the People when we received this Message. It was anxiously looked for, and what is it? Does the President relent? Does he yield to this demonstration of the popular will? Does he even offer a compromise? Does he conciliate in the least? Does he mitigate his plans? No, sir, no! He hurls back in the face of the People his rejected petition for more power—he puts us, their Representatives, upon terms, sir! He tells us that there shall be no peace—no permanent plan of relief—no guaranty of prosperity—no guard of safety—nothing, nothing but the *sub-Treasury* still—nothing else but that which he before proposed, and which we before rejected!

Mr. Chairman, let no one mistake this Message. The President does not, he dared not yield. At first I thought it was a retreat. A little reflection taught me that all appearance of a compromise in it is but a snare. Let no one be deceived by its cunning. He can gain nothing now by his

six-times repeated eulogies upon "my predecessor"—the Opposition is not to be led off upon the various false issues of a war with Mexico, of a national bank, or of graduating the price of the public lands—the attention of the nation is not to be diverted from the paramount subject of a deranged currency and its causes, and curses, and remedy—and I do trust that no true Conservative is to be entrapped by any compromise upon the measure of a special-deposit system. Sir, that system is the sub-Treasury in disguise—it is the same "rose," and "smells" none the sweeter under its new "name." Let no one be deceived by this half-intimated substitution of the special-deposit plan. Attempt to organize it, and reason and argument will exhibit it resulting in nothing else than in the same sub-Treasury scheme. Still the question must be—in what shall the revenue be collected? Specie? The notes of specie-paying banks? Shall the banks be paid for the keeping? How much? If nothing at all, they will not take the special deposits, and at last, in either event, whether paid or not, the plan will result, and will be designed to result, in the sub-Treasury scheme. No one knows this better than Ritchie; and who will be decoyed by him back again to the service of this plot against the People? Any mode, direct or indirect, is to be adopted to place the public money in the Briarian hands of the Executive. The fact is, the President tells us that he has "found no reason to change his own opinion," and he "cannot therefore advise a renewal of the connexion" of the Government with banks, "which circumstances have dissolved." He still adheres to "the expediency of adopting the system proposed"—the sub-Treasury system.

Now, sir, let me ask, why does he still persist in the "system proposed?" Why does he abuse our patience by again recommending this repudiated plan? He tells us it was not his understanding that the proceedings of Congress were *final*; and that, *therefore*, he deems it his duty to bring it once more before us! Sir, I maintain that our proceedings, on the contrary, were not final on any other system *except* this very "system proposed" and rejected. I affirm that our action on that and that alone was *final*. There was a clear majority of *thirteen* for laying the sub-Treasury bill on the table, and I aver that there would not have been less than a majority of *nine* to defeat it entirely upon a direct vote devoting it to the doom of eternal death instead of sleep. This must have been understood as the will of this House, both here and at the White House. The action was known by us to be final—it may now, though, be called *overaction*! It is impossible that our action could have been misunderstood.

The President says that—

"At the last session *three* modes of collecting, safe-keeping, and transferring the public money were presented for consideration. These were: *the creation of a national bank*; the revival, with modifications, of the *deposit system* established by the act of the 23d of June, 1836, permitting the use of the public moneys by the banks; and the discontinuance of the use of such institutions for the purposes referred to, with suitable provisions for their accomplishment through the *agency of public officers*. Considering the opinions of both Houses of Congress on the first two propositions as expressed in the negative, in which I entirely concur, it is unnecessary for me again to recur to them."

Now, sir, I say that but *one* plan, *one* mode of relief alone was proposed by the President at the late special session. But *one* was *officially* proposed, and but *one* duly brought to the consideration of Congress.

Mr. Chairman, did you, at that time, hear any plan proposed for the *creation of a national bank*? Is there a gentleman on this floor who did hear of such a proposition or plan? What was the plan? What its features? What the amount of stock? To be held for what duration of time, on what terms? Who proposed it, and how? Whence did it come—from the Executive, or from what committee? The creation of a national bank, sir, was *not* proposed, and the President knew so at the time he penned this Message. Certainly he did not allude to the action and report of the Committee of Ways and Means upon the petitions referred to them. Sir, we all remember the manner in which that report was made, and the action upon it. Did that committee examine the merits of any plan for a national bank? Did they advise and consult, and deliberate and debate whether some plan of a national bank might not be devised? No. Memorials were referred to them which they never read, according to their own confession, in committee; and in their report upon these, they assumed the province to say for us and our posterity, now and for all time to come

that a national bank was, under any and all circumstances, under any and all changes of public sentiment and interest, inexpedient; and this without setting forth a single reason or argument for the negative proposition. A mere *negative* proposition it was; at a time, too, when the country was groaning with distress, and earnestly and painfully looking for something positive to be done. Was this negative proposition thus introduced, considered, and discussed? No, sir, the debate upon it was cut off by the *previous question*. What was said on it was spoken piece meal in the morning hour; the proceeding of the House upon it was any thing but final, and the judgment of the House upon it is entitled to any thing but our respect. It was respected by no one at the time. Who regarded it as settling the question of a national bank? No one, not even the President himself. So much for the mode of creating a national bank.

The opinion of Congress was not expressed in the negative fairly and directly, upon the plan of again reviving the deposite system of the act of the 23d of June, 1836. That mode was not proposed by the President. It was presented in the form of an *amendment* to the sub-Treasury bill by my colleague, (Mr. GARLAND,) and rejected, in part, because *it was an amendment*. Several voted against that plan as an *amendment*, because they desired to reserve the *main* bill—the sub-Treasury scheme—for a separate and single doom. They desired to put that bill to death by itself—to sentence it to a solitary fate—to strip it of all its appendages and expose it naked, *in the form in which the chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means* (Mr. CAMBRELENG) *boasted he desired it to go to the People previous to the fall elections*—naked; as a mark for the aim of the votes of this House and of the People. It was peculiarly preserved from all amendment, was not permitted to escape under any modification, but was deliberately set apart for torture and death and *final sleep!* And yet, notwithstanding it was thus predeterminedly doomed, and its fate sealed, as it was thought and hoped, forever, it *is again presented to us!* Solemnly final as was the vote condemning it, the President, in defiance of the will of Congress and the People, reiterates its recommendation! And, sir, why?—why, in the name of the People—why, in the name of that respect which is due to this House from a co-ordinate branch of the Government—why is this rejected, spurned, condemned proposition again thrust back in our teeth? Sir, I looked upon the Message of the present incumbent to the late special session of Congress as the boldest political paper ever officially promulgated in this country, setting up, as it did, the monstrous heresy of despotism, that the *Government is one thing and the People another*; but this Message, sir, now under consideration, is bolder than that, all hollow! It *dares and defies the will of the People* manifestly declared against that abominable heresy!! If Mr. Van Buren be personally timid, he is politically brave. Here is no “backing out.” Sir, he plainly, flatly, promptly tells you why he will not in this instance respect the declared will of the People. Hear him—

“In respect to the last” (the sub-Treasury,) “you have had an opportunity since your adjournment, not only to test still further the expediency of the measure, *by the continued practical operation* of such parts of it as are now in force.”—

[Here Mr. WISE suspended reading, and said: I will not stop long here to inquire how it happens that this rejected measure is in “continued practical operation” in any of its parts? I would call the attention of all, however, to the fact that, notwithstanding its decided rejection, after much deliberation and the fullest discussion by this House, this same scouted system is still continued by the Executive alone in full “practical operation.” What need of legislation, when its expediency is demonstrated by itself, by its own operation *without law?* It has an existence and operation already to prove it should be created! Why did not the President first apply to the law-making power for its existence? Whence came it? From the President alone—the monstrous truth stares us in the face! But I will leave this for the present, and read on.]

“—But also to discover—what should ever be sought for and regarded with the utmost deference—the *opinions and wishes of the People*. The *national will is the supreme law of the Republic*: and, on all subjects within the limits of his constitutional powers, should be *faithfully obeyed by the public servant.*”

And so say I. Now why will he not obey "the national will," the supreme law of the Republic, *in this case*? He boldly tells you why he will not:

"Since the measure in question was submitted to your consideration, most of you have enjoyed the advantage of personal communication with your constituents."

He allows to us the advantage of knowing what our constituents want and will:

"For in one State only has an election been held for the Federal Government; but the early day at which it took place deprives the measure under consideration of much of the support it might have otherwise have derived from the result."

He looks then to other elections where "the measure" might have derived all the "support" which could have been expected in any event from the result:

"Local elections for State officers have, however, been held in several of the States, *with the expediency of the plan proposed by the Executive has been more or less discussed.*"

"More or less discussed!" Please bear that in mind. The expediency of the measure, the President himself admits, *has been more or less discussed*; and he *nowhere denies the fact that the People have declared their will respecting the measure.*" "You will, I am confident, yield to their results the respect due to every expression of the public voice." Yes, *we* certainly, truly, and faithfully will. But why will not *he*? He tells us:

"Desiring, however, to *arrive at truth* and a *just* view of the subject in all its bearings, you will at the same time remember that *questions of far deeper and more immediate local interest* than the fiscal plans of the National Treasury were involved in those local elections. *Above all*, we cannot overlook the *striking fact* that *there were at the time in those States more than one hundred and sixty millions of bank capital*, of which large portions were subject to actual forfeiture;" (that relates, sir, to one State;)—"other large portions, upheld only by special and limited legislative indulgences;" (and that, sir, to another state;)—"and most of it, if not all, to a greater or less extent, dependent for a continuance of its corporate existence upon the will of the State Legislatures to be then chosen;" (and that, sir, to yet another State.) "Apprized of this circumstance, you will judge whether it is not most probable that the *peculiar condition* of that *vast interest* in these respects, the extent to which it has been spread through all the ramifications of society, its direct connexion with the then pending elections, and the feelings it was calculated to infuse into the canvass have exercised a far greater influence over the result than any which could possibly have been produced by a conflict of opinion, in respect to a question in the administration of the General Government, more remote and far less important in its bearings upon that interest."

So far, so good. So far he only ascribes to "interest" the control of the People in the exercise of their suffrage. He proceeds:

"I have found no reason to change my own opinion as to the expediency of adopting the system proposed, being *perfectly satisfied* that there will be *neither stability nor safety*, either in the fiscal affairs of the Government, or in the pecuniary affairs of individuals and corporations, so long as a connexion exists between them, which, like the past, *offers such strong inducements* to make them the subjects of political agitation."

Here, you will observe, he is, in contradiction to his last Message, for taking again under his paternal care the "stability" and "safety" of the *pecuniary affairs of individuals and corporations*; and thus far he denominates the influences which govern the will of the People to be those only of "interest" and "feeling." In the next sentence he progresses a step further, and goes on from influences of *interest* and *feeling* to those of "principle." He says:

"Indeed, I am *more than ever* convinced of the dangers to which the *free and unbiassed exercise of political opinion—the only sure foundation and safeguard of republican government*—would be exposed by any further increase of the already overgrown influence of corporate authorities."

This, then, is *his* judgment. He has made up *his* opinion as to the probability of the influence of bank capital on local elections! He is "*more than ever convinced*"—by what? The recent local elections? Of what is he convinced? That the "exercise of political opinion—the only sure foundation and safeguard of republican government—is *enslaved and biassed.*" By what? *One hundred and sixty millions of bank capital!* And here is the reason why *he* will not yield to the results of the recent local elections the respect due to every expression of the public voice! *He charges the People with being the corrupted slaves of the banks!* and says, "I cannot, therefore consistently with my views of duty, advise a renewal of a connexion which circumstances have dissolved."

The people, says the President of the United States in his annual Message to both Houses of Congress, have been bribed and corrupted, and the exercise of their political opinion enslaved and biassed by the influence among them of some millions of bank capital! This will commend us as a People to the nations abroad! How will it make every native American cheek tingle with shame when quoted upon him in some foreign land, where serfs of despots deny the capability and virtue of the People to govern themselves! Sir, it is a libel upon our People—upon our country—upon democratic self-government! No foreigner should utter it to my face though he knelt in the presence of a throned monarch! I deny and denounce the foul aspersion upon the citizens and institutions of my country; and cry shame upon her recreant son who dares thus to slander her character and detract from her moral and political example. He is a *bastard* without shame and would sell his birthright for a mess of pottage! Bribe and corrupt others he would, as he accuses others of being bribed and corrupted! The President thus gravely charges our own People, and he recommends to us again a measure which we have once rejected, for these precious reasons: first, because, though rejected by Congress, it is still "*in continued practical operation*:" and, secondly, because, though *condemned by the people*—which he admits—*they were corrupted and bribed by bank capital to condemn it!*

He admits that the national will is the supreme law of the republic—that elections, federal and State, have been held; that the expediency of the plan proposed by the Executive has been, more or less, discussed at the local elections, and that these have resulted against the plan proposed by him. He refuses to these results his respect—he doubts and defies the supreme law! He says that the will of the People is tainted—it has been bought, and should not be respected. Though thundered in his ears against his measures, he heeds it not—it is bank thunder! and he sets up his individual opinions and convictions against all the world.

To say nothing of the total want of all dignity and decency in these allusions of the Message to the *local* elections, let me inquire what *right* the President had, in addressing the National Legislature, to take cognizance of the *local elections*? Has he, or have we, jurisdiction over State elections? Can we examine into the influences which control them? Suppose that a committee of inquiry into these serious allegations of President Van Buren in regard to the influences which enslaved and biassed the local elections were to be proposed by this House; could such a committee investigate the charges? No. We have no right to institute such an inquiry. I should oppose it; first, because it would merely enable the President to *white-wash* his aspersions upon the People, and, in the next place, such a committee would put the *People* of the United States upon trial! What, sir, put the People upon trial! The servant arraigns his master! The subject his sovereign! No, sir, no; the President, who arraigns, and we who would try, would be hurled from our seats of power and trust by the indignant scorn of an insulted People, for our folly and insolence! Sir, I am bold enough to inquire into any thing legitimately within the scope of my scrutiny, into any thing touching the conduct of the People's trustees and servants, but I acknowledge the People as my masters and sovereigns whilst sitting here as their representative; and I warn him, too, sir, who sits in the White House, lest a palace may have made him forget who and what he is, that they also are *his* masters and sovereigns!

There is a question of State rights, too, involved in this matter, Mr. Chairman. I ask my Southern State rights friends if they can brook this assault upon State elections? If this be a subject fit to be introduced in an Executive Message to Congress, it is fit for our deliberation and action. Now, for one, I disclaim all jurisdiction over local elections by the Federal Government, or any department or officer thereof. I object, then, to this resolution of the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. HAYNES,) because it embraces this part of the Message, which is an improper subject of Executive communication, and ought not to be referred to any committee.

Does the gentleman propose that the Committee of Ways and Means shall take up this inquiry, whether the People's political will was biassed and enslaved by bank capital? An inquiry, indeed, for pious democrats! The Committee of Ways and Means sitting in judgment upon the People,

and inquiring into the condition of their morals! My word for it, they would report on the side of the President; they would endorse his charge against the *bank capital* at least, if not against the People! A beautiful party of patent democrats, acknowledging "the voice of the People to be the supreme law of the Republic," sitting, gravely sitting in judgment upon the liberty and character of the People! This is *modern* democracy! A more pertinent and far more useful inquiry ought rather to be instituted by this House into the interference of the Executive and its officers with the freedom of elections. That, I conceive, would be a legitimate inquiry. But to an inquiry of this kind these "*democrats*" have ever been opposed upon the ground that we the Representatives have no right to inquire into the public and political conduct of Executive officers. As chairman of a committee to investigate executive abuses, I proposed, over and again, to inquire about the conduct of all the Departments, from the President down, touching the freedom of elections—but I was invariably voted down by a democratic majority of the committee, upon the ground that the Executive was not responsible, save by impeachment. And shall this same Executive now pretend to the right of inquiry into the conduct of the People, and the influences which governed the exercise of their political opinions; arraign that conduct, and impute to those influences corruption, and the worst of tendencies? Call you this democracy, sir? It is a spurious, a degenerate democracy!

But, sir, I do not intend formally to defend the People. I cannot sit in judgment upon them. They need no defender. I leave it to the immediate representatives of those who have expressed their will, and whose character and franchise have been thus assailed by the President, to defend both.

The voice of the People was the voice of God whilst it was a "*sweet voice*" in favor of power and prerogative. Now that it has declared for the People themselves, it is impugned and challenged as corruptly biased and enslaved. The Ex-President charged the local banks with the basest perfidy; their officers have never defended themselves to this day. The present incumbent now arraigns them for bribing and corrupting the People, and, my word for it, the people will be their own advocates, juries and judges! They will defend themselves.

But sir, I am not only opposed to the reference of that part of the Message already dwelt upon, but also to such reference of any part or the whole of that document, to the Committee of Ways and Means. My reason for opposing the reference of *finance* to that committee is, in the first place, one founded in the constitution of the committee itself. That committee, it is well understood, is already prepared and ready to move with the President in carrying out this favorite sub-Treasury scheme. This House is composed of a majority of Whigs and Conservatives, and yet *six* out of the *nine* members on that committee are Locofocos—committed to maintain and perfect this measure, to which a majority of this House and of the People are opposed. Destructives, as I call them, they go for the divorce of the People from their Governments, State and Federal, and from their institutions—for the destruction of credit, and for a system calculated to make one citizen the prey of another, and the whole People the prey of the office-holders. The Speaker has expressly formed that committee with careful reference to the ends and aims of an executive which seems bent on "rule or ruin." Is it not certain that committee will adopt the same financial measure which we have rejected, because the President has again recommended it? Do we not know already that that committee agrees in whole and in part with the President, and that the People have nothing to hope from them? Can we expect that committee to think, to deliberate, to discuss at all, except how they shall best subserve and effect the will of the President—fully agreeing, as they do, with him in political sentiment and feeling, prejudice and passion? I judge of them by the past, and I am fully satisfied already with the recommendations which they would make for relief and reform. If this subject must be referred, all that the People desire is a fair committee, the fair representative of their will: a committee consisting of some Conservatives and some Whigs as well as Locofocos, according to their numbers in this House. This is a subject of universal interest, of great magnitude, and there is a great diversity of opinion respecting it. Why not refer it to one from each State in the Union? There

should be "no monopoly," sir, of this great subject; it belongs to all People alike, and the voices of all should be heard and heeded. "No monopoly," sir, say I. He is no prophet, and not entitled to the credit of the gift of prophecy, who is able to predict what will certainly be the result of referring this subject to the Committee of Ways and Means.

But this objection to the Committee of Ways and Means is a minor reason against this reference. Sir, I call the attention of this committee to the position in which this question is now placed by the President. The President tells you that the proceedings of Congress at the special session, called for the purpose of acting on the measure, were not *final*. He impugns the voice of the People, uttered in the mean time, and tenders *the issue, whether the public will has been fairly and freely expressed*. He informs us, also, that the "plan proposed" is still in "continued practical operation." Why, then, refer this subject at all? Why not wait yet a little while longer for an expression of the public voice, which even the Executive will be constrained to admit "is the free and unbiassed voice of the People" declared upon this measure? No injury can be done the country, for, by the President's own showing, his *best plan is in continued practical operation*. Is the object and design of the President and his party to forestall the "expression of the public will? He implores anxiously that this measure shall be wholly settled during this session. He is for obtaining his wishes in advance of the People, and knows, or seems to fear that, unless he works his party machinery as speedily and efficiently as possible, the power to pass his favorite scheme will pass from him. I am not willing to indulge him in his wish to force his plans through *per fas vit nefas—nolens volens* the People. The President has raised an issue with the People and I am for waiting its result before I act on this measure. He cannot, I repeat, reasonably complain of the delay which the trial of this issue will interpose, because he tells us that his pet system is even now, and has been ever since we rejected it, in the most beautiful *practical operation*. So let it be, say I, till the People shall fully decide whether it shall be created and continued by law, and until they shall give the President such a practical demonstration of public sentiment as will satisfy him, beyond all possibility of a doubt, that the influence of some 160,000,000 of bank capital is insufficient to *bribe* or *corrupt* them in the exercise of their sacred and sovereign right of the elective franchise!

I cannot at this time, or ever, trust the Executive and his minions with the arrangement of any plan of finance or relief. I know the pride of the party. I have heard it boasted since I came here, by some of the champions of the sub-Treasury, that, in some form or other, and within a given time from the commencement of this session, they would carry the measure, in spite of the past and of the People. New York is to be defied—Maine is to be defied—New Jersey, Indiana, Rhode Island, Mississippi, Ohio, all are to be defied, and this measure is to be thrust through by stocking, and packing, and screwing, lest, perchance, the season of its success may hereafter fail!

Sir, there may be here some craven spirit who will skulk back, desert the post, retreat from the high ground assumed at the late special session—who will seek a pretext to fall back upon this sub-Treasury scheme under another name; there may be some such degenerate spirit, but I will not yet believe it! I cannot believe that any gentleman, of the independence and noble boldness to oppose this Executive scheme during a time when the day was doubtful, will now fear and fly, or take bounty, and desert from his post whilst the People are in arms to back him!

Sir, in conclusion, my object in rising was simply to call the attention of this committee and of the country to this extraordinary issue raised between the President and the People. The President and his party have used and abused the local bank capital of the nation for the worst purposes of political prostitution—to destroy a national bank—and to carry into operation the first Executive "Experiment." And now they turn round and accuse the People in turn of being *bribed* and *corrupted* by the influence of this same local bank capital! Sir, I shall vote against the reference of this Executive charge against the integrity of the People to any committee whatever, and more especially to the Committee of Ways and Means.

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