

# CHERAW GAZETTE.

M. MACLEAN EDITOR & PROPRIETOR.

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Extracts from the Speech of Mr. Bell, of Tennessee, in the House of Representatives, on the Naval Appropriation Bill.

But, Mr. Chairman, it has of late become more important than at any former period in the history of the Government, that this subject of President-making should be taken up seriously, and made a part of the regular business of Congress. By force of that system of party organization and discipline, which is now rapidly maturing and spreading itself over the country, it must soon come to pass, if indeed it is not now the case, that the election of a President determines every other question of public policy or public interest for at least four years, and perhaps eight. If this be so; if it be true that every thing is to be settled by the decrees of the party, and that the President, as the head of the party, is only the organ through which their decrees are to be communicated to Congress, then I appeal to you, sir, whether you (Mr. Hamer) would not upon reflection retract a sentiment expressed the other day, and admit the importance of discussing every question connected nearly or remotely with the presidential election?

I repeat, that if the doctrine is to be established that no member of this House who professes to belong to the party in power can vote against a measure recommended either publicly or privately by the President, without incurring the imputation of deserting his party—and such I believe is the rigor of the new system of party tactics in operation,—if whatever the President recommends cannot be resisted by the party which profess to support him, I assert that this subject of President making is the first and most important that can and ought to occupy our attention. If the result of an election is to annihilate the independent power of action by Congress, and put every thing in the hands of the President of a party, it is time not only to assert the right to discuss the question here, but to do it promptly, freely, and fully; and it shall not be my fault if it is not done. There is strong reason to believe that the obligations of party are held so sacred, that none who belong to the majority dare to do any thing which the President shall forbid, or to fail in the support of whatever he shall recommend. Have we not lately seen the force of this obligation to be so strong in this House, that the absolute power of peace and war was ready to be yielded up in effect into the hands of one man? Coming to this House under the extraordinary party pledges usual in popular elections of late, I hope it will not be regarded as improper or disrespectful, to ask, if the President had, during the late crisis, said "we must have war," would the party in this House have had the power to gainsay it? War we must then have had; and the moral power was not in this House to resist it, whatever may have been the private opinions of honorable members of the wisdom of such a measure.

No occasion can be more appropriate for the discussion of the principles and practices of the Government, than the one presented by the appropriation bills presented as a whole. It is proposed to increase the annual expenditure for the military defences of the country and internal improvement, ten millions in one year. It is a new era in the history of the Government. So extravagant a proposition is unknown in our annals. The results of this new policy are beyond the ken or conception of any; but those who planned it, understood them well enough, though it may not be desirable to their interests to view them all at once. The first inevitable result of this policy, if it shall be sanctioned by Congress, will be the introduction, in a short period, of an increased and oppressive system of taxation. An increased annual expenditure of ten millions may be met for a few years from the present sources of revenue; but the public lands are now in a state of such rapid exhaustion, that in a few years we will find our revenue from this quarter reduced to a million or less. The public works which we are now about to commence must be carried on, and funds will have to be raised to support those which may be finished in the mean time. Then comes a new and increased system of taxation as a matter of course, with its usual train of evils.

But what will be a more serious consequence, is the great increase of the army and navy, which cannot fail to follow the adoption of this new and extravagant policy. When all the navy yards, and all the new fortifications now proposed to be established shall be completed, a standing army of less than fifteen or twenty thousand men would not be thought of, or tolerated under the new impulse which is soon to be given to the military spirit. Indeed less than that number would not be sufficient to guard our western frontier, and at the same time secure many fortifications upon the sea-coast against surprise. As to the navy, after such gigantic preparations for the improvement and increase of it as are now proposed,

will a Navy, of less than 100 ships of war in commission be regarded as at all admissible for a country of such resources, of such character and importance in the scale of nations? Such are the views of grandeur and power which are now beginning to exercise an important influence over the course of many of the leading men in power. Some opinion may be formed of the magnitude of the projects of the party, from the declaration upon this subject of the gentleman from New York (Mr. Cambreleng), made in the course of his remarks upon the resolution of the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Adams). The gentleman expressed the hope, that in a short time we would see the navy of this country placed upon a footing to cope with the most powerful maritime power of Europe! Who does not see from all this that we are to have an increased Tariff in due season, and that the managers of the party are preparing to claim the support of the manufacturing interests?

But if we should be satisfied that it is the true policy of the country to adopt the plan of defending the country by fortifications, no matter at what cost; to increase the army and navy, at the risk even of an increased system of taxation; still the inquiry and discussion which I propose to go into, will be of great importance. The system of public defence may be wise and prudent in itself; but the time, and manner of carrying it into execution, may and does demand a separate consideration. The improvement of the navy, and the new fortifications projected; it is estimated will require an annual expenditure of ten millions for ten years, making a total of one hundred millions. The faithful and judicious application of this vast fund, supposing it to be settled that it shall be expended upon these objects, becomes a subject of the deepest interest to the whole country. The country has a right to enquire who are the agents and public servants who are about to be entrusted with the disbursement of this enormous capital. Are they faithful? Are they competent? Have they proved themselves so upon past trials? Sir, a great preliminary question is to be settled before we add ten millions to the usual annual expenditure. It is a question of confidence in public servants, as well as expediency. Who are they that demand from the representatives of the people this signal mark of confidence to place ten millions in their hands during the present year, more than at any former period? Are they the same public servants who have had charge of the public defences during our late difficulties with France, and under whose superintendence they have suffered decay and dilapidation? By what title do they ask this extraordinary evidence of confidence?

Sir, they ask for money and increased confidence; we demand scrutiny into past conduct. They ask for reward for past merit and service; it may become our duty to arraign them as delinquents before the tribunal of the public instead of pouring the Treasury into their laps. To vote money is the least difficult and most pleasant duty of a representative of the people. It requires neither experience, industry, talents, nor fidelity in members. But, sir, to see and to provide that it shall be faithfully expended and applied to objects of public utility, is a more difficult as well as more important part of our duty. I am aware that upon this question of confidence and competency of the public officers of the Government, as well as the policy of making large appropriations for building up the defences of the country, there is a ready and conclusive argument at hand, in the minds of many. I know well enough that all objections are intended to be met and put down here and before the people, by holding up for their due regard and acquiescence the sentiment and recommendation of the late Special Message upon French affairs. It should be borne in mind that 25,000 copies of that Message were ordered to be printed by this House; and in a week from the date of that order, the whole number was said to be published and at the disposal of members, when at the same time there were documents ordered to be printed at the commencement of this session, which had been furnished. It is easy to penetrate the design of this unusual despatch. The document was expected to give tone to public sentiment, generally and speedily. The effect of it upon this House after it had time to be returned upon it through a thousand channels, was rallied upon to pass the bill necessary to carry this new policy of the Administration into execution. I beg leave to read a single paragraph of the Message, that I may submit a few remarks upon the singular character of it.

"I may be permitted, I trust, at this time, without a suspicion of the most remote desire to throw off censure from the Executive, or to point it to any other department or branch of the Government, to refer to the want of effective preparation in which our country was found at the late crisis. From the nature of our institutions, the movements of the Government in preparation for hostilities must ever be too slow for the exigencies of unexpected war. I submit it then to you, whether the first duty we owe to the people who have confided to us their power, is not to place our country in such an attitude as always to be amply supplied with the means of self-defence as to afford no inducement to other nations to presume upon our forbearance, or to expect important advantages from a sudden assault either upon our commerce, or sea coast, or our interior frontier. In case of the commencement of hostilities during the recess of Congress, the time inevitably elapsing before that body could be called together, even under the most favorable circumstances, would be pregnant with dan-

ger, and, if we escaped without signal disaster or national dishonor, the hazard of both unnecessarily incurred, could not fail to excite a feeling of deep reproach. I earnestly recommend to you, therefore, to make such provisions, that in no future time shall we be found without ample means to repel aggression, even although it may come upon us without a note of warning. We are now, fortunately, so situated, that the expenditure for this purpose will not be felt; and, if it were, it would be approved by those from whom all its means are derived, and for whose benefit only it should be used with a liberal economy and an enlightened forecast."

Here, sir, we have a distinct avowal that there has been gross neglect somewhere. That is something gained; but it is left doubtful whether it is Congress or the Executive that is chargeable with the neglect which is so manifest as to call for a full acknowledgment. It is evident, however, that the effect of the manner of this admission is to shield the delinquents wherever they may be, and to charge the defenceless condition of our country at the late crisis to the nature of our government. I shall, before I sit down, endeavor to vindicate our form of government from this charge, at least so far as concerns the late default. I pledge myself to show who were the real delinquents, and what were their employments when they should have been taking care of the public safety and interests. But there appears to me to be an inconsistency in the passage I have just read, which I cannot omit to point out. In one part of the paragraph this sentiment is expressed.

"From the nature of our institutions, the movements of the Government in preparation for hostilities must ever be too slow for the exigencies of unexpected war."

In another part of the same paragraph, we find this sentence.

"I earnestly recommend to you, therefore, to make such provisions, that in no future time shall we be found without ample means to repel aggression, even although it may come upon us without a note of warning."

Now, Sir, I do not know that it is proper to consider this passage as the result of deliberation, or to criticise too closely a paper which, like many of the same kind, have often to be drawn up without affording time for close or accurate provisions; but it is manifest that this document was intended and expected to produce results of the greatest importance to the country. It was doubtless intended to prepare and reconcile the public mind to the change of policy by the party in power, and to give popularity to the project of expending the surplus revenue upon such objects as would raise us to the first rank among nations in military and naval power. I regard it as therefore entirely proper to point out any inconsistency which may impair the effect of it. It would be idle to vote a hundred millions to the public defence of the country, if it be true that by reason of the nature of our government, it is impossible that the country can ever be put into a condition to meet the emergency of sudden war.

Mr. Chairman, I regard the time as particularly propitious to a general review of the conduct and principles of men in power, especially in reference to the public defences. The French question is at an end, and we can now inquire into the conduct of the public officers who are responsible for them, and hold them up naked to the world, without the risk of exposing our weakness to a public enemy. A time of peace, too, it is said, is the time to prepare for war. This is the great maxim upon which the new policy of the administration is expected to be supported. A true and wise maxim it is, but one which is only half understood by those in whose mouths we most frequently find it. Many suppose that the only preparation for war consists in increasing our military and naval establishments.

The great minister of the fourth Henry of France, who was surnamed The Great, understood the full power of this maxim. The best, the truest and most effective preparation for war, is to take care that all the important departments of the civil administration are in a sound and healthful condition; especially those connected with the fiscal resources of the country, and those which are the keys to public confidence. If those be disordered and disarranged when entering upon a war, there can be no hope of a successful and economical management of the public credit and resources, or in other words, of the sinews of war—there can be no reform in time of war. Public confidence is as essential to the support of war as money itself. In truth it is confidence which supplies money. If you mean, then, really to enter upon a system of defence and effective preparation for war, begin at the right point. Correct the abuses in your civil administration—regulate and discipline your household troops. When you have done this, and not before, may you feel secure of the faithful and skilful application of the public treasure to the public defence; and when war shall actually come, success and victory cannot fail to crown your arms.

But there is a stronger justification than any I have yet mentioned of the course of discussion and scrutiny which I propose. It is that no time is to be lost in calling the attention of the public to, and exposing some late practices of the party in power; practices which are of the most mischievous and alarming tendency. We have too long slept upon this subject. Every moment of silent acquiescence here, tends to give currency and support to these dangerous innovations, in the minds of the people. If there was but one voice to be lifted up in this House against the late conduct of the party, it ought to be instantly and boldly uttered. Besides the direct interference of public officers of the highest grade, in the election of

members to both Houses of Congress, is not the Executive Chief Magistrate engaged in the canvass, the open advocate and champion of the election of the Vice President to the Presidency? Have we not, in fact, a Government candidate for the Presidency, supported by the whole power and influence of the Executive? Are not the whole train of public officers, with all their dependents in the field, in full cry, barking away, and hunting down every man who dares to interpose his influence against the consummation of their plans? I here in my place declare there is such a candidate, who, should he be elected, may be said to have succeeded to the Presidency, as truly and manifestly through the power and influence of the Government, as though he had been appointed to the succession, and actually installed in office by his predecessor. I do not say that every individual in office is giving himself up to this service; I know there are many honorable exceptions; but as a class, a corps, what I have said of the public officers I reaffirm. Sir, how long is this state of things to continue before any solemn opinion shall be expressed by this House in regard to it? This interference of the Government in the election of a successor has been open and notorious, for the last nine or twelve months. A session of Congress, in the mean time, has intervened. More than three months have elapsed since its commencement, and yet no resolution has been offered—no notice of any kind taken of so extraordinary a state of things. We have, too, a House of Representatives, in which there are said to be one hundred and forty members who profess to be republicans! the disciples and followers of Jefferson! and not one of them has lifted up his voice here to denounce a practice so dangerous and destructive of the constitutional guarantee of our liberties.

How are we to account for this silence? It is agreed by the party that there is no method of perpetuating their power but by a regular line of succession? Is this silence the result of a deliberate judgment in favor of the practice of employing the patronage and influence of the Executive in behalf of the regularly nominated candidate? Sir, I hope for the safety of the country that it is not. But I have lately witnessed the rapid progress of error on this subject not only in the minds of individuals, but of a whole community; and it is melancholy to reflect how sudden and precipitate may be the overthrow of all those principles and maxims which have heretofore been regarded as fundamental and essential to the very existence of the institutions and the public liberty. When the first evidence was given to the public of a direct interference of the Executive in the election of his successor, scarcely an individual of the party would be heard to defend it. But in a few short months every supporter of the Vice President in that community was ready to attest his sanction of the practice as just and expedient under his hand and seal, if necessary. It is time to oppose ourselves to this error if we would save the Constitution.

Mr. Chairman, I have spoken with great freedom of the course of the party in power and I have not spared my censures when I thought it was deserved. I intend to continue to exercise this privilege, in the course of the remarks I yet propose to submit. But it is due to myself, standing in the delicate and difficult relation I now do towards that party, that I should distinctly declare the nature of that relation. I have, up to a late period, given a support to the present Administration of the government. I still consider myself a supporter of the Administration, upon every leading and important question which has arisen, to the same extent to which I formerly gave them my support, except those which originated in, or have been changed and modified by the illegitimate desire and purpose of the Executive, to secure the election of a particular and favorite successor. As to all the principles and practices which have proceeded from this source, I am, I have been, and I am firmly resolved still to be opposed. If any member of this House can claim the indulgence of the Committee in commenting freely upon the present state of public affairs and especially upon the practices and objects of those in power, when it is remembered by whom, and in what manner I have been assailed, I think I may do so. It is not only due to myself, but it is due to the public. I owe it to many of those of the Jackson party who have united their interests and influence with the party which is attempting to bring in the Vice President, and whom I hope I may still claim as my personal friends, to vindicate the principles which have impelled me to my late course. It has been said that I have abandoned the party to which I once belonged. I deny that the party now in power is, properly speaking and if principle be the test of party, the same with which I once acted. But, sir, if this be the party of which I was once a member, I am free to admit, and I am ready to demonstrate to them, and the world that either I or they have proved recreant and faithless to every cardinal principle and political virtue which they once professed and avowed as the rules of their conduct. I proceed now to the proofs, and I shall when I have arrayed them, most cheerfully submit to the decision of the public upon the question, whether I or the party are the culprits.

I now proceed to notice briefly those leading and prominent principles and professions of the original Jackson party which those who now claim to be identical with that party have abandoned and disregarded in practice.

The original supporters of Gen. Jackson advocated his election against Mr. Crawford, the candidate nominated according to party usage, upon the ground that the practice

of caucus nominations of a President of the United States was a violation of the spirit of the Constitution, as it tended to defeat the contingent right of the small States to have an equal vote in the election of that high officer, as often as the election might devolve upon the House of Representatives. They also objected to such nominations because they were effected by intrigue and corrupt influences; and upon the further ground, that it tended to defeat the free and independent voice of the people. All the objections to a nomination by a congressional caucus apply with still greater force to a nomination by a convention of pretended delegates from the people, such as we have lately seen at Baltimore. In the first canvass of Gen. Jackson this was, in a very large section of the Union, decidedly the most popular and available argument against the candidate who had the advantage of a nomination by the republican party. But now, Sir, no man is admitted to be a Jackson man, or a supporter of his administration, who refuses to admit the practice of caucus nominations to be orthodox, and to subscribe to the obligation of acquiescence and absolute obedience. It is worthy of notice, that the very individual (Mr. Grundy) who, in the State which I have the honor to represent in part, was the most active and powerful opponent of the practice of caucus nominations in 1824, is now the leader of the party in that State which supports the candidate of the Baltimore Convention.

In Gen. Jackson's second canvass for the office which he now holds, commencing in 1835, the first, most exciting, and one of the most important positions or principles assumed by his friends, was, that the right of the people to elect the President should be rescued from the hands of political managers in and out of Congress, and vindicated and secured to them by new constitutional guarantees. The recent election of the gentleman from Massachusetts who sits before me (Mr. Adams) had given rise to this feeling and determination of the Jackson party. Hence the proposition to amend the constitution so as forever to prevent the recurrence of a similar event, was taken up and proclaimed as a capital object to be accomplished by the election of Gen. Jackson. So serious and obligatory was this engagement of his original supporters, regarded by Gen. Jackson, that he has felt himself bound in common decency and candor, to bring the subject of an amendment of the constitution to the notice of Congress at the beginning of every session of his administration. But what has been the result? The party which now has the assurance to claim to be the only and exclusive supporters of that distinguished man, have wilfully evaded the subject, as I will show before I close my remarks. They appear to have come to an understanding among themselves to regard all that the President is in the habit of repeating at each session upon this subject as an empty form. It has never been made a party question since Gen. Jackson's first election. The fear of an election by the House was too potent an argument in favor of caucus nominations to be dispensed with by a sagacious party.

Another, and most important principle assumed by the Jackson party in the canvass between 1825 and 1829, was, that it was essential to the purity of the Government, and to the independence of the elective franchise; that the practice of electing any of the great official incumbents to the Presidency should be broken down. It was observed that, in the early period of the Government, it had come to be considered, that the Vice President should, almost as a matter of course, and of right, succeed to the Presidency. The first, Mr. Adams, who was Vice President during General Washington's administration, was the next President. Mr. Vice President Jefferson ousted Mr. Adams; and, no doubt, but for the suicidal course of Mr. Vice President Burr, he would have succeeded Mr. Jefferson as President. But in Mr. Burr the regular succession of the Vice President to the Presidency was broken, and afterwards the Secretary of State acquired something like a prescriptive right to succeed to the presidency. We must all remember the sentiment of a distinguished gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. Clay), expressed in justification of his vote as a member of this House, in favor of the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Adams) upon the subject; he avowed the opinion that the election of the Secretary of State to the Presidency was a safe precedent. How obnoxious this doctrine soon became, and how much the author of it suffered in the estimation of the honest and stern yeomanry of the country who supported General Jackson is well known. It is said that if the precedent of electing any of the great officers of the government to the presidency should be followed for any great length of time, we might as well establish a hereditary succession at once. The argument was ably and powerfully enforced that such a practice would necessarily lead to great abuses of the patronage and influence of the Executive. That a public officer of so high a grade being always near the government and constituting a part of it, would always be able, with a very small share of address, to conciliate the favor and support of the Executive. Have these arguments lost their force by the mere lapse of time? Do they not carry with them the same weight and conclusiveness now that they did during the canvass which brought Gen. Jackson into power? Yet, Sir, do we not see in the support which is given by the government to the Vice President, this important principle, these solid arguments all set aside and trampled under foot by the party which still bears the name of Jackson!

It was also a favorite principle and a most effective topic of electing declaration by the Jackson party, that the purity and

independence of the public press should be guarded and protected by legal restrictions and provisions against the influence and control of the Executive. It was thought by the Jackson party in former years, that \$30,000 disbursed at the discretion of the Secretary of State, was sufficient to corrupt, in a dangerous degree the entire public press. The discretion of the Secretary of State, it was seriously contended, ought to be limited by law so as to prevent the possible abuse of his fund by bestowing it upon political partisans. Who among us does not remember the famous resolution of a gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. Saunders) upon this subject, and the equally famous debate that arose upon it? It was, I believe, a favorite scheme of my colleague, who is now the presiding officer of this House (Mr. Polk), to take from the Secretary of State the power of designating the publishers of the laws, and to vest it in the House of Representatives; so important at that day was the purity of the public press regarded by the Jackson party. I well remember what a decided effect was produced upon the minds of the people in the State which I represent in part, and what indignation was excited by the single act of the Secretary of State under the late Administration, of taking the printing of the laws from the Nashville Republican, a paper friendly to the election of General Jackson, and giving it to the Whig, a paper published in the same place and supposed to be in the interest of the Administration. Well, sir, in the vicissitude of human affairs it so happened that the party in whose cause the Nashville Republican had suffered came to be uppermost, and it was restored to its former rights and benefits; but as if it were intended to manifest the utmost possible contempt for the early principles of Jacksonism, and to give the most unequivocal guarantee to now allies, which the nature of the case admits, that all the principles avowed by the original Jackson party, are henceforth and forever, to be repudiated and forgotten, the present orthodox Secretary of State has recently ordered the printing of the laws to be again taken from the Nashville Republican, which is now supporting Judge White for the Presidency, and given to the Union, a paper printed in the same place, a paper purely partisan in its character newly established, and of a very limited circulation, but in the interest of the Vice President. The Postmaster General has added his testimony to that of the Secretary of State, that the early principles identified with the name of Jackson are no longer to be the guide of the party in power. He has not only appointed a printer of a newspaper to be Postmaster of a very thriving and considerable town in Tennessee, but the printer and the Postmaster are actually suffered to meet in the same office. It is needless to say that this printer is also an avowed supporter of the Vice President. But, sir, to enumerate all the evidences which exist to show the deliberate purpose of the party to use the patronage of the Government in seducing the public press to their interests would far exceed the limits of my remarks.

But the necessity of reform—a retrenchment of the expenditures of the Government, and the reduction and limitation of Executive patronage, were the perpetual themes of the Jackson party, as originally constituted. The Augean stable over which the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Adams) was said to preside, was to be cleansed. The number of Executive officers was to be diminished, and the discretionary power of the President of removing or changing them was to be restrained by legal enactments. The principle of all these engagements of the party, and to which they were bound by the highest obligations of truth, honor and patriotism, was regarded as vital. Corruption through Executive patronage, it was foreseen, would become so universal, as soon to sap and undermine the pure foundation of our free institutions, and convert them into the mere instruments of power and ambition. How those promises and expectations have been fulfilled by the party which now wears its mantle, may be inferred from the facts.—1st. The abuses then existing in several departments of the public service have actually multiplied under the present administration, instead of being reformed. 2d. The expenditures, especially in those branches of the public service most liable to suspicion and abuse, have been increased, and such officers have been appointed, some with discretionary and arbitrary allowances, and some with annual salaries, without necessity or warrant of law. The patronage of the government instead of being reduced, has of late been increased in a most extraordinary and alarming degree in a variety of ways. The most obvious and alarming accession of Executive patronage, power, and influence which has taken place has proceeded from the policy of the administration in paying down the U. S. Bank. Whenever any new business has been proposed, and honest men have been the motive—however pure and honest the purpose—the effect of that policy has been most clearly to put the Treasury, the money power of the country, at the absolute disposal of the Executive. Where is now your Treasury, and by what guards is it watched and secured? If the President should think proper to convert the entire revenue of the government to any object whatever of his own, whether public or private, is there any check or control existing in any department or officer of the government, or any law according to the constitution which has been put upon either of the depositories of the public money? Are not the mere will and pleasure of the Executive? Can he not order the public moneys to be retained in the hands of the collectors and