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BY GEORGE HOWARD,

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POLITICAL.



SPEECH OF MR. RHETT.

On the subject of taxation, delivered on the general appropriation bill, in the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States, on the 19th day of February, 1841.

Mr. Chairman: When I addressed the House a few days since, I stated, that the object of the proposed taxes on silks and other luxuries, was not to provide for any deficiency in revenue to meet the appropriations of the ensuing year, but was intended to produce an excess of revenue to be distributed to the States.

Mr. Chairman, I shall take the positions pursued by the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. Stanly) as the occasion of the remarks I propose offering to the committee. I shall do this for two reasons—the gentleman is a southern man, and the positions themselves are of the most pressing importance to the South; for, if the indications around us shall be realized, but a few months will intervene before we must again upon them.

ing a surplus revenue, determined, instead of leaving it on deposit with the banks, corrupting them and the country, to deposit it in certain proportions with the States of the confederacy, providing in the act the manner and time in which it should be returned by the States into the Treasury of the United States, whenever needed and called for by the Secretary of the Treasury.

Now, sir, to carry out this policy, suppose the taxes raised from the people by duties on our imports to be equally paid by them all over the Union; and suppose, also, in your distribution of them to the State, they are returned equally to the people; it will be difficult to discern the wisdom of such legislation.

Mr. Chairman, the gentleman from North Carolina insists upon it, that one of

the great issues presented to the country is direct taxation, or a tariff on imports. Now, sir, I have not been an indifferent observer of events on this subject, being deeply implicated with it; and I must confess my ignorance of the existence of any such issue between the different parties in the country.

Mr. Chairman, the gentleman from North Carolina does not differ much from me in his estimate of the effect of indirect taxation on the different portions of the Union. He did not show its good effects on the South; but he did dwell with enthusiasm on the vast and growing prosperity of the North; and as he gazed, he thought—and his heart revolted as he thought—of the abominable project of direct taxation!

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declares so emphatically, is not, and never shall be, abandoned. North Carolina, it seems may, at some future day, gain something by the policy. She has admirable water power; her fisheries might need encouragement. The attribute of protection, it is clear, is that feature in indirect taxation, which the gentleman most values.

Believing, therefore, not only that the protective policy is unjust and oppressive to the South, but utterly unconstitutional, and in direct conflict with all those great principles of liberty which have sanctified our Revolution, I heard with surprise, and regret the affirmation of the gentleman from North Carolina, that it was not abandoned, and never should be abandoned.

Mr. Chairman, in connexion with this great question, anticipating a renewal of the strife which formerly agitated the country in consequence of the protective policy he so upholds, the gentleman from North Carolina comes to his next great issue which he says is presented to the country—a union or dissolution of the confederacy.

To prove my opposition to the Union, the gentleman has quoted language used by me in a speech delivered on the 4th of July, 1829, to my constituents, in which I speak of resistance to a protective tariff, and the resolutions lately passed by South Carolina on the same effect.

it brings aggression to our institutions; instead of equality in the confederacy, practically colonizes us to other States; instead of liberty rears up the heartless, irresponsible despotism of a sectional majority over the destinies of the South? Resistance to a protective tariff; disunion, rather than abolition interference through this Government with our domestic institutions, I have proclaimed, here and elsewhere, and now proclaim again. Let the gentleman take and carry these sentiments to the people he represents, and point to his own better submission, as a contrast to these treasonable declarations.

Mr. Chairman, the gentleman has asserted that North Carolina is despised by Virginia and South Carolina, and, therefore, I suppose, he has deemed himself justifiable in assailing these States.