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SPEECH OF MR. RHETT.

On the subject of taxation, delivered on the general appropriation bill, in the 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 therluxuries, was not to provide for any deficiency in revenue to meet the approprinio sof the ensuing year, but was intendhe proceeds of the sales of the public tion.

allusion to me, spoke of vultraists do as I have heretofore done-leave others to notice his observations.

The first position he assumes, that the lates have a right to the fourth instalment diculous humbuggery?" the deposite act, or to the proceeds of e sales of the public lands, will bear but

more than that so much money raised from the country. the people by taxes shall be distributed to the States. And so also with the net prodistinguished Senator from Massachu claim, constitutes the sole basis of their detion existed on the part of those who ad- face of the cussion, and the expenses incielse; and, accordingly, gentlemen endea- not be, and cannot be, a dollar for distribuwho kept his ears open, could not easily have been purchased, and to which the In-

chaste and classic language, "the most ri-

ing a surplus revenue, determined, instead the great issues presented to the country is declares so emphatically, is not, and never it brings aggression to our institutions; inand called for by the Secretary of the Trea- the people have honored with their favor. Three-fourths of this surplus was or trusted with their interest, there has been

to any part of the country, it can only be censure or contempt of others. be deceived by such pretences. But now, dian title has been extinguished, by money so by an unequal contribution of the taxes, sir, the thin veil spread over the subject is raised from the people through the cus- or by receiving back in Government disming; and, accordingly, the gentleman they gain? It would only be a magnificent prosperity thus created and fostered by lude to a new protective tariff. Directly the gentleman from North Ca- deposite act, and it amounts to a loss by benefit enjoyed by no other interest. But must have page on this subject, or the mounts of the posite act, and it amounts to a loss by benefit enjoyed by no other interest. But must have page on this subject, or the rolina (Mr. Stanly) as the occasion of the the people of upward of a million of doltemarks i propose offering to the committars. Make the same deduction on the qually from us, is not, strictly speaking, the propose offering to the committars. Make the same deduction on the qually from us, is not, strictly speaking, the propose of their power, and freemen hope qually from us, is not, strictly speaking, the propose of their power, and freemen hope qually from us, is not, strictly speaking, the propose of their power, and freemen hope qually from us, is not, strictly speaking, the propose of their power, and freemen hope qually from us, is not, strictly speaking, the propose of their power, and freemen hope are proposed to the committance of the proposed resolutions. lee. I shall do this for two reasons—the annual distribution of the four millions of oppressive, where the tax is laid for revgentleman is a southern man, and the posi- dollars it is proposed to distribute as the ons themselves are of the most pressing proceeds of the sales of the public lands, taxes may be partial, and therefore inex-Phortance to the South; for, if the indica- and it amounts to a loss of more than a half pedient; put they are not morally wrong; amending the consideration or dissolving the dens around us shall be realized, but a million yearly. If North Carolina, by the two months will intervene before we must distribution of the four millions, should react upon them. He gives me an occasion ceive two hundred thousand, she would lent for the unequal effects of such taxahave earnestly desired, to speak; and the pay for it two hundred and twenty six taxes are not laid for revenue-when this am neither afraid nor ashamed of them, and republic, which for more than a half centupress on the attention of my constitution of my con Under other circumstances, I should mustly. If the gentleman proposes to benefit the people of North Carolina by such avowed purpose of promoting the prosperi-

pense of another. It then becomes oppres- himself, or worthy to represent freemen, What wrong, what usurpation has sine evpense of another.

sive—unconstitutional oppression, and conwill hesitate to resist oppression, or advoer perpetrated upon other States, which stitutes that protective policy, to which cate a change in any form of Government, in States as with individuals, constitute the Sales of the public lands, will bear but the examination. The Government, hav-

of leaving it on deposite with the banks, direct taxation, or a tariff on imports. shall be, abandoned. North Carolina, it stead of equality in the confederacy, praccorrupting them and the country, to de- Now, sir, I have not been an indifferent seems may, at some future day, gain some- lically colonizes us to other Sta es; instead posite it in certain proportions with the observer of events on this subject, being thing by the policy. She has admirable of liberty rears up the heartless, irrespon-States of the confederacy, providing in the deeply implicated with it; and I must con- water power; her fisheries might need sible despotism of a sectional majority over act the manner and time in which it should fess my ignorance of the existence of any encouragement. The attribute of protective destinies of the South? Resistance to be returned by the States into the Treasu- such issue between the different parties in tion, it is clear, is that feature in indirect a protective tar ff; disaniun, rather than ry of the United States, whenever needed the country. Of all the public men whom taxation, which the gentleman most values. ab littor interference through the Government with our domest classifutions, I have Believing, therefore, not only that the proclaimed, here and elsewhere, and now deposited with the States. The explosion but one, who either within this hall, or protective policy is unjust and oppressive proclaim again. Lt the gentleman take of the banks in 1837, and the consequent out of it, has advocated a system of direct to the South, but utterly unconstitutional. and carry these sentiments to the people wants of the Government, rendered it in- taxation on the part of the General Govern- and in direct conflict with all those great ne represents, and point to his own better expedien, if it was possible, to deposite ment. I am that man, as the gentleman principles of liberty which have sanctified submission, as a contrast to these treasonawith them the fourth its a'm m. And from North Carolina has correctly said, our Revolution, I heard with surprise and ble declarations. He has declared that if now, sir, it is gravely contended, that the a- Will be name another? (Mr. Stanly men-regret the affirmation of the gentleman North Carolina was i vaded by federal mount of money thus deposited, constitu- tioned Mr. Hubbard of Alabama, who rose from North Carolina, that it was not a bayoners, to enforce a law declared constiting a mere trust for safekeeping, was a and disclaimed it.) The gentleman from bandoned, and never should be abandoned tutional by the federal courts, he would gift, and that portion which was not de- Alabama disclaims it. Who else? And The tariff of 1833, I had been accus- submit, although his native State summoned posited, is a debt due to the States by this so will every other man, I fear, on this tomed to hear, especially from the adher- him to her defence; as if a law court in all Government. Suppose the banks with floor, taken man by man. I am alone in ents of its distinguished author, had brought the great struggles for liberty, has ever whom the money had been previously de-posited had set up such a claim, what man from Georgia (Mr. Nesbit) truly af-tion, and at outraged and oppressed people. Did Hampden's appeal to the courts save would the gentleman have the't of it? Per- firmed the other day in debate. Where, But it seems, now, we have made a nine him from paying ship money? And who hops he would have justified it in them, as he then, is the justice of endeavoring to make years' mistake. "It would have been doubts that, in our Revolution, the courts now does in his pretensions for the States. others responsible for my opinions? Both cowardly," says the gentleman, "if the would, at any time, have decided on the Such ethics may be very good for public of the leading presses in this city, represen-principle had been conceded, because, I side of British pretensions? For my part, offirs, where moral principles are considing the two great parties in the country, presume, a minority (South Carolina, if I have neither the passive philosophy, nor cred as more speculations; but, in private simultaneously repudiated direct taxation you please) resisted it." This was exactlife, all honest men would turn upon them when I first maintained it here. No State ly the argument of Lord North in the man from North Carolina. The day that with abhorrence and contempt. Sir, there -no party in any State, or in the Union, British Parliament, to the remonstances a hostile foot is put on the soil of South is no debt due by this Government to the to my knowledge, has proposed or advoca ond resistance of our ancestors; and will Carolina, to enforce any law on the part of States, on account of the fourth instalment ted it to be exercised by this Government ever be the argument of proud tyrannies the confederacy—whatever the cause— House of Representatives of the Con-gress of the United States, on the 19th talk of its payment, they mean nothing -it will be cowardly then to yield. "Sic as well as my patriotism, will bid me stand; volo, sic jubeo," is a far better method of and her fate, whatever it may be, will be Mr. Chairman, the gentleman from putting the gentleman's argument. The sufficient for me. And how different is ceeds of the sales of public lands. They North Carolina does not differ much from principle, too, was all Lord North ulti- the language of the gentleman from the know full well that there are, and can be, me in his estimate of the effect of indirect mately contended for. He laid a gentle noble declaration of a distinguished son of no net proceeds from the only portion of taxation on the different portions of the tax-a tax on a few luxuries-knowing full his native State! In the midst of our tariff the lands to which the States can have even Union. He did not show its good effects well that if the principle of taxation was controversy, Governor Swain declared ed to produce an excess of revenue to be the semblance of a claim. The Virginia on the South; but he did dwell with enthudistributed to the States. Such was the cession, although perfectly clear, according siasm on the vast and growing prosperity a serious contest upon a mere question of of federal troops through the territory of purpose frankly avowed in the Senate, by to my apprehension, in refuting any such of the North; and as he gazed, he thought the degree of imposition. And thus, sir, North Carolina. But Governor Swain, I - and his heart revolted as he thought - did the people of South Carolina contend presume, was neither a protective tariff setts. The gentleman from Georgia (Mr. mand. This covers only the States lying of the abominable project of direct taxation! only against the principle involved in a man, nor a federalist. He believed that Neshit, who succeeded me in the debate,) between the Mississippi and Ohio rivers; Why abominable, but that he believes this protective tariff. It was, with them, not a we were oppressed, and sympathized with as my colleague (Mr. Thompson) had and paying the revolutionary debt, which prosperity to spring from and depend up- question of money, but of right—of consti- our oppression; and he spurned the theory done before, denied that any such inten-tion existed on the part of those who ad-face of the cession, and the expenses incivocated the new taxes. They were want dent to the extinguishment of the Indian sir, in what way can any portion of the tariff ought to have been made; but if we and could constitutionally be dragooned ed for ordinary expenditures, & for nothing else; and, accordingly, gentlemen endeanot be, and cannot be, a dollar for distribuof view, by taxation? If it is equal on all, principle should be yielded, but, according forced upon them by federal usurpations. vored to show an immense deficiency in the Treasury to justify their imposition. The only portion of the public do-Independent of the fallacies of the fiscal main which can produce any net revenue it takes it from the people, and destroys it not to have abandoned it. The basest cow-sented; and, I doubt not, if the federal statements relied on, any one, I thought, at all to be distributed, are the lands which in supporting itself. If taxation is a gain ardice is moral cowardice—a fear of the bay onets had been destined for the people over whom he presided, instead of a sister State, whether backed by court decisions Mr. Chairman, in connexion with this or not, in obedience to her mandates he torn away. The gentleman from North toms. To distribute the lands such taxes bursements more than it pays by taxation. great question, anticipating a renewal of would have summoned every brave and Carolina (Mr. STANLY) who moved the have purchased, or the money resulting the strife which formerly agitated the countries as an amendment to the Treasury from the sale of lands such taxes have pursue and the strife which formerly agitated the countries of North Carolinote bill, comes forward and distinctly de- chased, is the same as distributing the tax one or both of them must the gentleman he so upholds, the gentleman from North na would have met the aggression. There. clares, that his object in moving them, es directly. Let gentlemen turn it as they suppose the prosperity of the North to be Carolina comes to his next great issue of course, the gentleman would not have was to provide the means for the payment please, their scheme for distributing the promoted. Now, is not such prosperity which he says is presented to the country been found; I mistake the spirit of even of our debt, as he calls it, due to the States tourth instalment, or the proceeds of the fostered at the expense of others? Is it -a union or dissolution of the confedera- the people he represents, if they would on account of the fourth instalment of the public lands, amounts to this: -money any thing more than an artificial benefit cy. (Mr. Stanly explained, and said he have been as passive and submissive as his deposite act, amounting to nine millions raised by indirect taxation from the peo- occasioned by the operation of Govern- did not say that any such issue was in the principles might require. They would dollars; and also for an annual abstract ple, through the customs, by duties on imtion from the Treasury of some four or five ports, is to be distributed to the States. of the country is unjustly transferred to a- tween Mr. Rhett and himself.) The gen- could be no neutrality; that they must promillions more, to be given to the States, as That is the naked, unquestionable proposi- nother? If this result is produced by a tlemen can make issues for himself, but tect her, or plunge their swords into the fair, necessary operation of the Govern- what right has he to make them for me? bosom of their native State. Nor would lands. And, sir, he must, indeed, be a Now, sir, to carry out this policy, sup ment, acting within its acknowledged con-Sciolist in politics and the plundering pro- pose the taxes raised from the people by stitutional limitations, it is an evil to be the Union but himself? Who has men- brought against them, have influenced pensities of human nature, who believes, duties on our imports to be equally paid by deplored, and, as far as possible, to be rethat when the vaults of your Treasury are them all over the Union; and suppose, al- medied. But when it is produced by leg- does he proclaim it an issue with any one? man, comparing the numerical difference. open to the indebted States, these supplies so, in your distribution of them to the islative action, designed distinctly (by pro- It is because he knows that his policy will of New York and South Carolina, spoke will constitute the limit of their demands. State, they are returned equally to the peo-The assumption of the debts of the States ple; it will be difficult to discern the wisby the General Government, amounting to dom of such legislation. No Government the benefits of Government, is it to be de oppress; and thus throw from himself upon thought of the men who met at the Mecktwo hundred and sixty millions of dollars, in the history of man has ever heretofore fended—is it matter for exultation? What them the odium of endangering the Union? lenburg convention. If in that grave and and the completion of the mighty works of raised money from the people to be given of the suffering portion who pay the taxes This, sir, is the old device of some nine bold assembly of freemen, some man of internal improvement for which these back to them again; and if man by man unequally, and receive back with reversed years past, which, worn out and cast aside popular statistics and enlarged patriotism, bebts were contracted, will naturally fol- they received back dollar for dollar what inequality, the benefit of the public expenlaw in the train of this portentous begin- has been collected from them, what can diture; is there no sympathy for them? A tricked up here for effect, as the first pre-To prove my opposition to the Union, "ridiculousness and insolence" of their rereally distinctly intimated that this is the made by changing it from one hand to the ultation, is only worthy the execration of the gentlemen has quoted language used by sistance, what fate would have awaited tonsummation to be attained. To meet other. But the people, to carry this nothe immense liabilities such a policy will table scheme into effect, can never receive direct taxation would have the tendency of ly, 1829, to my constituents, in which I ping post or death. What business have mpose, what excessive taxation on the back what they pay by taxation, because a checking it, by making the Government speak of resistance to a protective tariff, such creatures in the councils of men whose imports must be laid, and what a mighty host of officers must be employed and paid just and fair in its operation, and enabling and the resolutions lately passed by South determined end is liberty, and revolution the same effect. Why, sir. the s'ern means of obtaining it? And is it South! And it was, sir, for pointing out them to their possession. If the expenses mon prosperity, it would be a blessing to had the gentlemen come to me, I would at this day, after, the experience of our such designs, and opposing, in its incipien- of our present revenue system will be a be earnestly desired. Prosperity by robthe tax ition by which it was proposed fair criection of the cost of collecting and bery, robbers only should be capable of evidence than those papers afford to convict the great struggles for liberty have affordaccomplish them, that the gentleman dishursing taxes, it will amount to thirteen admiring. Under any system of indirect me of desiring a dishursing taxes, it will amount to thirteen om Georgia, (Mr. Neshat.) I suppose, in per cent. annually. Assess this on the taxation, however fair, there will be an taxation nine millions of dollars proposed to be dis- incidental benefit to the manufacturers of constituents in 1838, in which I plainly propriety of resistance to tyranny? The tributed to the people of the States under this country, in consequence of the enhan-Mr. Chairm in. I shall take the positions the pretext of the fourth instalment of the ced price of the commodities imported a sailed through its sides by northern aboli-

legislation, would it not be, to use his own ty of one portion of the Union at the ex-