

# FREE PRESS.



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## THE "FREE PRESS,"

By George Howard,

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## POLITICAL.

### TO THE FREEMEN of the

Third Congressional District  
of North-Carolina:

*Fellow-citizens:* After a tedious session of nearly six months, Congress adjourned on the 27th of May. I regret to say, that some of the measures adopted in that session do not meet my approbation. The first session of the 18th Congress will be remarkable, in the Parliamentary history of this country, for having settled two principles which were formerly thought not to be consistent with the original principles of our government; and which, I think, ought never to have made a part of the legislation of the United States: measures, how extensively injurious they may be in their operation, we cannot foresee, though it is not difficult to perceive, that more evil than good will result from them. The two measures to which I allude, are the Tariff and Internal Improvement bills, both of which have become law. The Tariff has been so generally discussed, in and out of Congress, in the newspapers and in common conversation, that it is better understood, and has therefore created much more excitement and feeling of disapprobation. A system of Internal Improvement, by the General Government, has nothing to recommend it to the people of this country. The very term *internal* is uncongenial with the principles of the General Government, the institution of which was for external purposes, to regulate our affairs with foreign nations and between the states as political bodies confederated for general purposes. This system, the entering wedge of which has been driven under the name of an act appropriating 30,000 dollars for making surveys, if practised on must in its progress, become more oppressive even than the system of prohibition and protection contained in the Tariff. I object to it on the two broad grounds of inexpediency and unconstitutionality. Congress has not the authority, nor has it the means, to carry into effect a system which if persevered in must impose a weight of taxation on the people they could not bear. I think I risk nothing in saying, that the whole revenue of this country, with that of Great Britain, aided by a million of slaves, could not accomplish in half a century so grand a scheme of this kind, general and equal in its distribution, as the glowing imagination of some of our political dreamers has figured out.

Appropriate for Pennsylvania a million of dollars you must do the same for New-York, Vir-

ginia, and other states, in proportion. When you have provided money to be expended in one part or one county of a state, it will be expected and claimed with equal justice by every other, which may fancy that some little creek or river may be of use if cleared out or connected to some other by a canal, or by clearing roads and leveling mountains, or what is, perhaps, the strongest of all reasons, getting the money spent among them; for not the least operating motive to measures of this kind is the money concern, by which the friends and connexions of the influential may live at the public expense by jobs and contracts.

If the government continually goes into new projects of expenditure, it is in vain to look forward to an extinction of the public debt. The whole subject of internal improvement belongs to the state authorities, and is with them only a question of expediency; and without meaning to criticise what has been done in this or any other state, there is ample room for making illustrative allusions to show the impropriety of attempting to do any thing until we get ready: such as our system of town-making, some years back, without people or houses. The usual consequence of all such schemes is, that many are ruined by the speculation which enriches a few at their expense. The same kind of loose construction which derives from the Constitution a right to go into the system of internal improvement, will give to Congress, whenever it shall be desired, the right to set free the negroes; and we know that a strong feeling of this kind exists in the eastern and some of the western states. But the states have the authority and they have the means to go into a limited and prudent system of improvements of this sort, regulating and measuring their means according to exigencies. As a proof of this, I need only bring to your attention that stupendous work recently executed in New-York, which will rebound as much to the honor as profit of the state—I allude to the Great Canal, which is already becoming an ample feeder to that great mart of trade, the city of New-York. If there is a determination, at all hazards, to go into this expensive plan, we should first clear off existing burthens, which a few years might with prudence do, and then amend the Constitution so as to obtain in the legitimate mode the authority, and not make the will of a majority of Congress the Constitution of the United States.

Of the Tariff I might say much more than the length of a communication of this kind would justify. Its avowed principle is a prohibition of foreign for the purpose of rearing, by a forced growth, domestic manufactures. For this purpose that part of the 8th section of the first article of the Constitution, which authorises Congress to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts and excises, &c. has been perverted to a purpose which I presume never entered into the heads of the framers of that instrument. No doubt their object was to

raise revenue by the different methods of taxation here enumerated, being only different methods of doing the same thing. The only legitimate purpose of taxing is revenue; it should, therefore, be the settled policy of this country to take no more from the pockets of the people than sufficient to defray the necessary expences of government. No government can be carried on without expense, not even that of the best regulated family establishment; they are the same in principle, and a proper economy equally beneficial in both, a sordid parsimony equally objectionable. It is not only wrong to use the given power to raise revenue by the various modes of taxing beyond what is prudent or necessary, but it is still more so to pervert this authority from its proper and legal purpose, indirectly to attain an end not recognized by the Constitution; in all such cases its spirit is violated, because the intention of its framers is misapplied; the only proper method of construing this instrument being as nearly as possible to ascertain and fulfil this intention. To accomplish other purposes than such as were intended, by a loose and tortuous construction, would be faithless and dishonest. The most that its friends can say in favor of the Tariff, beyond merely partial views, is, that supposing the consumption of foreign goods to continue the same, there will be levied on the community an additional tax of about three millions of dollars, when we could have done without. But if it operates as a prohibition, and lessens importation, then in proportion to that prohibition, after a year or two, the revenue must be curtailed and must be made up on the one hand by direct and internal taxes, the operation of which every body understands, or by borrowing and funding, by which the national debt will be increased. This would be the worst sort of policy, because if persevered in it must eventually make us the slaves of a set of fund holders. The real operation of this measure is to levy a contribution on one part of the country for the benefit of another; a contribution to pay manufacturers for carrying on their own business, attempting to force a premature growth of the manufacturing interest, which has already grown in this country with a strength and rapidity unexampled in any other.

This interest is the natural offspring of the other two great interests of the country, agriculture and commerce. These two great interests, if left as they should be, unshackled by legal restrictions, impelled as they are by physical and moral causes in the United States, must as necessarily produce, as their legitimate offspring, the other, as any appropriate cause is followed by its proper effect. Left to themselves, under the guidance of self-interest urging to industrious exertion, the accumulation of capital must of consequence be such as to seek other employment; and so soon as manufactures point to profit, this capital will be applied in that direction. Manufactures, resting upon such a foundation

would be able to compete with any opposition. There is not one redeeming clause in the act; every section, every item of detail, tries the whole principle: that which is wrong in all its details, can never be aggregately right. Its operation will be principally on the south, which furnishes a very large proportion of all the exportable commodities of the country upon which imports are founded, and we are to be sacrificed to the mistaken policy of Pennsylvania and the western states.

But leaving subjects which are calculated to produce nothing but sombre and disagreeable reflections, we will take a short view of a more cheering one—the state of the finances: which shows emphatically the total inutility of the Tariff, even upon the ground of revenue, the only one on which it could, under any circumstances, have been justified. The amount of receipts and expenditures for 1823, were such as to leave in the Treasury, on the first day of January 1824, \$6,466,969 30. The estimates for the year 1824, come to the result that after satisfying the current demands for that year, there will be a balance in the Treasury, on the first day of January 1825, of \$9,792,716 41. It must be remarked, however, that this estimate was founded upon a state of things existing, independently of the measures recently adopted in Congress, and that their operation may produce some variation in the result. It is satisfactory to me to be able to state that we are on a friendly footing with the world generally, and are likely to remain so; since it seems to have become the policy of the allied sovereigns to confine their system of regulating other people's affairs to the continent of Europe.

It has become necessary for me to make some remarks on the subject of the Presidential election. For a year or two past it has been usual for my friends, whenever we met, to question me about the candidates, which was most likely to become the President, and who I thought most proper for the appointment; and since I have returned home I seldom meet one of my acquaintance without having these questions asked. There is very little likelihood, from present appearances, that the election will be made by the people, by whom it should be; and I very much regret that without some unlooked for interposition, it must go to the House of Representatives.

With four or five candidates, all having some sectional support, by which the votes must necessarily be divided so as to prevent an election, there was no method of obviating the difficulty but by a nomination such as was proposed to the friends of all the candidates, going into meeting upon the principle that the weakest should be dropped, until some one, the most popular, might be agreed on. The avowed object of this meeting was to bring the election before the people by lessening the number of candidates. This was my principal reason for going into the meeting; my other one was, that it was a short and

summary method of answering such questions as my friends in the district were in the habit of asking; and under similar circumstances, and for similar purposes, I should certainly do the same thing again. It was no secret meeting for secret purposes; every person was at liberty to see what was done, and had there been such a number of candidates as would have insured the election to the people, I should have conceived such a meeting wholly unnecessary. It is not my intention to go into a detailed statement of the merits and demerits of the different candidates; they have all been in situations more or less conspicuous. After mature reflection, I feel bound to give a preference to W. H. CRAWFORD, because I think his talents are such as to qualify him in a superior degree for discharging the duties of the office, and more consistently with what I believe to be the interest of the community generally. It is unfortunate for our country that three sectional divisions or interests are springing up: a western, an eastern, and southern. This state of things has its influence on the approaching election. We must have either a western, eastern, or southern President. As the candidates claim all to be of the same political denomination, though there is a difference of opinion upon some matters of policy among them, the question resolves itself into this simple proposition, whether we shall take a man who is obliged from the very nature and force of circumstances to be with us, or one who from similar causes must necessarily be against us—shall we take a man of our side or of the other side? The western states, with Pennsylvania, form one interest, the eastern another, and the southern a third; now the question is, shall we take the man who is bound to us by birth, habits, identity of interest, and political sentiment, and who is in every way equal to any of the candidates, or shall we take one surrounded by circumstances the very opposite of these. Common sense and common interest point out what we should do. W. H. Crawford is what we call a self-made man; has risen from obscurity by his own exertions—he has been a member of the Georgia Legislature, of the Senate of the United States, minister to France, Secretary of War, and of the Treasury, and has filled with ability and integrity every station in which he has been placed. Had he not done so, the spirit of persecution which has for years been at work to put him down, must necessarily have succeeded.—His recent triumph over one of the most wanton and unjustifiable intrigues to ruin his reputation as a man, and destroy his hopes as a candidate, that ever disgraced any era of any country, will convince this great community of the unshaken soundness of his integrity and ability. Never was there a man more completely in the hands of his enemies; he has literally been accused, tried, acquitted, and justified by his opponent.

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