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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.

Washington, December 7, 1830.

This day, at 12 o'clock, M., the President of the United States transmitted to both Houses of Congress the following Message:

Fellow Citizens of the Senate and of the House of Representatives:

The pleasure I have in congratulating you upon your return to your constitutional duties is much heightened by the satisfaction which the condition of our beloved country, at this period, justly inspires.—The beneficent Author of all good has granted to us, during the present year, health, peace, and plenty, and numerous causes for joy in the wonderful success which attends the progress of our free institutions.

With a population unparalleled in its increase, and possessing a character which combines the hardihood of enterprise with the considerateness of wisdom, we see in every section of our happy country a steady improvement in the means of social intercourse, and correspondent effects upon the genius and laws of our extended republic.

The apparent exceptions to the harmony of the prospect are to be referred rather to inevitable diversities in the various interests which enter into the composition of so extensive a whole, than to any want of attachment to the Union—interests, whose collision serve only, in the end, to foster the spirit of conciliation and patriotism, so essential to the preservation of that union, which, I most devoutly hope, is destined to prove imperishable.

In the midst of these blessings, we have recently witnessed changes in the condition of other nations, which may, in their consequences, call for the utmost vigilance, wisdom, and unanimity in our councils, and the exercise of all the moderation and patriotism of our people.

The important modifications of their government, effected with so much courage and wisdom by the people of France, afford a happy presage of their future course, and has naturally elicited from the kindred feelings of this nation that spontaneous and universal burst of applause in which you have participated. In congratulating you, my fellow-citizens, upon an event so auspicious to the dearest interests of mankind, I do no more than respond to the voice of my country, without transcending, in the slightest degree, that salutary maxim of the illustrious Washington, which enjoins an abstinence from all interference with the internal affairs of other nations. From a people exercising, in the most unlimited degree, the right of self government, and enjoying, as derived from this proud characteristic, under the favor of heaven, much of the happiness with which they are blessed; a people who can point in triumph to their free institutions, and challenge comparison with the fruits they bear, as well as with the moderation, intelligence, and energy with which they are administered; from such a people, the deepest sympathy was to be expected in a struggle for the sacred principles of liberty, conducted in a spirit every way worthy of the cause, and crowned by a heroic moderation which has disarmed revolution of its terrors. Notwithstanding the strong assurances which the man, whom we so sincerely love and justly admire, has given to the world of the high character of the present King of the French, and which, if sustained to the end, will secure to him the proud appellation of Patriot King, it is not in his success, but in that of the great principle which has borne him to the throne—the paramount authority of the public will—that the American people rejoice.

I am happy to inform you that the anticipations which were indulged at the date of my last communication on the subject of our foreign affairs, have been fully realized in several important particulars.

An arrangement has been effected with Great Britain, in relation to the trade between the United States and her West India and North American colonies, which has settled a question that has for years afforded matter for contention and almost uninterrupted discussion, and has been the subject of no less than six negotiations, in a manner which promises results highly favorable to the parties.

The abstract right of Great Britain to monopolize the trade with her colonies, or to exclude us from a participation therein, has never been denied by the United States. But we have contended, and with reason, that if, at any time, Great Britain may desire the productions of this country, as necessary to her colonies, they must be received upon principles of just reciprocity; and further, that it is making an invidious and unfriendly distinction, to open her colonial ports to the vessels of other nations, and close them against those of the United States.

Antecedently to 1794, a portion of our productions was admitted into the colonial islands of Great Britain, by particular concession, limited to the term of one year, but renewed from year to year. In the transportation of these productions, however, our vessels were not allowed to engage; this being a privilege reserved to British shipping, by which alone our produce could be taken to the islands, and theirs brought to us in return. From Newfoundland and her continental possessions, all our productions, as well as our vessels, were excluded, with occasional relaxations, by which, in seasons of distress, the former were admitted of British bottoms.

By the treaty of 1794, she offered to concede to us, for a limited time, the right of carrying to her West India possessions, in our vessels not exceeding seventy tons burden, and upon the same terms as British vessels, any productions of the United States which British vessels might import therefrom. But this privilege was coupled with conditions which are supposed to have led to its rejection by the Senate; that is, that American vessels should land their return cargoes in the United States only; and, moreover, that they should, during the continuance of the privilege, be precluded from carrying molasses, sugar, coffee, cocoa, or cotton, either from those islands, or from the United States, to any other part of the world. Great Britain readily consented to expunge this article from the treaty; and subsequent attempts to arrange the terms of the trade, either by treaty, stipulation, or concerted legislation, having failed, it has been successively suspended and allowed, according to the varying legislation of the parties.

The following are the prominent points which have, in later years, separated the two Governments. Besides a restriction, whereby all importations into her colonies in American vessels are confined to our own products carried hence, a restriction to which it does not appear that we have ever objected, a leading object on the part of Great Britain has been to prevent us from becoming the carriers of British West India commodities to any other country than our own. On the part of the United States, it has been contended: 1st. That the subject should be regulated by treaty stipulations, in preference to separate legislation. 2d. That our productions, when imported into the colonies in question, should not be subject to higher duties than the productions of the mother country, or of her other colonial possessions. And 3d. That our vessels should be allowed to participate in the circuitous trade between the United States and different parts of the British dominions.

The first point, after having been, for a long time, strenuously insisted upon by Great Britain, was given up by the act of Parliament of July, 1825, all vessels suffered to trade with the colonies being permitted to clear from thence with any articles which British vessels might export, and proceed to any part of the world, Great Britain and her dependencies alone excepted. On our part, each of the above points had, in succession, been explicitely abandoned in negotiations, preceding that of which the result is now announced.

This arrangement secures to the United States every advantage asked by them, and which the state of the negotiation allowed us to insist upon. The trade will be placed upon a footing decidedly more favorable to this country than any on which it ever stood, and our commerce and navigation will enjoy, in the colonial ports of Great Britain, every privilege allowed to other nations.

That the prosperity of the country, so far as it depends on this trade, will be greatly promoted by the new arrangement, there can be no doubt. Independently of the more obvious advantages of an open and direct intercourse, its establishment will be attended with other consequences of a higher value. That which has been carried on since the mutual interdict under all the expense and inconvenience unavoidably incident to it, would have been insupportably onerous, had it not been, in a great degree, lightened by concerted evasions in the mode of making the transshipments at what are called the neutral ports. These indirections are inconsistent with the dignity of nations that have so many motives, not only to cherish feelings of mutual friendship, but to maintain such relations as will stimulate their respective citizens and subjects to efforts of direct, open, and honorable competition only, and preserve them from the influence of seductive and vitiating circumstances.

When your preliminary interposition was asked at the close of the last session, a copy of the instructions under which Mr. McLane has acted, together with the communications which had at that time passed between him and the British government, was laid before you. Although there has not been any thing in the acts of the two governments which requires secrecy, it was thought most proper, in the then state of the negotiation, to make that communication a confidential one. So soon, however, as the evidence of execution, on the part of Great Britain, is received, the whole matter shall be laid before you, when it will be seen that the apprehension which appears to have suggested one of the provisions of the act passed at your last session, that the restoration of the trade in question, might be connected with other subjects, and was sought to be obtained at the sacrifice of the public interest in other particulars, was wholly unfounded, and that the change which has taken place in the views of the British government has been induced by considerations as honorable to both parties as, I trust, the result will prove beneficial.

This desirable result, it will be seen, greatly promoted by the liberal and confiding provisions of the act of Congress of the last session, by which our ports were, upon the reception and announcation by the President of the required assurance on the part of Great Britain, forthwith opened to her vessels, before the arrangement could be carried into effect on her part; pursuing, in this act of prospective legislation, a similar course to that adopted by Great Britain, in abolishing, by her act of Parliament, in 1825, a restriction then existing, and permitting our vessels to clear from the colonies, on their return voyages for any foreign country whatever, before British vessels had been relieved from the restriction imposed by our law, of returning directly from the United States to the colonies—a restriction which she required and expected that we should abolish. Upon each occasion, a limited and temporary advantage has been given to the opposite party, but an advantage of no importance in comparison with the restoration of the mutual confidence and good feelings, and the ultimate establishment of the trade upon fair principles.

It gives me unfeigned pleasure to assure you that this negotiation has been, throughout, characterized by the most frank and friendly spirit on the part of Great Britain, and concluded in a manner strongly indicative of a sincere desire to cultivate the best relations with the United States. To reciprocate this disposition to the fullest extent of my ability, is a duty which I shall deem it a privalege to discharge.

Although the result is, itself, the best commentary on the services rendered to his country by our minister at the court of St. James, it would be doing violence to my feelings were I to dismiss the subject without expressing the very high sense I entertain of the talent and exertion which have been displayed by him on the occasion.

The injury to the commerce of the United States resulting from the exclusion of our vessels from the Black Sea, and the previous footing of mere sufferance upon which even the limited trade enjoyed by us with Turkey has hitherto been placed, have, for a long time, been a source of much solicitude to this government, and several endeavors have been made to obtain a better state of things. Sensible of the importance of the object, I felt it my duty to leave no proper means unemployed to acquire for our flag the same privileges that are enjoyed by the principal powers of Europe. Commissioners were, consequently, appointed, to open a negotiation with the Sublime Porte. Not long after the member of the commission who went directly from the United States had sailed, the account of the treaty of Adrianople, by which one of the objects in view was supposed to be secured, reached this country. The Black Sea was understood to be open to us. Under the supposition that this was the case, the additional facilities to be derived from the establishment of commercial regulations with the Porte were deemed of sufficient importance to require a prosecution of the negotiation as originally contemplated. It was therefore persevered in, and resulted in a treaty, which will be forthwith laid before the Senate.

By its provisions, a free passage is secured, without limitation of time, to the vessels of the United States, to and from the Black Sea, including the navigation thereof; and our trade with Turkey is placed on the footing of the most favored nation. The latter is an arrangement wholly independent of the treaty of Adrianople, and the former derives much value, not only from the increased security which, under any revolutions, it would give to the right in question, but from the fact, ascertained in the course of the negotiation, that, by the construction put upon that treaty by Turkey, the article relating to the passage of the Bosphorus is confined to nations having treaties with the Porte. The most friendly feelings appear to be entertained by the Sultan, and an enlightened disposition is evinced by him to foster the intercourse between the two countries by the most liberal arrangements. This disposition it will be our duty and interest to cherish.

Our relations with Russia are of the most stable character. Respect for that empire, and confidence in its friendship towards the U. States, have been so long entertained on our part, and so carefully cherished by the present Emperor and his illustrious predecessor, as to have become incorporated with the public sentiment of the United States. No means will be left unemployed on my part to promote these salutary feelings, and those improvements of which the commercial intercourse between the two countries is susceptible, and which have derived increased importance from our treaty with the Sublime Porte.

I sincerely regret to inform you that our minister lately commissioned to that court, on whose distinguished talents and great experience in public affairs I place great reliance, has been compelled, by extreme indisposition, to exercise a privilege, which, in consideration of the extent to which his constitution had been impaired in the public service, was committed to his discretion, of leaving temporarily his post for the advantage of a more genial climate.

If, as it is to be hoped, the improvement of his health should be such as to justify him in doing so, he will repair to St. Petersburg, and resume the discharge of his official duties. I have received the most satisfactory assurance that, in the meantime, the public interests in that quarter will be preserved from prejudice, by the intercourse which he will continue, through the Secretary of Legation, with the Russian cabinet.

You are apprised, although the fact has not yet been officially announced to the House of Representatives, that a treaty was, in the month of March last, concluded between the United States and Denmark, by which 650,000 dollars are secured to our citizens as an indemnity for spoliations upon their commerce in the years 1808, 1809, 1810 and 1811. This treaty was sanctioned by the Senate at the close of its last session, and it now becomes the duty of Congress to pass the necessary laws for the organization of the Board of Commissioners to distribute the indemnity amongst the claimants. It is an agreeable circumstance in this adjustment, that its terms are in conformity with the previously ascertained views of the claimants themselves; thus removing all pretence for a future agitation of the subject in any form.

The negotiations in regard to such points in our foreign relations as remain to be adjusted, have been actively prosecuted during the recess. Material advances have been made, which are of a character to promise favorable results. Our country, by the blessing of God, is not in a situation to invite aggression; and it will be our fault if she ever becomes so. Sincerely desirous to cultivate the most liberal and friendly relations with all; ever ready to fulfil our engagements with scrupulous fidelity; limiting our demands upon others to mere justice; holding ourselves ever ready to do unto them as we should wish to be done by; and avoiding even the appearance of undue partiality to any nation, it appears to me impossible that a simple and sincere application of our principles to our foreign relations can fail to place them ultimately upon the footing on which it is our wish they should rest.

Of the points referred to, the most prominent are, our claims upon France for spoliations upon our commerce; similar claims upon Spain, together with embarrassments in the commercial intercourse between the two countries, which ought to be removed; the conclusion of the treaty of commerce and navigation with Mexico, which has been so long in suspense, as well as the final settlement of limits between ourselves and that Republic; and finally, the arbitrament of the question between the United States and Great Britain in regard to the north-eastern boundary.

The negotiation with France has been conducted by our Minister with zeal and ability, and in all respects to my entire satisfaction. Although the prospect of a favorable termination was occasionally dimmed by counter pretensions, to which the United States could not assent, he yet had strong hopes of being able to arrive at a satisfactory settlement with the late Government. The negotiation has been renewed with the present authorities; and, sensible of the general and lively confidence of our citizens in the justice and magnanimity of regenerated France, I regret the more not to have it in my power, yet, to announce the result so confidently anticipated. No ground, however, inconsistent with this expectation, has been taken; and I do not allow myself to doubt that justice will soon be done to us. The amount of the claims, the length of time they have remained unsatisfied, and their incontrovertible justice, make an earnest prosecution of them by this Government an urgent duty.—The illegality of the seizures and confiscations out of which they have arisen is not disputed; and whatever distinctions may have heretofore been set up in regard to the liability of the existing government, it is quite clear that such considerations cannot now be interposed.

The commercial intercourse between the two countries is susceptible of highly advantageous improvements; but the sense of this injury has had, and must continue to have, a very unfavorable influence upon them. From its satisfactory adjustment, not only a firm & cordial friendship, but a progressive development of all their relations, may be expected. It is, therefore, my earnest hope that this old and vexatious subject of difference may be speedily removed.

I feel that my confidence in our appeal to the motives which should govern a just and magnanimous nation, is alike warranted by the character of the French people, and by the high voucher we possess for the enlarged views and pure integrity of the monarch who now presides over their councils; and nothing shall be wanting on my part to meet any manifestation of the spirit we anticipate in one of corresponding frankness and liberality.

The subjects of difference with Spain have been brought to the view of that government, by our Minister there, with much force and propriety; and the strongest assurances have been received of their early and favorable consideration.

The steps which remained to place the matter in controversy between Great Britain and the United States fairly before the arbitrator, have all been taken in the same liberal and friendly spirit which characterised those before announced. Recent events have doubtless served to delay the decision, but our Minister at the court of the distinguished arbitrator, has been assured that it will be made within the time contemplated by the treaty.

I am particularly gratified in being able to state that a decidedly favorable, and, as I hope, lasting change has been effected in our relations with the neighboring republic of Mexico. The unfortunate and unfounded suspicions in regard to our dispositions, which it became my painful duty to advert to on a former occasion, have been, I believe, entirely removed, and the Government of Mexico has been made to understand the real character of the wishes and views of this in regard to that country. The consequence is, the establishment of friendship and mutual confidence. Such are the assurances which I have received, and I see no cause to doubt their sincerity.

I had reason to expect the conclusion of a commercial treaty with Mexico, in season for communication on the present occasion. Circumstances which are not explained, but which, I am persuaded, are not the result of an indisposition on her part to enter into it, have produced the delay.

There was reason to fear, in the course of the last summer, that the harmony of our relations might be disturbed by the acts of certain claimants, under Mexican grants of territory which has litherto been under our jurisdiction. The co-operation of the representative of Mexico near this government was asked on the occasion, and was readily afforded. Instructions and advice have been given to the Governor of Arkansas, and the officers in command in the adjoining Mexican State, by which, it is hoped, the quiet of that frontier will be preserved, until a final settlement of the dividing line shall have removed all ground of controversy.

The exchange of ratifications of the treaty concluded last year with Austria, has not yet taken place. The delay has been occasioned by the non-arrival of the ratification of that Government within the time prescribed by the treaty. Renewed authority has been asked for by the representative of Austria; and, in the meantime, the rapidly increasing trade and navigation between the two countries have been placed upon the most liberal footing of our navigation acts.

Several alleged depredations have been recently committed on our commerce by the national vessels of Portugal. They have been made the subject of immediate remonstrance and reclamation. I am not yet possessed of sufficient information to express a definitive opinion of their character, but expect soon to receive it. No proper means shall be omitted to obtain for our citizens all the redress to which they may appear to be entitled.

Almost at the moment of the adjournment of your last session, two bills, the one entitled "An act for making appropriation for building light-houses, light-boats, beacons, and monuments, placing buoys, and for improving harbors and directing surveys," and the other, "An act to authorize a subscription for stock in the Louisville and Portland Canal Company," were submitted for my approval. It was not possible, within the time allowed me, before the close of the session, to give these bills the consideration which was due to their character and importance, and I was compelled to retain them for that purpose. I now avail myself of this early opportunity to return them to the houses in which they respectively originated, with the reasons which, after mature deliberation, compel me to withhold my approval.

The practice of defraying out of the Treasury of the United States, the expenses incurred by the establishment and support of light-houses, beacons, buoys, and public piers, within the bays, inlets, harbors, and ports of the United States, to render the navigation thereof safe and easy, is co-eval with the adoption of the Constitution, and has been continued without interruption or dispute.

As our foreign commerce increased, and was extended into the interior of the country by the establishment of ports of entry and delivery upon our navigable river, the sphere of those expenditures received a corresponding enlargement. Light-houses, beacons, buoys, public piers, and the removal of sand bars, snyvers, and other partial or temporary impediments in the navigable rivers and harbors which were embraced in the revenue districts from time to time established by law, were authorized upon the mere principle, and the expense defrayed in the same manner. That these expenses have at times been extravagant and disproportionate, is very probable. The circumstances under which they are incurred are well calculated to lead to such a result, unless their application is subjected to the closest scrutiny.—The local advantages arising from the disbursement of public money too frequently, it is to be feared, invite appropriations for objects of this character that are neither necessary nor useful. The number of light-house keepers is already very large, and the bill before me proposes to add to it fifty-one more, of various descriptions. From representations upon the subject which are understood to be entitled to respect, I am induced to believe that there has not only been great improvidence in the past expenditures of the Government upon these objects, but that the security of navigation has, in some instances, been diminished by the multiplication of light-houses, and consequent change of lights upon the coast. It is in this, as in other respects, our duty to avoid all unnecessary expense, as well as every increase of patronage not called for by the public service. But, in the discharge of that duty in this particular, it must not be forgotten that, in relation to our foreign commerce, the burden and benefit of protecting and accommodating it necessarily go together, and must do so as long as the public revenue is drawn from the people through the custom-house. It is indisputable, that whatever gives facility and security to navigation, cheapens imports; and all who consume them are alike interested in whatever produces this effect. If they consume, they ought, as they now do, to pay; otherwise they do not pay. The consumer in the most inland State derives the same advantage from every necessary and prudent expenditure for the facility and security of our foreign commerce and navigation, that he does who resides in a maritime state. Local expenditures have not, of themselves, a correspondent operation.

From a bill making *direct* appropriations for such objects, I should not have withheld my assent. The one now returned does so in several particulars, but it also contains appropriations for surveys of a local character, which I cannot approve. It gives me satisfaction to find that no serious inconvenience has arisen from withholding my approval from this bill; nor will it, I trust, be cause of regret that an opportunity will be thereby afforded for Congress to review its provisions under circumstances better calculated for full investigation than those under which it was passed.

In speaking of direct appropriations, I mean not to include a practice which has obtained to some extent, and to which I have, in one instance, in a different capacity, given my assent—that of subscribing to the stock of private associations. Positive experience and a more thorough consideration of the subject, have convinced me of the impropriety as well as inexpediency of such investments. All improvements effected by the funds of the nation for general use should be open to the enjoyment of all our fellow-citizens, exempt from the payment of tolls, or any imposition of that character. The practice of thus mingling the concerns of the Government with those of the States or of individuals is inconsistent with the object of its institution, and highly impolitic. The successful operation of the federal system can only be preserved by confining it to the few and simple, but yet important objects for which it was designed.

A different practice, if allowed to progress, would ultimately change the character of the Government, by establishing new ties between it and State Governments, which were intended to be kept forever distinct. I cannot give my sanction to any measure which contemplates, or may be otherwise regarded than as a little by degrees, and consequently unknown to the public eye, the important principle fixed by the Constitution. If the interest of the government in private companies is subordinate to that of individuals, the management and control of a portion of the public funds is delegated to an authority unknown to the Constitution, and beyond the supervision of our constituents; if superior, its officers, and agents will be constantly exposed to imputations of favoritism and oppression. Its real property in the public interest, or an alienation of the affections and support of portions of the people, may, therefore, be added to the general discords resulting to the government from contracting with its constituents in pecuniary speculations, be looked for as the probable fruit of such institutions. It is no answer to this objection to say that the extent of consequences like these cannot be great from a limited and small number of investments; because experience in other matters teaches us, and we are not at liberty to disregard its admonitions, that, unless an entire stop be put to them, it will soon be impossible to prevent their accumulation, until they are spread over the whole country, and made to embrace many of the private and appropriate concerns of individuals.

The power which the General Government would acquire within the several States by becoming the principal stockholder in corporations, controlling every canal and each sixty or hundred miles of every important road, and giving a proportionate vote in all their elections, is almost inconceivable, and, in my view, dangerous to the liberties of the people.

This mode of aiding such works is, also, in its nature, deceptive, and in many cases conducive to improvidence in the administration of the national funds. Appropriations will be obtained with much greater facility, and granted with less security to the public interest, when the measure is thus disguised, than when definite and direct expenditures of money are asked for. The interests of the nation would doubtless be better served by avoiding all such indirect modes of aiding particular objects. In a government like ours, more especially, should all public acts be, as far as practicable, simple, undisguised, and intelligible, that they may become fit subjects for the approbation or animadversion of the people. The bill authorizing a subscription to the Louisville and Portland canal affords a striking illustration of the difficulty of withholding additional appropriations for the same object, when the first erroneous step has been taken by instituting a partnership between the government and private companies. It proposes a third subscription on the part of the United States, when each preceding one was at the time regarded as the extent of the aid which government was to render to that work; and the accompanying bill for light-houses, &c. contains an appropriation for a survey of the bed of the river, with a view to its improvement, by removing the obstruction which the canal is designed to avoid. This improvement, if successful, would afford a free passage to the river, and render the canal entirely useless. To such improvidence is the course of legislation subject, in relation to internal improvements on local matters, even with the best intentions on the part of Congress.

Although the motives which have influenced me to this matter may be already sufficiently stated, I am, nevertheless, induced by its importance to add a few observations of a general character.

In my objections to the bills, authorizing subscriptions to the Maysville and Rockville Road Companies, I expressed my views fully in regard to the power of Congress to construct roads and canals within a State, or to appropriate money for improvements of a local character. In the same time intimated my belief that the right to make appropriations for such as were of a national character had been so generally acted upon, and so long acquiesced in by the Federal and State Governments, and the constituents of each, as to justify its exercise on the ground of continued and uninterrupted usage; but that it was, nevertheless, highly expedient that appropriations, even of that character, should, with the exception made at the time, be deferred until the national debt is paid, and that, in the mean while, some general rule for the action of the government in that respect ought to be established.

These suggestions were not necessary to the decision of the question then before me, and were, I readily admit, intended to awaken the attention, and draw forth the opinions and observations of our constituents upon a subject of the highest importance to their interests, and one destined to exert a powerful influence upon the future operations of our political system. I know of no tribunal to which a public man in this country, in a case of doubt and difficulty, can appeal with greater advantage or more propriety than the judgment of the people; and although I must necessarily, in the discharge of my official duties, be governed by the dictates of my own judgment, I have no desire to conceal my anxious wish to conform, as far as I can, to the views of those from whom I act.

All irregular expressions of public opinion are of necessity attended with some doubts as to their accuracy; but, making full allowances on that account, I cannot, I think, deceive myself in believing that the acts referred to, as well as the suggestions which I allowed myself to make in relation to their bearing upon the future operations of the Government, have been approved by the great body of the people. That those whose immediate pecuniary interests are to be affected by proposed expenditures should shrink from the application of a rule which prefers their more general and remote interests to those which are personal and immediate, is to be expected. But even such objections must, from the nature of our population, be but temporary in their duration; and if it were otherwise, our course should be the same; for the time is yet, I hope, far distant, when those entrusted with power to be exercised for the good of the whole, will consider it either honest or wise to purchase local favor at the sacrifice of principle and the general good.

So understanding public sentiment, and thoroughly satisfied that the best interests of our common country imperiously require that the course which I have recommended in this regard should be adopted, I have, upon the most mature consideration, determined to pursue it.

It is due to candor, as well as to my own feelings, that I should express the reluctance and anxiety which I must at all times experience in exercising the undoubted right of the Executive to withhold his assent from bills on other grounds than their unconstitutionality. That this right should not be exercised on slight occasions, all will admit. It is only in matters of deep interest, when the principle involved may be justly regarded as next in importance to infractions of the Constitution itself, that such a step can be expected to meet with the approbation of the people. Such an occasion do I conscientiously believe the present to be. In the discharge of this delicate and highly responsible duty, I am sustained by the reflection that the exercise of this power has been deemed consistent with the obligation of official duty by several of my predecessors; and by the persuasion, too, that whatever liberal institutions may have to fear from the encroachments of Executive power, which has been every where the cause of so much strife and bloody contention, but little danger is to be apprehended from a precedent by which that authority denies to itself the exercise of powers that bring in their train influence and patronage of great extent, and thus excludes the operation of personal interests, every where the bane of official trust. I derive, too, no small degree of satisfaction from the reflection, that, if I have mistaken the interests and wishes of the people, the Constitution affords the means of soon redressing the error, by selecting for the place their favor has lavished upon me a citizen whose opinions may accord with their own. I trust, in the mean time, the interests of the nation will be saved from prejudice, by a rigid application of that portion of the public funds which might otherwise be applied to different objects to that highest of all our obligations, the payment of the public debt, and an opportunity be afforded for the adoption of some better rule for the expenditure of the Government in this matter than any which has hitherto been acted upon.

Personally unpressured with the importance of the subject, not merely as it relates to the general prosperity of the country, but to the safety of the federal system, I cannot avoid requesting my earnest hope that all good citizens, who take a proper interest in the success and harmony of our admirable political institutions, and who are intelligible of desiring to convert to an opposite state of things hostilities for the gratification of personal animosities—will, laying aside every other consideration and disregarding local prejudices, unite their honest exertions to establish upon their general principle, which shall be calculated to afford the greatest extent of public good in regard to the subject of internal improvement, and afford the least ground for sectional discontent.

The general ground of my objection to local appropriations has been sometimes expressed, and I shall endeavor to avoid a repetition of what has been already urged—the importance of sustaining the State governments, as far as is consistent with the rightful action of the Federal Government, and of preserving the greatest attainable harmony between them. I will now only add an expression of my sentiments, entertained which every day's experience serves to confirm—that the political creed which inculcates the preservation of these great objects as a paramount duty is the true faith, and one to which we are mainly indebted for the present success of the entire system, and to which we must alone look for its future stability.

That there are diversities in the interests of the different States which compose this extensive confederacy, must be admitted. These diversities, arising from situation, climate, population, and pursuits, are doubtless, as it is assumed they should be, greatly exaggerated by partizans, and that spirit of rivalry so inseparable from neighboring communities. These circumstances make it the duty of those who are entrusted with the management of its affairs to neutralize their effects as far as practicable, by making the beneficial operation of the Federal Government as equal and equitable among the several States as can be done consistently with the great ends of its institution.

It is only necessary to refer to undoubted facts to see how far the past acts of the Government upon the subject under consideration have fallen short of this object. The expenditures heretofore made for internal improvements amount to upwards of five millions of dollars, and have been distributed in very unequal proportions amongst the States. The estimated expense of works of which surveys have been made, together with that of others projected and partially surveyed, amount to more than ninety-six millions of dollars.

That such improvements, on account of particular circumstances, may be more advantageously and beneficially made in some states than in others, is doubtless true; but that they are of a character which should prevent an equitable distribution of the funds amongst the several States, is not to be conceded. The want of this equitable distribution cannot fail to prove a prolific source of irritation amongst the States.

We have it constantly before our eyes, that professions of superior zeal in the cause of internal improvement, and a disposition to lavish the public funds upon objects of that character, are freely and earnestly put forth by aspirants to power, as constituting the highest claims to the confidence of the people. Would it be strange, under such circumstances, and in times of great excitement, that grants of this description should find their motives in objects which may not accord with the public good? Those who have not had occasion to see and regret the indulgence of a laxity in these matters in past times, have been more fortunate than myself in their observation of the course of public affairs. If to these evils be added the combinations and angry contentions to which such a course of things gives rise, with their baleful influences upon the legislation of Congress, touching the leading and appropriate duties of the Federal Government, it was but doing justice to the character of our people to expect the severe condemnation of the past, which the recent exhibition of public sentiment has evinced.

Nothing short of a radical change in the action of the Government upon the subject can, in my opinion, remedy the evil. If, as it would be natural to expect, the States which have been large favored in past appropriations should insist on being redressed in those hereafter to be made, at the expense of the States which have so largely and disproportionately participated, we have, as matters now stand, but little security that the attempt would do more than change the inequality from one quarter to another.

Thus viewing the subject, I have heretofore felt it my duty to recommend the adoption of some plan for the distribution of the surplus funds which may at any time remain in the treasury, after the national debt shall have been paid, among the States, in proportion to the number of their representatives, to be applied by them to objects of internal improvement.

Although this plan has met with favor in some portions of the Union, it has also elicited objections which merit deliberate consideration. A brief notice of these objections here will not, therefore, I trust, be regarded as out of place.

They rest as far as they have come to my knowledge, on the following grounds: 1st, an objection to the ratio of distribution; 2d, an apprehension that the existence of such a regulation would produce improvident and expensive taxation to raise the funds for distribution; 3, that the mode proposed would lead to the construction of works of a local nature, to the exclusion of such as are general, and as would consequently be of a more useful character; and, lastly, that it would create a discreditable and injurious dependence on the part of the State Governments, upon the Federal power. Of those who object to the ratio of representation as the basis of distribution, some insist that the importations of the respective States would constitute one that would be more equitable, and others, again, that the extent of their respective territories would furnish a standard which would be more expeditious, and sufficiently equitable. The ratio of representation presented itself to my mind, and it still does, as one of obvious equity, because of its being the ratio of contribution, whether the funds to be distributed be derived from the customs or from direct taxation. It does not follow, however, that its adoption is indispensable to the establishment of the system proposed. There may be considerations appertaining to the subject which would render a departure, to some extent, from the rule of contribution, proper. Nor is it absolutely necessary that the basis of distribution be confined to one ground. It may, if, in the judgment of those whose right it is to fix it, be deemed politic and just to give it that character, have regard to several.

In my first message, I stated it to be my opinion that "it is not probable that any adjustment of the tariff upon principles satisfactory to the people of the Union, will, until a remote period, if ever, leave the Government without a considerable surplus in the treasury beyond what may be required for its current service." I have had no cause to change that opinion, but much to confirm it. Should these expectations be realized, a suitable fund would thus be produced for the plan under consideration to operate upon; and if there be no such fund, its adoption will, in my opinion, work no injury to any interest; for I cannot assent to the justness of the apprehension that the establishment of the proposed system would tend to the encouragement of improvident legislation of the character supposed. Whatever the proper authority, in the exercise of constitutional power, shall, at any time hereafter, decide to be for the general good, will, in that as in other respects, deserve and receive the acquiescence and support of the whole country; and we have ample security that every abuse of power in that regard, by the agents of the people,

(See page 4.)