

SOUTHERN CITIZEN.

WHAT DO WE LIVE FOR, BUT TO IMPROVE OURSELVES AND BE USEFUL TO ONE ANOTHER?

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Twenty-Sixth Congress.

FIRST SESSION.

Friday, January 3, 1840.

IN SENATE.

Mr. Dickson, of Rhode Island, and Mr. Grundy, of Tennessee, appeared today.

THE PUBLIC LANDS.

Agreeably to notice given on Tuesday last, Mr. Calhoun asked leave, and introduced a bill to cede the public lands to the States in which they are respectively situated. The bill was read by its title, and, on motion of Mr. C. referred to the Committee on the Public Lands.

Soon after—

Mr. Clay (of Ky.) having given notice of his intention to move to introduce the copy-right bill, stated that he regretted that he was detained by indisposition this morning, and prevented from being present when the bill was introduced by the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. Calhoun) for ceding the public lands to certain States within which they are situated. He had wished to suggest some other reference of it than to the Committee on the Public Lands; but, unless some Senator would move a reconsideration of the order of reference to that committee, he could not offer the suggestion which he wished to make.

[Mr. Southard moved the reconsideration, and Mr. Calhoun objecting to it without some satisfactory reason.]

Mr. Clay went on to observe that, as the committee was constituted, four of its five members were from the new States. He meant to offer no disrespect to them; but he must say that this was a measure which, disguised as it may be, and colorable as its provisions were, was, in effect, a donation of upwards of 100 millions of acres of the common property of all the States of this Union to particular States. He did not think it right that such a measure should be committed to the hands of Senators exclusively representing the donors. He thought that a committee ought to be constituted in which the old States should have a fuller and fairer representation. We should preserve, whatever we may do, the decorum of legislation, and not violate the decencies of justice.

Whilst up, Mr. Clay would be glad if any Senator would inform him whether the Administration is in favor of or against this measure, or stands neutral and uncommitted. This inquiry he should not make if the recent relations between the Senator who introduced this bill and the head of that Administration continued to exist; but rumors, of which the city, the circles, and the press are full, assert that those relations are entirely changed, and have, within a few days, been substituted by others of an intimate, friendly, and confidential nature. And shortly after the time

when this new state of things is alleged to have taken place, the Senator gave notice of his intention to move to introduce this bill. Whether this motion has or has not any connexion with that adjustment of former differences, the Public would, he had no doubt, be glad to know. At all events, it is important to know in what relation of support, opposition, or neutrality, the Administration actually stands to this momentous measure; and he (Mr. C.) supposed that the Senator from South Carolina, or some other Senator, could communicate the desired information.

Mr. Calhoun said he had supposed that no man had as much occasion for delicacy in referring to political compromises as the Senator from Kentucky. That Senator had referred to some transaction in the political course of Mr. C. which occurred some twelve or thirteen years ago, and had alluded to certain passages in which Mr. C. was accused of changing his political relations. But that Senator knew that it was others who had changed their relations to political subjects and political measures rather than Mr. C., who had followed less in regard to those subjects and measures than he was followed. The Senator was accustomed to have his example followed by others; but Mr. C. had not usually followed it, and especially would he not follow it now. But Mr. C.'s personal relations must of course follow his political relations. The Senator had now got the whole story, and Mr. C. trusted it would be satisfactory in regard to the rumors to which he had alluded.

Mr. C. found it impossible to move without giving occasion to accusations of changing his grounds. If he was against the Chief Magistrate, he was charged with changing his opinions.— If he was in favor him, he was then accused of changing his political relations. But he had not changed at all; he stood now where he had always stood, and that was on the unchangeable purpose to bring back the Government to its original simplicity and economy. He, with others, had succeeded in expunging the whole of the Senator's American System, and other extravagances, so as to give the Government a chance of taking a fresh start. And it gave Mr. C. pleasure to say that the best part of the measures of the present Chief Magistrate were approved by Mr. C. and Mr. C. was happy of the opportunity of making these declarations, and he would stand to them. Nothing should prevent Mr. C. from supporting a man while he was politically right. The Senator from Kentucky had given the Government a wrong direction. Mr. C. had resisted the proceeding, and he should continue to do so, standing on the ground occupied by Mr. Jefferson and others of his class.

Mr. Clay said he had understood the Senator as felicitating himself on the opportunity which had been now afforded him by Mr. C. of defining once more his political position; and Mr. C. must say that he had now defined it very clearly, and had apparently given it a new definition. The Senator now declared that all the leading measures of the present Administration had met his approbation, and should receive his support. It turned out, then, that the rumor to which Mr. C. had alluded was true, and that the Senator from South Carolina might be hereafter regarded as a supporter of this Administration, since he had declared that all its leading measures were approved by him, and should have his support.

As to the allusion which the Senator from South Carolina had made in regard to Mr. C.'s support of the head of another Administration, (Mr. Adams,) it occasioned Mr. C. no pain whatever. It was an old story, which had long been sunk in oblivion, except when the Senator and a few others thought proper to bring it up. But what were the facts of that case? Mr. C. was then a member of the House of Representatives, to whom three persons had been returned from whom it was the duty of the House to make a selection for the Presidency. As to one of those three candidates, he was known to be in an unfortunate condition, in which no one sympathized with him more than did Mr. C. Certainly the Senator from South Carolina did not. That gentleman was therefore

out of the question as a candidate for the Chief Magistracy; and Mr. C. had consequently the only alternative of the illustrious individual at the Hermitage, or of the man who was now distinguished in the House of Representatives, and who had held so many public places with honor to himself, and benefit to the country. And if there was any truth in history, the choice which Mr. C. then made was precisely the choice which the Senator from South Carolina had urged upon his friends. The Senator himself had declared his preference of Adams to Jackson. Mr. C. made the same choice; and experience had approved it from that day to this, and would to eternity. History would ratify and approve it. Let the Senator from South Carolina make any thing out of that part of Mr. C.'s public career if he could. Mr. C. defied him.

The Senator had alluded to Mr. C. as the advocate of compromise. Certainly he was. This Government itself, to a great extent, was founded and rested on compromise. And to the particular compromise to which allusion had been made, Mr. C. thought no man ought to be more grateful for it than the Senator from South Carolina. But for that compromise, Mr. C. was not at all confident that he would have now had the honor to meet that Senator face to face in this National Capitol.

The Senator had said that his own position was that of State rights. But what was the character of this bill? It was a bill to strip seventeen of the States of their rightful inheritance; to sell it all for a mess of pottage; to surrender it for a trifle—a mere nominal sum. The bill was, in effect, an attempt to strip and rob seventeen States of this Union of their property, and assign it over to some eight or nine of the States. If this was what the Senator called vindicating the rights of the States, Mr. C. prayed God to deliver us from all such rights and all such advocates.

Mr. Calhoun said the Senator from Kentucky entirely mistook the character of the bill. It was not only a State rights measure, but was indispensable to the peace and prosperity of the States, as the only measure that would well effect the object in view.

Having used the words *compromise*, Mr. C. felt bound to refer the Senator to that particular compromise; and the Senator had said in reply that if any one should be thankful to him for that compromise—

[Mr. Clay. Not to me.]

Mr. Calhoun. The Senator always claimed to be the author of that measure; and I am not in the smallest degree thankful to him for it. I knew he could not avoid it. I was his master on that occasion, and I forced it upon him. I wrote home at that time half a dozen letters, saying that the Senator would be obliged to accede to a compromise. I will now explain all that. The effect of publication is this: that, when a State interposes, the majority must sometimes yield to the minority. Those who are to have the smallest share of the plunder, in the majority, are sure to get a way. In the American system, the constituents of the Senator obtained a very small portion; they were rather of those that were plundered. At the time when Gen. Jackson occasioned the force bill, the Senator from Kentucky had lost the manufacturers; Gen. Jackson had supplanted him; and a Senator, not now present, was also in the way of superseding him in that interest. The Senator from Kentucky was therefore flat on his back, and nothing would answer his own purpose but the compromise. It was with him either compromise or annihilation. It was necessary that either he or the American system should fall.

It was not my desire to mention these things; but the Senator went out of his way to touch on kindred subjects, and I therefore felt myself compelled to make these statements. I have alluded to my letters on that occasion; and I predicted in them on the third day of the session that this question would terminate as it did.

Sir, I will go further. I yielded a good deal in that compromise. It was my first proposition that it should go out in 1840, proceeding in an equal proportion for every year of 15 per cent. And I will say further, that at the session before we nullified in South Carolina, I

and others said that the question must be settled. It was seven years which I then fixed on for its termination, and it would have been carried in that time but for certain circumstances. In regard to all I yielded; my colleague (Mr. Preston) knows why I did it, but I do not choose to state it here. And I should now have said nothing on the subject, if the Senator had been silent himself. But he has no gratitude on my part; and South Carolina owes him no gratitude. He acted under the necessity of the case. I, backed by the gallant State which I represent, compelled the Senator to break down the system at one decisive blow; and it is my opinion that it will bring back the Government to its original principle.

Mr. Clay. I am sorry to be obliged to prolong this discussion. But I made no allusion to compromises till it was done by the Senator himself. I made no reference to the event of 1825, till he had made it; and I did not, in the most distant manner, allude to nullification; and it is extraordinary that the Senator himself should have introduced it, especially at a moment when he is uniting with the authors of the force bill, and of those measures which put down nullification.

The Senator says I was flat on my back, and that he was my master. Sir, I would not own him as my slave. He my master! and I compelled by him! And, as if it were impossible to go far enough in one paragraph, he refers to certain letters of his own to prove that I was not only on my back! but another Senator and the President had robbed me! I was flat on my back, and unable to do any thing but what the Senator from South Carolina permitted me to do!

Sir, what was the case? I introduced the compromise in spite of the opposition of the gentleman who is said to have robbed me of the manufacturers. It met his uncompromising opposition. That measure had, on my part, nothing personal in it. But I saw the condition of the Senator from South Carolina and his friends. They had reduced South Carolina, by that unwise measure, (of nullification,) to a state of war; and I therefore wished to save the effusion of human blood, and especially the blood of our fellow-citizens. That was one motive with me; and another was a regard for that very interest which the Senator says I helped to destroy. I saw that this great interest had so got in the power of the Chief Magistrate, that it was evident that, at the next session of Congress, the whole protective system would be swept by the board. I therefore desired to give it at least a lease of years, and, for that purpose, I, in concert with others, brought forward that measure, which was necessary to save that interest from total annihilation.

But to display still further the circumstances in which the Senator is placed, he says, from that very day of the compromise, all obligations were cancelled that could, on account of it, rest on him, on South Carolina, and on the South.— Sir, what right has he to speak in the name of the whole South? or even of South Carolina itself? For if history is to be relied upon, if we may judge of the future from the past, the time will come when the Senator cannot propose to be the organ even of the chivalrous and enlightened people of South Carolina.

Sir, I am not one of those who are looking out for what may ensue to themselves. My course is nearly run; it is so by nature, and so in the progress of political events. I have nothing to ask of the Senator, of the South, nor of South Carolina, nor yet of the country at large. But I will go, when I do go, or when I choose to go, into retirement, with the undying conviction that, for a quarter of a century, I have endeavored to save the country, faithfully and honorably, without a view to my own interest or my own aggrandizement; and of that delightful conviction and consciousness no human being nor all mankind can ever deprive me.

Mr. Calhoun. The Senator is in the habit of attacking me, and if I were not thus compelled to defend myself, I would pass over the whole matter. I rise now simply to supply some remarks which had escaped my memory, and they are mere matter of history. I was opposed to Mr. Crawford as a candidate for the

Presidency; and after my name was withdrawn I took no part in the election. I was a candidate for the Vice Presidency, and abstained from taking any part, and from all electioneering. When the election was decided, I saw the course which Mr. Adams was determined to take, and I then could not hesitate to take my stand in the way of resistance.

I do not know what induced the Senator from Kentucky to get up a discussion on this bill, and at this time. What his motives are for all this, he can best tell; but I feel these personal invectives as extremely unpleasant, and I would not introduce them. But when they are introduced it is requisite that I should protect myself.

Mr. Clay. One word. Does not the Senator feel that he himself brings his political character into debate? I simply made the inquiry (and I put it to Senators to say if such was the fact) to know whether this great measure, which involves in all about a thousand millions of the public lands—whether this measure had the sanction of the Administration or not. I did it in no way for the purpose of offence; and, by the way, I referred to a rumor which is afloat of new relations, public and political, with the head of the Administration, and stated that I would not have made the inquiry but for that fact. And is it not right, in regard to a great measure, to know whether or not it has the support of the Administration? He would at once have put an end to the discussion if he had simply said that he knew nothing of the views of the Administration, but had introduced this measure independently. But, instead of this, he gets in a passion because I referred to this rumor, and he concludes by saying that the greater part of the measures of the present Administration are approved, and that they will be supported, by him.

Mr. Walker argued briefly to show that Mr. Clay ought already to have known the answer to his question, as Mr. Calhoun had long since introduced this measure, while he was yet opposed to the Administration. He also insisted that the bill ought to be referred to the Committee on Public Lands.

Mr. Grundy said he had been formerly opposed to this bill, and should be so now. He therefore did not wish his vote at this time to be regarded as an indication that he was in favor of the bill.

Mr. Allen expressed himself in the same manner as Mr. Grundy.

Mr. Preston said this bill would have a paramount effect on the finances of the country. It was a question whether it would not increase taxation. In this view it was important, and Mr. P. therefore preferred that it should go to the Committee of Finance.

Mr. Calhoun said the bill, as he had drawn it, would lead to no reduction of the revenue. It was not to go into operation till June, 1842, thus leaving time to adjust the tariff. He saw no reason why it should be taken from the Committee on the Public Lands.

Mr. White said he was entirely ignorant of the contents of this bill; but if the reference should be reconsidered, the bill could then be read, and he would be better able to decide which committee it was appropriate.

Mr. Calhoun called for the reading of the bill, which was read accordingly.

The question of reconsidering the reference of the bill to the Committee on the public Lands was then put, and decided by yeas and nays in the negative, as follows:

Yeas.—Messrs. Betts, Clay, of Ky., Clayton, Crittenden, Davis, Dickson, Knight, Merrick, Phelps, Prentiss, Preston, Ruggles, Southard, Wall, White, of Tenn. 15.

Nays.—Messrs. Allen, Benton, Brown, Buchanan, Calhoun, Clay of Ala., Grundy, Henderson, Hubbard, King, Linn, Lumpkin, Mouton, Nicholas, Norvell, Pierce, Roane Robinson, Sevier, Smith, of Conn., Smith, of Ia., Strange, Tappan, Walker, White of Ia., Williams, Wright, Young—28.

Several private bills were introduced, together with several resolutions, which will be noticed hereafter.

The bill reported from the Committee on Public Lands relinquishing to the State of Mississippi the two per cent. fund accruing under the act for her admission into the Union, was, by general consent, considered in Committee of the

I am a slave