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The Lincoln Republican.

"The tendency of Democracy is toward the elevation of the industrious classes, the increase of their comfort, the assertion of their dignity, the establishment of their power."

BY ROBERT WILLIAMSON, Jr.

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Twenty-seventh Congress.

SPEECH OF MR. CALHOUN, OF SOUTH CAROLINA.

In Senate of the U. S. August 24, 1841—
On the Distribution Bill.
(Concluded.)

But its mischievous effects on the exterior relations of the country would not be limited to its indirect consequences—There it would strike a direct and deadly blow, by withdrawing entirely from the defenses of the country one of the only two sources of our revenue, and that much the most permanent and growing. It is now in the power of Congress to pledge permanently this great and increasing fund to that important object—to completing the system of fortifications and building, equipping, and maintaining a gallant navy. It was proposed to strike out the whole bill; to expunge the detestable project of distribution; and to substitute in its place the revenue from the public lands as a permanent fund, sacred to the defence of the country. And from what quarter did this patriotic and truly statesmanlike proposition come? From the far and gallant west; from a Senator (Mr. Linn) of a State the most remote from the ocean, and secure from danger. And by whom was it voted down? Strange to tell, by Senators from maritime States—States most exposed, and having deepest interest in the measure, defeated by their representatives on this floor. Wonderful as it may seem, Louisiana, Mississippi, Georgia, and South Carolina, each gave a vote against it; North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, and New Jersey, gave each two votes, against it; New York gave one; and every vote from New England, but two from New Hampshire and one from Maine, was cast against it. Be it remembered in all after times, that these votes from States so exposed, and having so deep a stake in the defence of the country, were cast in favor of distribution—of giving gratuitously a large portion of the fund from the public domain to wealthy British capitalists, and against the proposition for applying it permanently to the sacred purpose of defending their own shores from insult and danger. How strange that New York and New England, with their hundred millions of property, and so many thousands of hardy and enterprising sailors annually afloat, should give so large a vote for a measure above all others best calculated to withdraw protection from both, and so small a vote for one best calculated to afford them protection? But strange as that may be, it is still more strange that the staple States—the States that will receive so little from distribution, and which must pay so much to make up the deficiency it will cause—States so defenceless on their maritime frontier—should cast so large a vote for their own oppression, and against their own defence! Can folly, can party infatuation, be the cause one or both, go further.

Let me say to the Senators from commercial and navigating States, in all soberness, that there is now a warm and generous feeling diffused throughout the entire Union in favor of the arm of defence with which your interest and glory are so closely identified. Is it wise by any act of yours, to weaken or alienate such feelings? And could you do an act more directly calculated to do so? Remember, it is a deep principle of our nature not to regard the safety of those who do not regard their own. If you are indifferent to your own safety, you must not be surprised if those less interested should become still more so. But as much as the defenses of the country would be weakened directly by the withdrawal of so large a fund, the blow would be by no means so heavy as that which, in its consequences, would fall on them. That would paralyze the right arm of our power. To understand fully how it would have that effect, we must look not only to the amount of the sum to be withdrawn, but also on what the burden would fall to make up the deficiency.

It would fall on the commerce of the country, exactly where it would do most to cripple the means of defence. To illustrate the truth of what I state, it will be necessary to inquire what would be our best system of defence. And what would involve the prior question,—from what quarter are we most exposed to danger? With that, I shall accordingly begin.

There is but one nation on the globe from which we have any thing serious to apprehend; but that is the most powerful that now exists, or ever did exist. I refer to Great Britain. She is in effect our near neighbor, though the great Atlantic divides us. Her colonial possessions extend along the whole extent of our eastern and western borders, from the Atlantic to the Pacific ocean. Her power and influence extend over the numerous Indian tribes scattered along our western border, from our northern boundary to the infant republic of Texas. But it is on our maritime frontier, extending from the mouth of the Sabine to that of St. Croix—a distance, with the undulations of the coast, of thousands of miles, deeply indented with bays and navigable rivers, and studded with four great commercial emporiums; it is there, on the long line of frontier, that she is the most powerful, and we the weakest and most vulnerable. It is there she stands ready, with her powerful navy, sheltered in the commanding positions of Halifax, Bermuda, and the Bahamas, to strike a blow at any point she may select on this long line of coast. She is the quarter from which only we have danger to apprehend; and the important inquiry which next presents itself is, how can we best defend ourselves against a power so formidable, thus touching us on all points, excepting the small portion of our boundary along which Texas joins us?

Every portion of our extended frontier demands attention, inland as well as maritime; but with this striking difference—that on the former, our power is as much greater than hers, as hers is greater than ours on the maritime. There we would be the assailant, and whatever works may be erected there, ought to have reference to that fact, and look mainly to protecting important points from sudden seizure and devastation, rather than to guard against any permanent lodgment of a force within our borders.

The difficult problem is the defence of our maritime frontier. That, of course, must consist of fortifications and a navy; but the question is, which ought to be mainly relied on, and to what extent the one may be considered as superseding the other. On both points I propose to make a few remarks.

Fortifications, as the means of defence, are liable to two formidable objections, either of which is decisive against them as an exclusive system of defence. The first is, that they are purely defensive. Let the system be ever so perfect, the works located to the greatest advantage, and planned and constructed in the best manner, and all they can do is to repel attacks. They are like a shield without a sword. If they should be regarded as sufficient to defend our maritime cities, still they cannot command respect, or give security to our widely spread and important commercial and navigating interests.

But regarded simply as the means of defence, they are defective. Fortifications are nothing without men to garrison them; and if we should have no other means of defence, Great Britain could compel us, with a moderate fleet stationed at the points above enumerated, and with but a small portion of her large military establishment, to keep up on our part, to guard our coast, ten times the force, at many times the cost, to garrison our numerous forts. Aided by the swiftness of steam, she could menace at the same time every point of our coast, while we, ignorant of the time or point where the blow might fall, would have to stand prepared at every moment and at every point, to repel her attack. A hundred thousand men constantly under arms would be insufficient for the purpose; and we would be compelled to yield, in the end, ingloriously, without striking a blow, simply from the exhaustion of our means.

Some other mode of defence, then, must be sought. There is none other but a navy. I, of course, include steam as well as sails. If we want to defend our coast and protect our rights abroad, it is absolutely necessary. The only questions are, how far our naval force ought to be carried; and to what extent it would supersede the system of fortification?

Before I enter on the consideration of this important point, I owe it to myself and the subject to premise, that my policy is peace, and that I look to the navy but as the right arm of defence,—not as an instrument of conquest or aggrandizement. Our road to greatness, as I said on a late occasion, lies not over the ruins of others. Providence has bestowed on us a new and vast region, abounding in resources beyond any country of the same extent on the globe. Ours is a peaceful task—to improve this rich inheritance; to level its forests; to cultivate its fertile soil; to develop its vast mineral resources; give the greatest rapidity and facility of intercourse between its widely

extended parts; stud its wide surface with flourishing cities, towns and villages; and spread over it richly cultivated fields. So vast is our country, that generations after generations may pass away in executing this task, during the whole of which time we would be rising more surely and rapidly in numbers, wealth, greatness, and influence, than any other people have ever done by arms. But, to carry out successfully this, our true plan of acquiring greatness and happiness, it is not of itself sufficient to have peace and tranquility within. These are indeed necessary, in order to leave the States and their citizens in the full and undisturbed possession of their resources and energy, by which to work out, in general rivalry, the high destiny which certainly awaits our country if we should be but true to ourselves. But, as important as they may be, it is not much less so to have safety against external danger, and the influence and respectability abroad necessary to secure our exterior interests and rights (* important to our prosperity) against aggression. I look to a navy for these objects; and it is within the limits they assign I would confine its growth.—To what extent, then, with these views, ought our navy to be carried? In my opinion, any navy less than that which would give us the habitual command of our own coast and seas, would be little short of useless. One that could be driven from sea and kept in harbor by the force which Great Britain could safely and constantly allot to our coast, would be of little more service than an auxiliary aid to our fortifications in defending our harbors and maritime cities. It would be almost as passive as they are, and would do nothing to diminish the expense, which I have shown would be so exhausting to defend the coast exclusively by fortifications.

But the difficult question still remains to be solved—What naval force would be sufficient for that purpose? It will not be expected that I should give more than a conjectural answer to such a question. I have neither the data nor the knowledge of naval warfare to speak with any thing like precision; but I feel assured that the force required would be far less than what would be thought when the question is first propounded. The very idea of defending ourselves on the ocean against the immense power of Great Britain on that element, has something startling at the first blush. But, as greatly as she outnumbers us in ships and naval resources, we have advantages that counterbalance that, in reference to the subject in hand. If she has many ships, she has also many points of guard, and these as widely separated as are the parts of her widely extended empire. She is forced to keep a home fleet in the channel—another in the Baltic—another in the Mediterranean,—one beyond the Cape of Good Hope, to guard her important possessions in the east,—and another in the Pacific. Our situation is the reverse. We have no foreign possessions, and no point to guard beyond our own maritime frontier. There our whole force may be concentrated, ready to strike when a vulnerable point is exposed. If to these advantages be added, that both France and Russia have large naval forces; that between us and them there is no point of conflict; that they both watch the naval supremacy of Great Britain with jealousy; and that nothing is more easy than for us to keep on good terms with both powers, especially with a respectable naval force at our command,—it will be readily perceived that a force far short of that of Great Britain would effect what I contemplate. I would say a force equal to one-third of hers would suffice; but if not, certainly less than one-half would. And if so, a naval force of that size would enable us to dispense with all fortifications, except at important points, and such as might be necessary in reference to the navy itself, to the great relief of the Treasury, and saving the means to be applied to the navy, where it would be far more efficient.—The less considerable points might be safely left to the defence of cheap works, sufficient to repel plundering attacks; as no large fleet, such as would be able to meet us, with such a naval force as that proposed, would ever think of disgracing itself by attacking places so inconsiderable.

Assuming, then, that a navy is indispensable to our defence, and that one less than that supposed would be in a great measure useless, we are naturally led to look into the sources of our naval power preparatory to the consideration of the question, how they will be affected by imposing on commerce the additional burden this bill would make necessary.

Two elements are necessary to naval power—sailors and money. A navy is an expensive force, and is only formidable when manned with regularly bred sailors. In our case, both of these depend on commerce. Commerce is indispensable to form a commercial marine, and that to form a naval marine; while commerce is with us, if this bill should pass, the only source of revenue. A flourishing commerce is, then, in every respect, the basis of our naval power; and to cripple commerce is

to cripple that power—to paralyze the right arm of our defence. But the imposition of onerous duties on commerce is the most certain way to cripple it. Hence this detestable and mischievous measure, which surrenders the only other source of revenue, and throws the whole burden of supporting the Government exclusively on commerce, aims a deadly blow at the vitals of our power.

The fatal effect of high duties on commerce, is no longer a matter of speculation. The country has passed recently through two periods—one of protective tariffs and high duties, and the other of a reduction of duties; and we have the effects of each in our official tables, both as regards our tonnage and commerce. They speak a language not to be mistaken, and far stronger than any one could anticipate, who has not looked into the tables, or made himself acquainted with the powerful operation of low duties in extending navigation and commerce. As much as I had anticipated from their effects, the reduction of the duties—the lightening of the burdens of commerce—have greatly exceeded my most sanguine expectations.

I shall begin with the tonnage, as more immediately connected with naval power; and, in order to show the relative effects of high duties and low on navigation, I shall compare the period from 1824, when the first great increase of protective duties took place, to 1830, inclusive, when the first reduction duties commenced.—During these seven years, which include the operation of the two protective tariffs of 1824 and 1828—that is the reign of the high protective tariff system, our foreign tonnage fell off from 639,972 tons to 577,475, equal to 64,497; our coasting tonnage from 710,100 to 615,310, equal to 103,880 tons—making the falling off in both equal to 165,370 tons. Yes; to that extent (103,880) did our coasting tonnage decline; the very tonnage, the increase of which, it was confidently predicted by the protective party, would make up for every possible loss in our foreign tonnage from their miserable quack system. Instead of that, the falling off in the coasting trade is even greater than in the foreign; proving clearly that high duties are not less injurious to the home than to the foreign trade.

I pass now to the period (I will not say of free trade—it is far short of that,) of reduction of high protective duties; and now mark the contrast between the two.—I begin with the year 1831, the first after the reduction was made on a few articles, (principally coffee and tea), and will take in the entire period down to the last returns—that in 1840—making a period of ten years. This period includes the great reduction under the compromise act, which is not yet completed, and which, in its further progress, would add greatly to the increase, if permitted to go through undisturbed. The tonnage in the foreign trade increased during that period from 576,475 to 899,764, equal to 323,288 tons—not much less than two-thirds of the whole amount at the commencement of the period; and the coasting for the same period increased from 615,310 to 1,250,099, equal to 635,699 tons—more than double; and this, too, when, according to the high tariff doctrine, our coasting trade ought to have fallen off, instead of increasing—in consequence of the reduction of the duties—and thus incontrovertibly proving, that low duties are not less favorable to our domestic than to our foreign trade. The aggregate tonnage from the period has increased from 1,191,776 to 2,180,763—nearly doubled. Such and so favorable to low duties in reference to tonnage is the result of the comparison between the two periods.

The comparison in reference to commerce will prove not less so. In making the comparison, I shall confine myself to the export trade, not because it gives the results more favorable—for the reverse is the fact—but because the heavy loans contracted by the States during the latter period—between 1830 and 1841—gave a facitious increase to the imports, which would make the comparison appear more favorable than it ought in reality to be.—Their effects were different on the exports. They tended to decrease rather than to increase their amount. Of the exports, I shall select domestic articles only, because they only are affected by the rate of the duties, as the duties on foreign articles, paid or secured by bond on their importation, are returned on reshipment. With these explanatory remarks, I shall now proceed to the comparison.

The amount in value of domestic articles exported for 1825 was \$66,944,745, and in the year 1830 \$59,462,029; making a falling off, under the high tariff system, during that period, of \$7,482,716. Divide the period into two equal parts, of three years each, and it will be found that the falling off in the aggregate of the latter part, compared to the former, is \$13,090,255; showing an average annual decrease of \$4,962,418 during the latter part, compared with the former.

The result will be found very different on turning to the period from 1830, when the reduction of the duties commenced, to 1840, during the whole of which the reduction has been going on. The value of

domestic exports for 1831 was \$61,277,657, and for 1840 \$113,805,634, making a difference of \$52,527,977, equal to eighty-three per cent, omitting fractions, for the ten years. If the period be divided into two equal parts, of five years each, the increase of the latter compared to the former, will be found to be \$139,089,371; making an annual average increase for the latter period—from 1835 to 1840—of \$27,817,654. The rapid increase began with the great reduction under the compromise act of 1832. The very next year after it passed the domestic exports rose from \$81,034,162 to \$101,189,082—just like the rest, which takes place when the weight is removed from the spring.

But my friends from the manufacturing States will doubtless say that this vast increase of exports from reduction of duties was confined to the great agricultural staples, and that the effects were the reverse as to the export of domestic manufactures. With their notion of protection, they cannot be prepared to believe that low duties are favorable to them. I ask them to give me their attention, while I show how great their error is. So far from not partaking of this mighty impulse from the reduction, they felt it more powerfully than other articles of domestic exports, as I shall now proceed to show from the tables.

The exports of domestic manufactures during the period from 1824 to 1832, inclusive—that is, the period of the high protective duties under the tariffs of 1824 and 1828—fell from \$5,729,797 to \$5,050,633, making a decline of \$678,163 during that period. The decline was progressive, and nearly uniform, from year to year, through the whole period. In 1833 the compromise act was passed, which reduced the duties at once nearly half, and has since made very considerable progressive reduction. The exports of domestic manufactures suddenly, as if by magic, sprang forward, and have been rapidly and uniformly increasing ever since; having risen, in the eight years, from 1832 to 1840, from \$5,050,633 to \$12,108,538—a third more than double in that short period, and that immediately following a great decline in the preceding period of eight years, under high duties.

Such were the blighting effects of high duties on the tonnage and the commerce of the country, and such the invigorating effects of their reduction. There can be no mistake. The documents from which the statements are taken are among the public records, and open to the inspection of all. The results are based on the operations of a series of years, showing them to be the consequences of fixed and steady causes, and not accidental circumstances; while the immediate and progressive decrease and increase of tonnage, both coastwise and foreign and of exports, including manufactures as well as other articles, with the laying on of high duties, and the commencement and progress of their reduction, point out, beyond all controversy, high duties to be the cause of one, and reduction—low duties—that of the other.

It will be vain for the advocates of high duties to seek for a different explanation of the cause of these striking and convincing facts in the history of the two periods. The first of these, from 1824 to 1832, is the very period when the late Bank of the United States was in the fullest and most successful operation;—when exchanges, according to their own showing, were the lowest and most steady, and the currency the most uniform and sound; and yet, with all these favorable circumstances, which they estimate so highly, and with no hostile cause operating from abroad, our tonnage and commerce, in every branch on which the duties could operate, fell off; on the contrary, during the latter period, when all the hostile causes which they are in the habit of daily denouncing on this floor, and of whose disastrous consequences we have heard so many eloquent lamentations;—yes, in spite of contractions and expansions; in spite of tampering with the currency and the removal of the deposits; in spite of the disordered state of the whole machinery of commerce; the deranged state of the currency, both at home and abroad; in spite of the state of the exchanges, and of what we are constantly told of the agony of the country;—both have increased, rapidly increased—increased beyond all former example!—Such is the overpowering effect of removing weights from the spines of industry, and striking off shackles from the free exchanges of products, as to overcome all adverse causes.

Let me add, Mr. President, that of this highly prosperous period to industry, [however disastrous to those who have over-speculated, or invested their funds in rotten and swindling institutions,] the most prosperous of the whole, as the tables will show, is that during the operation of the sub-treasury—a period when some progress was made towards the restoration of the currency of the Constitution. In spite of the many difficulties and embarrassments of the trying period, the progressive reduction of the duties, and the gradual introduction of a sounder currency, gave so vigorous a spring to our industry as to overcome them all; showing clearly, if the

country was blessed with the full and steady operation of the two, under favorable circumstances, that it would enjoy a degree of prosperity exceeding what even the friends of that measure anticipated.

Having now shown that the navy is the right arm of our defence; that it depends on commerce for its resources, both as to men and to means; and that high duties destroy the growth of our commerce, including navigation and tonnage; I have, I trust, satisfactorily established the position which I laid down—that this measure, which would place the entire burden of supporting the Government on commerce, would paralyze the right arm of our power. Vote it down and leave commerce as free as possible; and it will furnish ample resources, skillful and gallant sailors, and an overflowing treasury, to repel danger far from our shores, and maintain our rights and dignity in our external relations.—With the aid of the revenue from land, and proper economy, we might soon have ample means to enlarge our navy to that of a third of the British, with duties below the limits of 20 per cent. prescribed by the compromise act. The annual appropriation, or cost of the British navy, is about \$39,000,000. Ours, with the addition of the appropriation for the home squadron made this session, is [say] \$6,000,000; requiring only the addition of four millions to make it equal to a third of that of Great Britain, provided that we can build, equip, man and maintain ours as cheaply as she can hers. That we can, with proper management, can scarcely be doubted, when we reflect that our navigation, which involves almost all the elements of expense that a navy does, successfully competes with hers all over the world. Nor are we deficient in men—gallant and hardy sailors to man a navy on as large a scale as is suggested. Already our tonnage is two-thirds of that of Great Britain, and will in a short time approach an equality with hers, if our commerce should be fairly treated. Leave, then, in the Treasury, the funds proposed to be withdrawn by this detestable bill; apply it to the navy and defenses of the country; and even at its present amount, with small additional aid from the impost, it will give the means of raising it, with the existing appropriation, to the point suggested; and with the steady increase of the fund from the increased sales of lands, keeping pace with the increase of commerce under a system of light and equal duties, we may, with proper economy in the collection and disbursements of the revenue, raise our navy steadily, without feeling the burden, to half the size of the British—or more, if more be needed for defence and the maintenance of our rights. Beyond that, we ought never to aim.

I have (said Mr. C.) concluded what I proposed to say. I have passed over many and weighty objections to this measure which I could not bring within the scope of my remarks, without exhausting the patience of this body. And now, Senators, in conclusion, let me entreat you, in the name of your common country, and the immortal fathers of our Revolution and founders of our Government—to reject this dangerous bill. I implore you to pause and ponder before you give your final vote for a measure which, if it should pass and become a permanent law, would do more to defeat the ends for which this Government was instituted, and to subvert the Constitution and destroy the liberty of the country, than any which has ever been proposed.

"Circumstances alter Cases."—The banks refuse to pay their debts, and the Legislatures grant them all the indulgence they ask.

The States find it inconvenient to pay their debts, and taxes are laid to provide the means.

Is it not as honest for a State to suspend payment as a bank?

When the banks suspend payment, the people are cheated.

To prevent the States suspending payment, the people are taxed.

Why is this difference?

That speculators may not be obliged to sell their property at low prices and pay their debts, the banks suspend payment and the people are cheated.

That speculators and banks may not lose upon State stocks held by them, the States are loudly called on to preserve their faith, and the people are taxed.

In one respect, the principle is the same. The people are both cheated and taxed to save the speculators from loss.

But what hypocrisy it is, for men who sustain banks in the violation of all faith, to declaim so zealously about the importance of preserving the faith of the States!

Democracy goes for good faith on all sides. Let the States pay; let the banks pay; let the speculators pay; let every body pay that can; let there be such indulgence as banks and other creditors can grant without injustice to their own creditors; but no violation of faith, public or private, sanctioned by law or countenance by authority.

All such acts are blows aimed at the pillars which sustain society itself.

Kendall's Expositor.