

# THE STAR AND NORTH CAROLINA GAZETTE.

DAVID OUTLAW, Editors.  
THOS. J. LEMAY, ?

RALEIGH, N. C. THURSDAY, JUNE 23, 1836

VOL XXVII. NO. 27

THOMAS J. LEMAY,  
PROPRIETOR AND PUBLISHER.

TERMS.  
SUBSCRIPTIONS, three dollars per annum—one half in advance. Subscribers in other States cannot be allowed to remain arrears longer than one year, & persons resident without this State, who may desire to become subscribers, will be strictly required to pay the whole amount of the year's subscription in advance. ADVERTISEMENTS, not exceeding fifteen lines, inserted three times for one dollar, and twenty-five cents for each continuance. Expresses to the Editor must be post paid.

**SPEECH OF MR. PICKENS,**  
OF SOUTH CAROLINA;  
Delivered in the House of Representatives, May 23, 1836, the House being in Committee of the whole on the Fortification Bill.

Mr. PICKENS said it was not agreeable to him to trespass upon the attention of the committee, and he trusted he never could be induced to do so except from considerations of duty. Mr. Chairman: This debate has taken a wide range, and doctrines have been advanced and sentiments avowed, against which I feel bound to raise my most solemn protest. The chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, Mr. Cambreleng, introduced an amendment to a former bill embracing the same principles, but declared that he would consider the whole debate as open upon the present occasion.

However, before I proceed to reply to what has been advanced by other gentlemen, I propose to make a few observations on the general principles which shall govern my vote on the bill immediately under the consideration of the committee.

As to appropriations towards those fortifications calculated to give efficiency and protection to our navy, I perhaps would be inclined to go as far as most gentlemen. I am in favor of those that are important for these purposes, and no other, so far as the Atlantic coast is concerned. I look upon it as one of the most idle and visionary schemes that has ever been conceived, to attempt a military line of fortifications on our Atlantic coast similar to those which European governments have adopted. Our population, comparatively speaking, is sparse, and we have a coast equal in extent to the whole western coast of Europe. Under these circumstances, our resources would not justify an attempt to encircle ourselves with a system of fortifications on a plan similar to those which more populous and far less extensive countries have adopted. Besides, we have no border powers against which it may be necessary to protect ourselves. We are remote from all other powers—with an immense and increasing commerce. Our physical position, and all the circumstances with which we are surrounded, proclaim a navy to be our only system of enlarged national defence. Our expenditures for fortifications ought to be made exclusively with a view to give protection and energy to our navy. With our extensive coast, you may make fortifications for land defence, and have your system as you may suppose, perfect; but give your enemy ascendancy upon the ocean, and they will land their forces at whatever points they may think proper. No commercial country can rely for defence upon any thing but a well-regulated navy.

Our true policy of defence is to increase and strengthen it by judicious points of fortification, so as to enable us to protect our whole coast by a stronger naval power than any nation would be able to concentrate against us. With this view, and looking to the natural division of our coast into four great bays, as it were,—the first from Passanauquady to Cape Cod, the second from Cape Cod to Cape Hatteras, the third from Cape Hatteras to Cape Florida, and the fourth to the Sabine.—I would say that extensive navy yards with efficient fortifications, should be established at the most suitable points between these different bays, so that an ordinary naval force, with brave and enterprising men, could easily defend the whole frontier, and at the same time protect our commerce. For instance, I would have such a navy yard with fortifications at or near Boston—the same at or near New York—then at Norfolk and the mouth of the Chesapeake—the same at Charleston—and then at Pensacola, for the defence of the gulf and the commerce of the West. I would place these points on the best and strongest footing, equal to any in Europe, and make little or no expenditures on any other points, so far as our Atlantic frontier is concerned.

It is all idle and visionary to attempt to place our coast in a perfect state of defence by stationary fortifications—this can alone be done by those that move upon the face of the deep. There is scarcely any fortification but what can be passed under favorable tides and winds, and it is a military maxim that there is none but what can be taken. Look to those that were erected at Antwerp, with so much skill and labor, on the same plan of fortress Monroe, and which Bonaparte himself pronounced impregnable, and what was the result? The

French battered them to the ground in twenty-four hours. The truth is, that for an invading force on land we must at last rely upon "high minds and brave hearts," with bayonets, and not fortifications. Besides, sir, the genius of our institutions is at war with a standing army. But extend your visionary and wanton schemes of fortifications, and they call for an increased force to keep them in repair, Sir, I rejoice to say, that I believe the majority of the officers of your present army are men worthy to be trusted with the liberties of their country. But increase your military points and call for a corresponding increase of men, and then place all under profligate and ambitious rulers, and there is no patriot who will not tremble for the consequences to his country.

Mr. Chairman: There has been a great change in the condition and resources of our country within the last few years. Under the application of steam power to our coast and rivers, remote sections have been brought together, and the energies of the community have been condensed. Our population, arising from a sparse population, has been to a great extent overcome. If this be the effect of steam as applicable to the water, what must be the operation of things under the tremendous schemes that are now in progress to bring the interior West to the sea coast by means of rail roads? I would rather have one rail road running from our coast into that brave and enterprising country, for the purposes of defence, than all the fortifications your overflowing treasury can erect. For military purposes, heretofore, communities have been strong in proportion to the denseness of their population. But the recent triumphs of invention and art over nature seem likely to develop new energy and resources, and may change the whole scheme of military defences in an extensive and widely populated country. Under these views, I shall never vote for any fortification that cannot be shown to be necessary for the strength and support of the navy. I would desire to have but few points, and place them on the most liberal and substantial basis. It is nothing but a wanton waste of the public money to attempt to embrace too many interests, and cover too many points.

But, sir, I will now look at the operation of this system in another point of view. While you have been expending, for the last twenty years, millions upon millions in certain sections of this Union, other extensive sections have been to a great extent entirely neglected. When my colleague (Mr. Thompson) some weeks since, with so much ability, demonstrated the unequal operation of your naval appropriations, he drew but a just picture of this Government in all its fiscal operations. As to our navy I am disposed to make some allowances for appropriations heretofore, from the fact that our tonnage has been owned in, and our large commercial transactions have, in a great measure, taken place in those sections where the demand and supplies for a navy and its appendages were naturally called for. But we have now reached a new era in our affairs, when other sections and other interests must be attended to. Heretofore your Government has been profuse in its expenditures for the defence of those portions of your country which you boast of being naturally the strongest, while you have neglected those portions which you have proclaimed to be the weakest. Is this the sound policy that should direct the energies of a fostering Government to protect equally the exposed points of a united people?

Let it not be supposed that we complain of the unequal disbursements, merely for the dollars and cents involved. No; it is because the operation is deeply connected with the great principles of liberty. As a people under one Government, we present a different state of things from any other people. We are one for certain great purposes, and separate for others. As far as the pecuniary and fiscal transactions of Government are concerned, it is not to be disguised that we have sectional interests differently affected. As far as the States are concerned, we have in each peculiar sentiments, habits, and feelings. To preserve these is the very essence of our separate independence and existence. No people can be free and independent who are habitually and systematically excluded from the favors and benefits of the Government that acts upon them. Let it become fixed, as a settled policy, that the West and the South are only to feel this Government in its exactions, while other sections are to feel it in its disbursements—let it be known that we are to be converted into Roman provinces, from which you are to collect treasure and wealth to be distributed amongst those who may be styled "Roman citizens"—and then, sir, if such a system is to last—if this state of things is to be continued—you will soon see, under it, our industry and

enterprise droop and grow dull; you will see our spirits wither and die; genius will turn from lofty aspiration; our people will lose their burning feeling of patriotism; and from manly independence we will tamely sink down to become serfs and vassals, under a mighty empire, where even the very boundaries of the States will be lost and forgotten amid the ruin and desolation thrown over a broken and disheartened country!

It is useless and idle, at this period of the world, to talk about liberty, so far as it may be identified with personal rights and individual protection. These stands secured, and are, to a great extent, consecrated in the feelings and institutions of every civilized community on earth. In those great struggles which ended in the overthrow of feudal barbarism, the contest was for individual and personal liberty. But since the combination of the Holy Alliance, together with all the improvements and schemes of modern society, everything seems to tend towards an amalgamation of all Christendom into one system of organization, and the great contest now is for the political independence of separate communities. This view becomes deeply interesting to us as independent States. An habitual exclusion of any portion of the States of this confederacy from the fiscal benefits of this Government, and power over its action, must end in a sacrifice of their political independence. Hence it is, that political power becomes deeply identified with political liberty. A people to be free must feel that they are so.

Compare these great principles with what now actually exists, and what has existed for the last twenty years. In that period of time this Government has collected \$420,000,000, and after throwing out of the calculation the \$130,000,000, which have been appropriated for the payment of the public debt, we then have left \$290,000,000, of which \$210,000,000 have been disbursed in the Middle and Northern sections, while only \$80,000,000 have been disbursed in all the other sections.

Let not gentlemen suppose that the West and the South are factious, when they oppose this system of disbursements. Not they see involved in it the highest interests and even the liberties of their country.

I come now to what has been advanced by others in the progress of this debate. The Chairman of the "Ways and Means" observed that the revenue system which this Government had adopted for the last twenty years, was the most unjust and oppressive that was ever adopted by any civilized Government. In this, sir, I agree with him. He also said that the commencement of this system was the tariff of 1816. To a considerable extent, I agree with him here too. But when he came to assert that the "compromise bill" was the consummation of that system, I confess I could not exactly understand him. There are principles in this bill which by no means receive my approbation. The gentleman spoke of the evils complained of from the surplus in the treasury, and intimated that if it had not been for the "compromise" a system would have been adopted which would have reduced the revenue now down to the wants of the Government. All this sounded very well from the gentleman in one part of his remarks. But when he came to another part, where he was attempting to defeat the "land bill," or any other just distribution of this surplus amongst the States, I confess I was astonished to see the gentleman labor so hard to prove that there was and would be no surplus.

He entered into a long calculation to show that there would be no more than the wants of the Government would require. At one moment, he denounced the "compromise" as producing the evils of the surplus, to show how much better others could have done for the country; and then when he desired to retain what was in the treasury from a distribution, he attempted to prove that the same "compromise" has produced no surplus beyond what the Government will actually want. I leave the gentleman to reconcile this palpable absurdity and contradiction in his argument, if argument it can be called. But, sir, this contradiction was not more astonishing to me than the reasoning by which he jumped at his conclusions. He spoke loudly on the "ebbs and floods" of importations and exports; and from something connected with these "ebbs and floods" which he knew of, he asserted that two years hence our importations would not exceed \$40,000,000, and upon this our imports would yield \$10,000,000 of revenue. (Here Mr. Cambreleng explained, and said that he meant the dutiable articles would not exceed that amount, but admitted that the importations would amount to \$150,000,000.) Mr. Pickens resumed, and said he did not so understand the gentleman before. But if the gentleman admits that our importations will

equal \$150,000,000, I am totally at a loss to perceive how he comes to the conclusion that our customs will then yield only \$10,000,000. The system is biennial in its reduction, and then only amounting to ten per cent. If the whole importations are \$150,000,000, unless the proportions vary entirely from what they have been heretofore, the dutiable articles must equal \$66,000,000, and this must yield a revenue of \$17,000,000, instead of \$10,000,000. No, sir, with our increasing and wide spreading population, stretching itself over the exuberant valleys of the Mississippi—the vast schemes of internal improvements—developing the resources of the interior—industry and enterprise invigorating the remotest quarters of our land—all, all, proclaim the increasing means of a great people with corresponding wants and demands. Under this prospect of things, I should be induced to think that in two years more our importations would reach \$170,000,000, and that our customs would yield \$18,000,000. Your exports in cotton alone for the year ending on the 1st of last October, sold for \$75,000,000, and this year they will probably reach near \$90,000,000. This was the article which, in the plenitude of your wisdom, you pronounced overproduced three years ago, when we raised less than ten hundred thousand bags, and sold it for less than nine cents, and you declared that production had then out-run demand. Last year we raised above 500,000 bags more, and sold it, notwithstanding your over-production, for sixteen cents. No man can foretell the developments of this country under a wise system of free trade. No man can foresee the immense increase of importations and exports of a free and unrestrained people, with the freshness of the virgin wilderness before them.

The gentleman cannot make the surplus vanish by figures. Even if all the reasonable expenditures that have been officially asked for be made, we will have, on the first of January next, at least \$46,000,000 of surplus in the treasury, supposing the public lands to yield \$17,000,000; and many put them as high as \$25,000,000. Good faith and prudence demand that this should be deposited, not in the corporations of the States, but in the treasury of the separate States themselves, in proportion to their federal representation, they being responsible for its repayment. This would give us the faith and credit of the States instead of the banks. But of this and of the gentleman's argument on the "land bill," I will say more on another occasion.

The gentleman, in his calculations to reduce the surplus, has placed \$7,000,000 and appropriated for Indian treaties, and in this I suppose he is correct. He also put down \$5,000,000 for the Florida war. Mr. Chairman: I will not say that this is too much, but I will say that it is four times as much as it ought to have been. I will here take occasion also to say, that this is one of the most disgraceful wars that has ever occurred—disgraceful in its origin, and of no credit to those who have had the termination of the first campaign. I am rather induced to believe that the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. Wise) has given us the true causes of this war. It is not improbable that it was engendered by iniquitous authority given to agents and others, who, under the vile pretext of seizing fugitive slaves and purchasing others before the emigration of the lawless savages could take place, attempted in some instances to seize even the children of their chiefs for bondage and sale, and then committed imposition and outrage, until suffering nature could bear it no longer. I forbear to say more at present, for I may be misinformed, and I trust for humanity, and for the honor of our Government, that I may be. But I will say, that whatever may or may not have been the treatment of the Indians, I believe that many of those who have volunteered to defend your border have been, to say the least, treated with coldness and neglect. I do not stand here to complain for them. What they have suffered and borne, they have borne without a murmur, for the honor and character of their State. But representing, as I do, perhaps as many of these spirited men as any other gentleman, I take occasion to say that they volunteered their services, not as the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Adams) sneeringly says because it was to them a "fat business," but to defend your exposed frontier, after this Government, from neglect and injustice, had involved us in a cruel and merciless war of plunder and murder.—These very men who have so honorably sustained your stars and your stripes, were from amongst those whom your Government Press here, and its pensioned bands, have denounced for the last two years as traitors to their country. And what has been the fact? While they had gone forth to encounter hardship and exposure in vindication of your honor and your power, those, who some years since, were so eager to exhibit their patriotism by volunteering in a civil war of extermination to be waged on their own

brethren, have made no move in this recent war to let off the exuberance of their spirit, but have kept back in that silence which belongs to their servility. After all that our citizens have done in this unfortunate savage war, it becomes the officer you placed there to command them, considering that he had but recently come fresh from the fields of his triumph in *maneuvering and strategy*—I say it little becomes him to cast a sneer over them as "volunteers," and not "good troops."

But, sir, to return. The gentleman from New York, (Mr. Cambreleng) to exhaust the surplus, has put down \$10,000,000 for the war in which we will be involved with Mexico on our southwestern borders.

Mr. Chairman: To say the least of it, this declaration, coming from one who bears such a relation to this House and country as the gentleman does, was as imprudent as any thing could well be. Every thing relating to the affairs of Texas involves questions of the deepest and most delicate interest, and it does not become us at present to say or do any thing that may tend to embarrassment. I trust there will be some course which the gentleman will pursue. Whatever may be the power of policy of those governments that are in their nature unlimited, I hold that, under our constitution, which we are sworn to defend, with its limited trust powers conferred on us for the interest and benefit of this people, we have no right to go into a war except purely for self-defence. There are certain great moral obligations which should ever bind governments as well as individuals, and which, particularly under our peculiar institutions, should never be forgotten on any occasion, no matter how tempting. A war with Mexico for conquest would lead to a conflict with European powers, the end of which it would not be easy to foretell. I have as much cause to feel sympathy as most gentlemen, for I had the companionship of my boyhood—the friend of my maturer years—brave, chivalrous, and daring to the highest degree, inhumanly butchered in the fall of the Alamo. But I shall never suffer the feelings and sympathies of my heart to prompt me, under impulse, to do any thing calculated to involve others in consequences the most serious, unless under a case of clear justification.

But, sir, whatever may have been the calculations of gentlemen, the recent glorious and triumphant victory gained to the arms of Texas has entirely dispelled them. I deprecated debate heretofore, because I feared that it might lead to consequences calculated to embarrass the negotiating power of this Government. I frankly avow that it is an object near and dear to my heart, to acquire Texas for this Union. Sir, I desire this, not as has been said to extend the boundaries of slavery, but for the purpose of extending the boundaries of liberty. Who is there so cold and heartless that he would desire to limit the confines of this great and growing Republic? If ever all the nations of Christendom were anxious to adopt our constitution, and cover themselves under its principles, is there a man here whose heart would not beat and whose eye would not kindle with joy at the anticipation of such an event. And who is there so narrow and contracted that would not extend our union and protection to those who are our neighbors—who speak our language—identified with us, as they are, in interest and in feeling—who went from our fire-sides and from our attars—who are our own brethren and relatives? Who is there amongst us that would turn his hand upon the hardy enterprise of a brave and daring people?

Yes, sir! they are ours by position—ours by all the sympathies of our nature—ours by all the bonds of interest—ours by all the ties that can bind man to his fellow man. I desire their union, not because it would strengthen the slaveholding States—I scorn to place it upon any such narrow grounds but because I desire to nurture with our foster care a noble empire for the free, just now quickening into life—because I desire that our banner may float aloft, and that the whole race of civilized man shall sleep in peace under its broad and benignant folds.

Mr. Chairman: I come now to examine some of the abstract doctrines which fell from the gentleman from New York, (Mr. Cambreleng) and which I heard with profound astonishment. The gentleman, after speaking of the triumphs of the democracy, proclaimed that he hoped the time was soon coming when the people would declare, in language not to be mistaken, "that no legislation should bind posterity." Sir, if this sentiment had been uttered only by the colleague of the gentleman on my extreme right, (Mr. Moore,) it would have excited in me no attention, for I took that gentleman's wild declamation to be better suited for the "loco foco" party in the streets of New York than for the halls of legislation. But coming as it did from the Chairman of the "Ways and Means," who from his years and experience may be supposed not to speak without reflection, it is a doctrine which deserves the most serious attention of this country. I am aware that

authority, the claims for its origin high ion has been, a duty which in my opinion much reverence is to be paid to with full as aware that it has received. I am mulgated in an ingenious, on profusion Ohio against all corporations, it is openly preached in the Northern and Middle sections of this Union, where in all probability it will soon become the popular doctrine of the day.

What, sir! no legislation bind posterity!! Push this doctrine to its consequences, and where does it lead? What becomes of your public faith? What becomes of your national honor? Let it be known that those treaties which bind you in your intercourse with the nations of the earth, are to be disregarded and defied by the whim, the interest, or the ambition of the ascendant party of to-day, and we must then necessarily be excluded from civilized society. No legislation bind posterity!! What bore us in glory and in triumph through the war of our revolution, but that legislation which bound posterity to redeem the debt incurred to sustain your armies upon the field of battle? What sustained us through the second war of our independence, but the power to pledge the resources of this nation for the great purposes of self-preservation? Is this Congress to do nothing that can bind those who are to come after us? Go back at once and tear up your Declaration of Independence itself—scatter into a thousand pieces the parchment of your Constitution, and substitute, in the place thereof, the shouts of a mob proclaiming their triumphs of to-day, or the power of a lawless multitude waving over a blood stained land the sceptre of anarchy to-morrow. No legislation bind posterity!! Where is faith? Where is honor? Where is public law? Where is public morality?—Sir, this is a doctrine at war with peace, policy, and honor. It breaks down all that is venerable, virtuous, and consecrated in the institutions of civilization itself. If this be the doctrine that the gentleman, and the party with which he is identified, intend practically to enforce in this country, I can tell him that, when he attempts it, a hundred thousand plumes will wave over a hundred thousand lances, couched to vindicate all those sacred rights which have been acquired under the *plighted faith* of this Government.

But, sir, the gentleman dropped another remark that struck me with peculiar force. He asserted that the time would soon come when the Government would sell the public lands to none but emigrants who were actual settlers. Where is the right under the Constitution by which this Government would attempt to exclude any class of free citizens from purchases of the public domain? Where is the right by which you shall claim to distribute it amongst a particular class? If it be intended by this to feed the appetite and minister to the desires of that class who may have no peculiarities or interests to bind them to the place of their nativity—if it be intended to catch that class who move through the land from one end to the other, having no home, and feeling for no country, then it is vile agrarianism. Has it come to this, that a man is to be excluded from the benefits and privileges under this Government because, by industry, economy, or enterprise, he should be so fortunate as to accumulate property, or because he may happen to be associated with others who have? Are citizens whose ties and interests may bind them to reside in one State, to be excluded from holding a freehold in another?

If this system of selling alone to a certain class, be intended by the gentleman as an equal division of the public domain, then he should remember that when the Roman people came to receive their distribution from the public granaries, they became prostituted and debased. When their conquering Generals came loaded with the spoils of devastated provinces, and were enabled to deal out bread and beauties to this class or that class, then, through bribery and corruption, they brought their way to power over the prostrate liberties of their country.

But the gentleman made another declaration, which I confess filled my heart with the most gloomy forebodings for the future. After speaking of the bloated state of things in the country at present, he concluded by declaring that "the whole nation was now one common gambling house." Considering the position he occupies in this House, and the relation he bears to the dominant party that now rules this confederacy—considering that from his residence, he must be intimately acquainted with the secret springs of speculation and commerce—I confess I heard this solemn declaration with no ordinary emotions. This nation one common gambling house! And who made it so? Let those who hold the reins of Government answer this awful question. Mr. Chairman, next to the omnipotence and omnipresence of that superintending Providence that moves upon the affairs of the world, there is no power that exercises so great an influence over the feelings, the sentiments, and the very nature of