

DEBATE IN THE SENATE.

JANUARY 6, 1838.

MR. CALHOUN'S RESOLUTIONS.

The Question being a Mr. Morris's amendment to the third resolution, declaring the freedom of speech and the press on all subjects indisputable, and under the supervision only of the State in which such freedom is exercised.

Mr. DAVIS said that he had several times briefly addressed the Senate upon this subject, which for two years or more had been greatly agitated, more probably than was usual.

At the first session of the last Congress, after a long, animated, denunciatory debate, carried on chiefly by the members from the South, the Senate arrived at certain results in regard to abolition petitions, in which he (Mr. D.) did not concur, but a very great majority did.

Such, sir, being the avowed sentiments of a majority of the Senate, they proceeded to give to them sanction and practical effect; and they did suppress debate, and close the doors against petitions, for, though they resolved to receive them yet they immediately afterwards adopted the practice which has ever since been in force, as the journal will prove.

Mr. Calhoun said the course which he marked out was not followed at all. Mr. DAVIS. I did not mean to say that the detail of the Senator's proposals was adopted, but that the Senate sustained the chief purpose he aimed at.

Mr. CALHOUN. I was in the minority in every vote on this subject. I wished to meet the petitions, and to refuse the admission of them. I wished to take higher and stronger ground. I was not averse to agitation.

Mr. DAVIS. I did not allege that the Senator was averse to agitation, but that it was generally deprecated; and that his proposed measures looked to that end, as the journal most fully proves.

Mr. CALHOUN rose and said, that before he should notice such observations of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. Davis) as he deemed pertinent to the question before the Senate, he felt it a duty which he owed to himself, to state distinctly the position which he had heretofore held in relation to the subject of these resolutions.

It is not true, as the Senator supposes, that my views in relation to the proper course to be taken have prevailed. It is just the reverse. Mr. C. said he had, he believed, been in a standing minority from the time the subject of abolition was first agitated in this body.

But he had received a letter that very morning from one of the fraternity, of high standing and authority, which gave a very different account of this small corps of humble beggars.

He says that they count 1,500 societies, averaging 100 individuals each, and are growing at the rate of one society a day. Here, then, we have 150,000 persons regularly organized, with a copious revenue, and an extensive and powerful press.

He next tells us that the Abolitionists can do no harm; that their publications cannot circulate in the slaveholding States, and can do no mischief in the non-slaveholding States; that the evil exists here, where two much excitement exists; and that if we would keep perfectly cool and patient, and hear ourselves and constituents called robbers and murderers, and our rights and property and lives attacked, without moving hand or tongue, all would be well.

Accustomed, as he has been, to respect the Senator for his sober and correct judgment and feelings on most subjects, he could not but be surprised at the language which he has held on the present occasion.

But we are next told, for the hundredth time, that these are mere abstract propositions, and not demanded by the occasion; on which account, with various other reasons that he assigns, he cannot vote for them.

It was, he would suppose, perfectly needless for the Senator to assign any reason for voting against these resolutions, or any other measure having the same object in view, after what he had told us of the Abolitionists, and the purity and harmlessness of their objects; nor is it at all surprising that he should think that there was no necessity for their introduction.

As to what the Senator has thought proper to say about the secret mischief lurking under these resolutions, about nullification and his (Mr. C's) bitter experience in relation to it; he understands his object to be to distract and draw off attention from the real point at issue, and he does not deem it deserving reply.

The experience of nullification is indeed bitter; not to those who applied the remedy, and freed themselves from a disease that was preying on the vitals of the Constitution and the South, but to those against whom it was applied, and who were fattening on the industry of the rest of the community.

The Senator asks, why mingle abolition with political matters? Why with the Texas question? He knew not how to reconcile such questions with the respect which he has entertained for the Senator's intelligence and fairness. Does not the Senator know that we have received hundreds of petitions, and that they continue daily to pour in on us in one incessant stream, praying that Texas may not be admitted, on the ground that it would extend the limits of the slaveholding portion of the Union? Does he not know that a sovereign State of the Union has come here with its resolutions objecting to

the annexation on the same ground? Does he not know that the entire movement on abolition, with the object proposed to be effected, and the means by which it is to be done, involves political and constitutional questions and considerations of the highest possible magnitude, vital to the peace and safety of all?

As brief as has been his notice of the Senator's apology for the Abolitionists, (for such he must consider his speech,) it is much longer than he would have made it, had it not been for the respect which he has had for his talents and character.

Another set of resolutions. It will be seen that Col. Watkins has presented another project to unite the dominant party.

From a hasty perusal, Mr. Watkins's resolutions if they take any position in particular, seem to take the Whig proposition of a Special Depository. But we are not certain that our impression of their character is correct.

The introduction of these resolutions by the Leader of the Party, will, we presume, calm the agitated waters. None will dare to raise his voice in opposition to the dictates of the great head of the Democracy, unless, perchance, the spirit of insubordination has made such inroads as to embolden some, who aspire to be leaders to make head against the Agamemnon of the corps.

We have not room for the reflections to which these matters give rise—but we may state the fact, which cannot be denied, that the Administration has no majority in this Legislature, on the grand question upon which it has staked its existence.

Mr. Watkins, after handing in some petitions, took this opportunity of expressing his opinion on this question. Though he did not agree with all the Resolutions which had been offered, yet he approved of the conciliatory spirit which characterized them.

Mr. W. then offered the following Resolutions which he thought would meet the views of all parties:— Whereas, experience has shown that the connection heretofore subsisting between the general government and the banks, in the collection, safe keeping and transfer of the public revenue, is not necessary to the fiscal operation of the government, and has proved injurious to the banks themselves, by stimulating them to over-issues—

Resolved, That the connection existing between the Government and the Banks, previous to the suspension of specie payments in May last, ought not to be renewed, nor should Congress employ the agency of any banks in collecting and safekeeping the public revenue, except as special depositories.

Resolved, That while we can recognize no other standard of value than gold and silver, and believe it is essential to the soundness of the currency, that a larger portion of the precious metals should be introduced into the circulation than has hitherto existed, by creating a greater demand for them, yet we are willing that the public revenue shall be receivable in the notes of specie paying Banks, provided that the balances due from them shall be actually converted into specie at short intervals, and placed in special depositories as Congress may deem expedient, so as not to affect injuriously the interest of the Banks, whilst they prevent the public monies from being employed for private or corporate purposes.

Resolved, That however important the principles of policy and expediency involved in the question now pending before Congress, with respect to the fiscal operations of the Government, may be, and as much as it may be desired to see the subject speedily adjusted upon just and proper grounds, we do not conceive that it should produce discussion in the Republican party, or prevent those who differ in opinion on this point alone, from acting harmoniously together in support of the general measures of the present Administration, without which, the fruits of the victories won by concert and union may be lost by unnecessary divisions.

Resolved, That we cordially approve the temperate, conciliatory and liberal tone of the President's Message to Congress on the subject of the currency, and that our confidence in his wisdom, prudence, patriotism and fidelity, remains unimpaired.

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ter sovereigns. New York particularly, sees the benefits conferred Philadelphia by a bank of large capital and extended credit, and is very anxious to have a similar institution to enable her to compete successfully for foreign and domestic trade.

The competition between these leading members of the confederated banking system, and may be extensively felt for weal or woe, by the States of the Union. In rivalry between New York and Philadelphia for commercial ascendency the South may find safety from the domination of either, and it is probably improve the opportunity, may find its own independence upon an equal basis.

We copy the following on the subject from the N. Y. Commercial. The movement seems to us to render the propriety more apparent, of Virginia adopting the proposition submitted to the last Legislature by Mr. Wicks, of incorporating a State Bank of large capital, with branches in as many other States as may choose to join them.—This

From the N. Y. Commercial. "The fact is, New York wants a great commercial bank, as large as that of Philadelphia. And the Legislature ought to incorporate one at the present session. It should be emphatically a state institution—the State itself subscribing for one half the stock. It would then be the best stock in the world. We need the foreign capital which a great bank alone, by the convertibility of its stock, and its credits in the markets of London and Amsterdam, can procure, and which is essential to enable us to retrieve our prostrate condition. It is useless to calculate upon a national bank, so long as Mr. Van Buren is in power, or men of kindred principles; and although no other local bank would answer the purpose of a substitute, one of thirty five millions, as proposed, to be located in the city of New-York, the centre of our foreign and domestic exchanges, would be to all intents and purposes—a BANK OF THE UNITED STATES."

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