

Andrew Jackson (1767-1845)

Second Annual Message

given on December 6, 1830

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
5 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
10 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 any want of attachment to the Union -- interests whose collisions serve only in the end to foster the spirit of conciliation and patriotism so essential to the
15 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 conditions 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.

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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 have 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 man- kind I do no more than respond to the
25 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
30 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
35 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.

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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.

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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 concessions, 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 in 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 70 tons burthen, 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 stipulations or concerted legislation have 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, first, that the subject should be regulated by treaty stipulation in preference to separate legislation; second, 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, 3rd, 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 [1825- 07], 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 explicitly 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
105 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.

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This desirable result was, 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 annunciation 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
115 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 mutual confidence and
120 good feeling, 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
125 duty which I shall deem it a privilege 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.

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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
135 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 opened 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
140 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 limitations of time, to the vessels of the United States to and from
145 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 circumstances 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
150 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

155 toward the United 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.

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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.

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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 assurances that in the mean time the public interest in that quarter will be preserved from prejudice by the intercourse which he will continue through the secretary of legation with the Russian cabinet.

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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 \$650K 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
175 necessary laws for the organization of the board of commissioners to distribute the indemnity among the claimants. It is an agreeable circumstance in this adjustment that the terms are in conformity with the previously ascertained views of the claimants themselves, thus removing all pretense 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
180 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 fulfill our engagements with scrupulous fidelity; limiting our demands upon others to mere justice; holding ourselves ever ready to do unto them as we would wish to be done by, and avoiding even the appearance of undue partiality to any
185 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
190 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
195 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
200 expectation has yet been taken, and I do not allow myself to doubt that justice will soon be done 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 what ever distinctions may have heretofore been set up in regard to the liability of the existing Government it is quite clear that such considerations can not now be interposed.

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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 and 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.

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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.

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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.

220 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 characterized 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.

225 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 disposition 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 consequences is the establishment of friendship and mutual confidence. Such are the assurances I have received, and I see no cause to doubt their sincerity.

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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.

235 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 had hitherto been under our jurisdiction. The cooperation 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
240 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 mean time the rapidly increasing trade and
245 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
250 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 appropriations 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
255 Portland Canal Company" -- were submitted for my approval. It was not possible within the time allowed for me before the close of the session to give to 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.

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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 coeval with the adoption of the Constitution, and has been continued without interruption or dispute.

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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 rivers the sphere of those expenditures received a corresponding enlargement. Light houses, beacons, buoys, public piers, and the removal of sand bars, sawyers, and other partial or temporary impediments in the navigable rivers and harbors which were embraced in the revenue districts from time to time
270 established by law were authorized upon the same 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.

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The number of light house keepers is already very large, and the bill before me proposes to add to it 51 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
280 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
285 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 what ever 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
290 corresponding 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 local character, which I can not approve. It gives me satisfaction to find that no serious inconvenience has arisen from withholding my approval
295 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.
300 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 impolite. The successful operation of the federal system can only be
305 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 this Government by consolidating into one the General and State Governments, which were intended to be kept for ever distinct. I can not perceive how bills authorizing such subscriptions can be otherwise regarded than as bills for revenue, and
310 consequently subject to the rule in that respect prescribed 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. Direct prejudice the public interest or an alienation of the affections and respect of portions of the people may, therefore, in addition to the
315 general dis-credit resulting to the Government from embarking with its constituents in pecuniary stipulations, be looked for as the probable fruit of such associations. It is no answer to this objection to say that the extent of consequences like these can not 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
320 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 60 or 100 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
325 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
330 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 to 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, etc., contains an appropriation for a survey of
340 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 of 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.

345 Although the motives which have influenced me in this matter may be already sufficiently stated, I am, never the less, 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 of to appropriate money for
350 improvements of a local character. I at the same time intimated me 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, never the less, 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
355 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 awake the attention and draw forth the opinion and observations of our constituents upon a subject of the highest importance to their interests, and I destined to exert a powerful influence upon the future operations of our
360 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 for whom I act.

365 All irregular expressions of public opinion are of necessity attended with some doubt as to their accuracy, but making full allowances on that account I can not, 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 intrusted with power to be exercised for the good of the whole will consider it either honest or wise to purchase local favors at the sacrifice of principle and general good.

375 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 constitutionality. 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.

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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 what ever 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 bestowed 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 operations of the Government in this matter than any which has hitherto been acted upon.

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Profoundly impressed with the importance of the subject, not merely as relates to the general prosperity of the country, but to the safety of the federal system, I can not avoid repeating 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 incapable of desiring to convert an opposite state of things into means for the gratification of personal ambition, will, laying aside minor considerations and discarding local prejudices, unite their honest exertions to establish some fixed general principle which shall be calculated to effect the greatest extent of public good in regard to the subject of internal improvement, and afford the least ground for sectional discontent.

The general grounds of my objection to local appropriations have been heretofore expressed, and I shall endeavor to avoid a repetition of what has been already urged -- the importance of sustaining the State sovereignties 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 conviction -- a conviction which every day's experience serves to confirm -- that the political creed which inculcates the pursuit of those 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. Those diversities arising from situation, climate, population, and pursuits are doubtless, as it is natural they should be, greatly exaggerated by jealousies and that spirit of rivalry so inseparable from neighboring communities.
420 These circumstances make it the duty of those who are intrusted 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
425 consideration have fallen short of this object. The expenditures heretofore made for internal improvements amount to upward of \$5M, 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, amounts to more than \$96M.

430 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 can not fail to prove a prolific source of irritation among the States.

435 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 this character are daily 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 indication of a
440 sinister influence 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 exhibitions of public sentiment has evinced.

445

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 least favored in past appropriations should insist on being redressed in those here after 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
450 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
455 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.

460 They rest, as far as they have come to my knowledge, on the following grounds: first, an objection to the ration of distribution; second, an apprehension that the existence of such a regulation would produce improvident and oppressive taxation to raise the funds for distribution; 3rd, 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, last, that it would create a discreditable and injurious dependence on the part of the State governments
465 upon the Federal power.

Of those who object to the ration of representatives 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 expedient and sufficiently equitable. The ration

470 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 1 ground. It may, if in
475 the judgment of those whose right it is to fix it 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 probably 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
480 surplus in the Treasury beyond what may be required for its current surplus". 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 can not 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. What ever the proper authority
485 in the exercise of constitutional power shall at any time here after 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 agents of the people will receive a speedy and effectual corrective at their
hands. The views which I take of the future, founded on the obvious and increasing improvement of all classes of our
fellow citizens in intelligence and in public and private virtue, leave me without much apprehension on that head.

490

I do not doubt that those who come after us will be as much alive as we are to the obligation upon all the trustees of
political power to exempt those for whom they act from all unnecessary burthens, and as sensible of the great truth
that the resources of the nation beyond those required for immediate and necessary purposes of Government can no
where be so well deposited as in the pockets of the people.

495

It may some times happen that the interests of particular States would not be deemed to coincide with the general
interest in relation to improvements within such States. But if the danger to be apprehended from this source is
sufficient to require it, a discretion might be reserved to Congress to direct to such improvements of a general
character as the States concerned might not be disposed to unite in, the application of the quotas of those States, under
500 the restriction of confining to each State the expenditure of its appropriate quota. It may, however, be assumed as a
safe general rule that such improvements as serve to increase the prosperity of the respective States in which they are
made, by giving new facilities to trade, and thereby augmenting the wealth and comfort of their inhabitants, constitute
the surest mode of conferring permanent and substantial advantages upon the whole. The strength as well as the true
glory of the Confederacy is founded on the prosperity and power of the several independent sovereignties of which it
505 is composed and the certainty with which they can be brought into successful active cooperation through the agency
of the Federal Government.

It is, more over, within the knowledge of such as are at all conversant with public affairs that schemes of internal
improvement have from time to time been proposed which, from their extent and seeming magnificence, were readily
510 regarded as of national concernment, but which upon fuller consideration and further experience would now be
rejected with great unanimity.

That the plan under consideration would derive important advantages from its certainty, and that the moneys set apart
for these purposes would be more judiciously applied and economically expended under the direction of the State
515 legislatures, in which every part of each State is immediately represented, can not, I think, be doubted. In the new
States particularly, where a comparatively small population is scattered over an extensive surface, and the
representation in Congress consequently very limited, it is natural to expect that the appropriations made by the
Federal Government would be more likely to be expended in the vicinity of those numbers through whose immediate
agency they were obtained than if the funds were placed under the control of the legislature, in which every county of
520 the State has its own representative. This supposition does not necessarily impugn the motives of such Congressional
representatives, nor is it so intended. We are all sensible of the bias to which the strongest minds and purest hearts are,
under such circumstances, liable. In respect to the last objection -- its probable effect upon the dignity and
independence of State governments -- it appears to me only necessary to state the case as it is, and as it would be if the

measure proposed were adopted, to show that the operation is most likely to be the very reverse of that which the
525 objection supposes.

In the one case the State would receive its quota of the national revenue for domestic use upon a fixed principle as a matter of right, and from a fund to the creation of which it had itself contributed its fair proportion. Surely there could be nothing derogatory in that. As matters now stand the States themselves, in their sovereign character, are not
530 unfrequently petitioners at the bar of the Federal Legislature for such allowances out of the National Treasury as it may comport with their pleasure or sense of duty to bestow upon them. It can not require argument to prove which of the two courses is most compatible with the efficiency or respectability of the State governments.

But all these are matters for discussion and dispassionate consideration. That the desired adjustment would be
535 attended with difficulty affords no reason why it should not be attempted. The effective operation of such motives would have prevented the adoption of the Constitution under which we have so long lived and under the benign influence of which our beloved country has so signally prospered. The framers of that sacred instrument had greater difficulties to overcome, and they did overcome them. The patriotism of the people, directed by a deep conviction of the importance of the Union, produced mutual concession and reciprocal forbearance. Strict right was merged in a
540 spirit of compromise, and the result has consecrated their disinterested devotion to the general weal. Unless the American people have degenerated, the same result can be again effected when ever experience points out the necessity of a resort to the same means to uphold the fabric which their fathers have reared.

It is beyond the power of man to make a system of government like ours or any other operate with precise equality
545 upon States situated like those which compose this Confederacy; nor is inequality always injustice. Every State can not expect to shape the measures of the General Government to suit its own particular interests. The causes which prevent it are seated in the nature of things, and can not be entirely counteracted by human means. Mutual forbearance becomes, therefore, a duty obligatory upon all, and we may, I am confident, count upon a cheerful compliance with this high injunction on the part of our constituents. It is not to be supposed that they will object to make such
550 comparatively inconsiderable sacrifices for the preservation of rights and privileges which other less favored portions of the world have in vain waded through seas of blood to acquire.

Our course is a safe one if it be but faithfully adhered to. Acquiescence in the constitutionally expressed will of the majority, and the exercise of that will in a spirit of moderation, justice, and brotherly kindness, will constitute a
555 cement which would for ever preserve our Union. Those who cherish and inculcate sentiments like these render a most essential service to their country, while those who seek to weaken their influence are, how ever conscientious and praise worthy their intentions, in effect its worst enemies.

If the intelligence and influence of the country, instead of laboring to foment sectional prejudices, to be made
560 subservient to party warfare, were in good faith applied to the eradication of causes of local discontent, by the improvement of our institutions and by facilitating their adaptation to the condition of the times, this task would prove 1 of less difficulty. May we not hope that the obvious interests of our common country and the dictates of an enlightened patriotism will in the end lead the public mind in that direction?

565 After all, the nature of the subject does not admit of a plan wholly free from objection. That which has for some time been in operation is, perhaps, the worst that could exist, and every advance that can be made in its improvement is a matter eminently worthy of your most deliberate attention.

It is very possible that one better calculated to effect the objects in view may yet be devised. If so, it is to be hoped
570 that those who disapprove the past and dissent from what is proposed for the future will feel it their duty to direct their attention to it, as they must be sensible that unless some fixed rule for the action of the Federal Government in this respect is established the course now attempted to be arrested will be again resorted to. Any mode which is calculated to give the greatest degree of effect and harmony to our legislation upon the subject, which shall best serve to keep the movements of the Federal Government within the sphere intended by those who modeled and those who adopted it,
575 which shall lead to the extinguishment of the national debt in the shortest period and impose the lightest burthens upon our constituents, shall receive from me a cordial and firm support.

Among the objects of great national concern I can not omit to press again upon your attention that part of the Constitution which regulates the election of President and Vice-President. The necessity for its amendment is made so clear to my mind by observation of its evils and by the many able discussions which they have elicited on the floor of Congress and elsewhere that I should be wanting to my duty were I to withhold another expression of my deep solicitude on the subject. Our system fortunately contemplates a recurrence to first principles, differing in this respect from all that have preceded it, and securing it, I trust, equally against the decay and the commotions which have marked the progress of other governments.

585

Our fellow citizens, too, who in proportion to their love of liberty keep a steady eye upon the means of sustaining it, do not require to be reminded of the duty they owe to themselves to remedy all essential defects in so vital a part of their system. While they are sensible that every evil attendant upon its operation is not necessarily indicative of a bad organization, but may proceed from temporary causes, yet the habitual presence, or even a single instance, of evils which can be clearly traced to an organic defect will not, I trust, be over-looked through a too scrupulous veneration for the work of their ancestors.

The Constitution was an experiment committed to the virtue and intelligence of the great mass of our country-men, in whose ranks the framers of it themselves were to perform the part of patriotic observation and scrutiny, and if they have passed from the stage of existence with an increased confidence in its general adaptation to our condition we should learn from authority so high the duty of fortifying the points in it which time proves to be exposed rather than be deterred from approaching them by the suggestions of fear or the dictates of misplaced reverence.

A provision which does not secure to the people a direct choice of their Chief Magistrate, but has a tendency to defeat their will, presented to my mind such an inconsistency with the general spirit of our institutions that I was indeed to suggest for your consideration the substitute which appeared to me at the same time the most likely to correct the evil and to meet the views of our constituents. The most mature reflection since has added strength to the belief that the best interests of our country require the speedy adoption of some plan calculated to effect this end. A contingency which some times places it in the power of a single member of the House of Representatives to decide an election of so high and solemn a character is unjust to the people, and becomes when it occurs a source of embarrassment to the individuals thus brought into power and a cause of distrust of the representative body.

Liable as the Confederacy is, from its great extent, to parties founded upon sectional interests, and to a corresponding multiplication of candidates for the Presidency, the tendency of the constitutional reference to the House of Representatives is to devolve the election upon that body in almost every instance, and, what ever choice may then be made among the candidates thus presented to them, to swell the influence of particular interests to a degree inconsistent with the general good. The consequences of this feature of the Constitution appear far more threatening to the peace and integrity of the Union than any which I can conceive as likely to result from the simple legislative action of the Federal Government.

615

It was a leading object with the framers of the Constitution to keep as separate as possible the action of the legislative and executive branches of the Government. To secure this object nothing is more essential than to preserve the former from all temptations of private interest, and therefore so to direct the patronage of the latter as not to permit such temptations to be offered. Experience abundantly demonstrates that every precaution in this respect is a valuable safeguard of liberty, and I which my reflections upon the tendencies of our system incline me to think should be made still stronger.

It was for this reason that, in connection with an amendment of the Constitution removing all intermediate agency in the choice of the President, I recommended some restrictions upon the re-eligibility of that officer and upon the tenure of offices generally. The reason still exists, and I renew the recommendation with an increased confidence that its adoption will strengthen those checks by which the Constitution designed to secure the independence of each department of the Government and promote the healthful and equitable administration of all the trusts which it has created.

630 The agent most likely to contravene this design of the Constitution is the Chief Magistrate. In order, particularly, that his appointment may as far as possible be placed beyond the reach of any improper influences; in order that he may approach the solemn responsibilities of the highest office in the gift of a free people uncommitted to any other course than the strict line of constitutional duty, and that the securities for this independence may be rendered as strong as the nature of power and the weakness of its possessor will admit, I can not too earnestly invite your attention to the
635 propriety of promoting such an amendment of the Constitution as will render him ineligible after 1 term of service.

It gives me pleasure to announce to Congress that the benevolent policy of the Government, steadily pursued for nearly 30 years, in relation to the removal of the Indians beyond the white settlements is approaching to a happy consummation. Two important tribes have accepted the provision made for their removal at the last session of
640 Congress, and it is believed that their example will induce the remaining tribes also to seek the same obvious advantages.

The consequences of a speedy removal will be important to the United States, to individual States, and to the Indians themselves. The pecuniary advantages which it promises to the Government are the least of its recommendations. It
645 puts an end to all possible danger of collision between the authorities of the General and State Governments on account of the Indians. It will place a dense and civilized population in large tracts of country now occupied by a few savage hunters. By opening the whole territory between Tennessee on the north and Louisiana on the south to the settlement of the whites it will incalculably strengthen the SW frontier and render the adjacent States strong enough to repel future invasions without remote aid. It will relieve the whole State of Mississippi and the western part of
650 Alabama of Indian occupancy, and enable those States to advance rapidly in population, wealth, and power. It will separate the Indians from immediate contact with settlements of whites; free them from the power of the States; enable them to pursue happiness in their own way and under their own rude institutions; will retard the progress of decay, which is lessening their numbers, and perhaps cause them gradually, under the protection of the Government and through the influence of good counsels, to cast off their savage habits and become an interesting, civilized, and
655 Christian community. These consequences, some of them so certain and the rest so probable, make the complete execution of the plan sanctioned by Congress at their last session an object of much solicitude.

Toward the aborigines of the country no one can indulge a more friendly feeling than myself, or would go further in attempting to reclaim them from their wandering habits and make them a happy, prosperous people. I have
660 endeavored to impress upon them my own solemn convictions of the duties and powers of the General Government in relation to the State authorities. For the justice of the laws passed by the States within the scope of their reserved powers they are not responsible to this Government. As individuals we may entertain and express our opinions of their acts, but as a Government we have as little right to control them as we have to prescribe laws for other nations.

665 With a full understanding of the subject, the Choctaw and the Chickasaw tribes have with great unanimity determined to avail themselves of the liberal offers presented by the act of Congress, and have agreed to remove beyond the Mississippi River. Treaties have been made with them, which in due season will be submitted for consideration. In negotiating these treaties they were made to understand their true condition, and they have preferred maintaining their independence in the Western forests to submitting to the laws of the States in which they now reside. These treaties,
670 being probably the last which will ever be made with them, are characterized by great liberality on the part of the Government. They give the Indians a liberal sum in consideration of their removal, and comfortable subsistence on their arrival at their new homes. If it be their real interest to maintain a separate existence, they will there be at liberty to do so without the inconveniences and vexations to which they would unavoidably have been subject in Alabama and Mississippi.

675

Humanity has often wept over the fate of the aborigines of this country, and Philanthropy has been long busily employed in devising means to avert it, but its progress has never for a moment been arrested, and one by one have many powerful tribes disappeared from the earth. To follow to the tomb the last of his race and to tread on the graves of extinct nations excite melancholy reflections. But true philanthropy reconciles the mind to these vicissitudes as it
680 does to the extinction of one generation to make room for another. In the monuments and fortifications of an unknown people, spread over the extensive regions of the West, we behold the memorials of a once powerful race, which was exterminated or has disappeared to make room for the existing savage tribes. Nor is there any thing in this which, upon a comprehensive view of the general interests of the human race, is to be regretted. Philanthropy could not wish

to see this continent restored to the condition in which it was found by our forefathers. What good man would prefer a
685 country covered with forests and ranged by a few thousand savages to our extensive Republic, studded with cities,
towns, and prosperous farms, embellished with all the improvements which art can devise or industry execute,
occupied by more than 12,000,000 happy people, and filled with all the blessings of liberty, civilization, and religion?

The present policy of the Government is but a continuation of the same progressive change by a milder process. The
690 tribes which occupied the countries now constituting the Eastern States were annihilated or have melted away to make
room for the whites. The waves of population and civilization are rolling to the westward, and we now propose to
acquire the countries occupied by the red men of the South and West by a fair exchange, and, at the expense of the
United States, to send them to a land where their existence may be prolonged and perhaps made perpetual.

695 Doubtless it will be painful to leave the graves of their fathers; but what do they more than our ancestors did or than
our children are now doing? To better their condition in an unknown land our forefathers left all that was dear in
earthly objects. Our children by thousands yearly leave the land of their birth to seek new homes in distant regions.
Does Humanity weep at these painful separations from every thing, animate and inanimate, with which the young
heart has become entwined? Far from it. It is rather a source of joy that our country affords scope where our young
700 population may range unconstrained in body or in mind, developing the power and faculties of man in their highest
perfection.

These remove hundreds and almost thousands of miles at their own expense, purchase the lands they occupy, and
support themselves at their new homes from the moment of their arrival. Can it be cruel in this Government when, by
705 events which it can not control, the Indian is made discontented in his ancient home to purchase his lands, to give him
a new and extensive territory, to pay the expense of his removal, and support him a year in his new abode? How many
thousands of our own people would gladly embrace the opportunity of removing to the West on such conditions! If the
offers made to the Indians were extended to them, they would be hailed with gratitude and joy.

710 And is it supposed that the wandering savage has a stronger attachment to his home than the settled, civilized
Christian? Is it more afflicting to him to leave the graves of his fathers than it is to our brothers and children? Rightly
considered, the policy of the General Government toward the red man is not only liberal, but generous. He is
unwilling to submit to the laws of the States and mingle with their population. To save him from this alternative, or
perhaps utter annihilation, the General Government kindly offers him a new home, and proposes to pay the whole
715 expense of his removal and settlement.

In the consummation of a policy originating at an early period, and steadily pursued by every Administration within
the present century -- so just to the States and so generous to the Indians -- the Executive feels it has a right to expect
the cooperation of Congress and of all good and disinterested men. The States, moreover, have a right to demand it. It
720 was substantially a part of the compact which made them members of our Confederacy. With Georgia there is an
express contract; with the new States an implied one of equal obligation. Why, in authorizing Ohio, Indiana, Illinois,
Missouri, Mississippi, and Alabama to form constitutions and become separate States, did Congress include within
their limits extensive tracts of Indian lands, and, in some instances, powerful Indian tribes? Was it not understood by
both parties that the power of the States was to be coextensive with their limits, and that with all convenient dispatch
725 the General Government should extinguish the Indian title and remove every obstruction to the complete jurisdiction
of the State governments over the soil? Probably not one of those States would have accepted a separate existence --
certainly it would never have been granted by Congress -- had it been understood that they were to be confined for
ever to those small portions of their nominal territory the Indian title to which had at the time been extinguished.

730 It is, therefore, a duty which this Government owes to the new States to extinguish as soon as possible the Indian title
to all lands which Congress themselves have included within their limits. When this is done the duties of the General
Government in relation to the States and the Indians within their limits are at an end. The Indians may leave the State
or not, as they choose. The purchase of their lands does not alter in the least their personal relations with the State
government. No act of the General Government has ever been deemed necessary to give the States jurisdiction over
735 the persons of the Indians. That they possess by virtue of their sovereign power within their own limits in as full a
manner before as after the purchase of the Indian lands; nor can this Government add to or diminish it.

May we not hope, therefore, that all good citizens, and none more zealously than those who think the Indians oppressed by subjection to the laws of the States, will unite in attempting to open the eyes of those children of the forest to their true condition, and by a speedy removal to relieve them from all the evils, real or imaginary, present or prospective, with which they may be supposed to be threatened.

Among the numerous causes of congratulation the condition of our impost revenue deserves special mention, in as much as it promises the means of extinguishing the public debt sooner than was anticipated, and furnishes a strong illustration of the practical effects of the present tariff upon our commercial interests.

The object of the tariff is objected to by some as unconstitutional, and it is considered by almost all as defective in many of its parts.

The power to impose duties on imports originally belonged to the several States. The right to adjust those duties with a view to the encouragement of domestic branches of industry is so completely incidental to that power that it is difficult to suppose the existence of the one without the other. The States have delegated their whole authority over imports to the General Government without limitation or restriction, saving the very inconsiderable reservation relating to their inspection laws. This authority having thus entirely passed from the States, the right to exercise it for the purpose of protection does not exist in them, and consequently if it be not possessed by the General Government it must be extinct. Our political system would thus present the anomaly of a people stripped of the right to foster their own industry and to counteract the most selfish and destructive policy which might be adopted by foreign nations. This sure can not be the case. This indispensable power thus surrendered by the States must be within the scope of the authority on the subject expressly delegated to Congress.

In this conclusion I am confirmed as well by the opinions of Presidents Washington, Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe, who have each repeatedly recommended the exercise of this right under the Constitution, as by the uniform practice of Congress, the continued acquiescence of the States, and the general understanding of the people.

The difficulties of a more expedient adjustment of the present tariff, although great, are far from being insurmountable. Some are unwilling to improve any of its parts because they would destroy the whole; others fear to touch the objectionable parts lest those they approve should be jeopardized. I am persuaded that the advocates of these conflicting views do injustice to the American people and to their representatives. The general interest is the interest of each, and my confidence is entire that to insure the adoption of such modifications of the tariff as the general interest requires it is only necessary that that interest should be understood.

It is an infirmity of our nature to mingle our interests and prejudices with the operation of our reasoning powers, and attribute to the objects of our likes and dislikes qualities they do not possess and effects they can not produce. The effects of the present tariff are doubtless over-rated, both in its evils and in its advantages. By one class of reasoners the reduced price of cotton and other agricultural products is ascribed wholly to its influence, and by another the reduced price of manufactured articles.

The probability is that neither opinion approaches the truth, and that both are induced by that influence of interests and prejudices to which I have referred. The decrease of prices extends throughout the commercial world, embracing not only the raw material and the manufactured article, but provisions and lands. The cause must therefore be deeper and more pervading than the tariff of the United States. It may in a measure be attributable to the increased value of the precious metals, produced by a diminution of the supply and an increase in the demand, while commerce has rapidly extended itself and population has augmented. The supply of gold and silver, the general medium of exchange, has been greatly interrupted by civil convulsions in the countries from which they are principally drawn. A part of the effect, too, is doubtless owing to an increase of operatives and improvements in machinery. But on the whole it is questionable whether the reduction in the price of lands, produce, and manufactures has been greater than the appreciation of the standard of value.

While the chief object of duties should be revenue, they may be so adjusted as to encourage manufactures. In this adjustment, however, it is the duty of the Government to be guided by the general good. Objects of national importance alone ought to be protected. Of these the productions of our soil, our mines, and our work shops, essential to national defense, occupy the first rank. What ever other species of domestic industry, having the importance to which I have referred, may be expected, after temporary protection, to compete with foreign labor on equal terms merit the same attention in a subordinate degree.

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The present tariff taxes some of the comforts of life unnecessarily high; it undertakes to protect interests too local and minute to justify a general exaction, and it also attempts to force some kinds of manufactures for which the country is not ripe. Much relief will be derived in some of these respects from the measures of your last session.

800 The best as well as fairest mode of determining whether from any just considerations a particular interest ought to receive protection would be to submit the question singly for deliberation. If after due examination of its merits, unconnected with extraneous considerations -- such as a desire to sustain a general system or to purchase support for a different interest -- it should enlist in its favor a majority of the representatives of the people, there can be little danger of wrong or injury in adjusting the tariff with reference to its protective effect. If this obviously just principle were
805 honestly adhered to, the branches of industry which deserve protection would be saved from the prejudice excited against them when that protection forms part of a system by which portions of the country feel or conceive themselves to be oppressed. What is incalculably more important, the vital principle of our system -- that principle which requires acquiescence in the will of the majority -- would be secure from the discredit and danger to which it is exposed by the acts of majorities founded not on identity of conviction, but on combinations of small minorities entered into for the
810 purpose of mutual assistance in measures which, resting solely on their own merits, could never be carried.

I am well aware that this is a subject of so much delicacy, on account of the extended interests in involves, as to require that it should be touched with the utmost caution, and that while an abandonment of the policy in which it originated -- a policy coeval with our Government, and pursued through successive Administrations -- is neither to be
815 expected or desired, the people have a right to demand, and have demanded, that it be so modified as to correct abuses and obviate injustice.

That our deliberations on this interesting subject should be uninfluenced by those partisan conflicts that are incident to free institutions is the fervent wish of my heart. To make this great question, which unhappily so much divides and
820 excites the public mind, subservient to the short-sighted views of faction, must destroy all hope of settling it satisfactorily to the great body of the people and for the general interest. I can not, therefore, in taking leave of the subject, too earnestly for my own feelings or the common good warn you against the blighting consequences of such a course.

825 According to the estimates at the Treasury Department, the receipts in the Treasury during the present year will amount to \$24,161,018, which will exceed by about \$300K the estimate presented in the last annual report of the Secretary of the Treasury. The total expenditure during the year, exclusive of public debt, is estimated at \$13,742,311, and the payment on account of public debt for the same period will have been \$11,354,630, leaving a balance in the Treasury on [1831-01-01] of \$4,819,781.

830

In connection with the condition of our finances, it affords me pleasure to remark that judicious and efficient arrangements have been made by the Treasury Department for securing the pecuniary responsibility of the public officers and the more punctual payment of the public dues. The Revenue Cutter Service has been organized and placed on a good footing, and aided by an increase of inspectors at exposed points, and regulations adopted under the
835 act of [1830-05], for the inspection and appraisement of merchandise, has produced much improvement in the execution of the laws and more security against the commission of frauds upon the revenue. Abuses in the allowances for fishing bounties have also been corrected, and a material saving in that branch of the service thereby effected. In addition to these improvements the system of expenditure for sick sea men belonging to the merchant service has been revised, and being rendered uniform and economical the benefits of the fund applicable to this object have been
840 usefully extended.

The prosperity of our country is also further evinced by the increased revenue arising from the sale of public lands, as will appear from the report of the Commissioner of the General Land Office and the documents accompanying it, which are herewith transmitted. I beg leave to draw your attention to this report, and to the propriety of making early
845 appropriations for the objects which it specifies.

Your attention is again invited to the subjects connected with that portion of the public interests intrusted to the War Department. Some of them were referred to in my former message, and they are presented in detail in the report of the Secretary of War herewith submitted. I refer you also to the report of that officer for a knowledge of the state of the
850 Army, fortifications, arsenals, and Indian affairs, all of which it will be perceived have been guarded with zealous attention and care. It is worthy of your consideration whether the armaments necessary for the fortifications on our maritime frontier which are now or shortly will be completed should not be in readiness sooner than the customary appropriations will enable the Department to provide them. This precaution seems to be due to the general system of fortification which has been sanctioned by Congress, and is recommended by that maxim of wisdom which tells us in
855 peace to prepare for war.

I refer you to the report of the Secretary of the Navy for a highly satisfactory account of the manner in which the concerns of that Department have been conducted during the present year. Our position in relation to the most powerful nations of the earth, and the present condition of Europe, admonish us to cherish this arm of our national
860 defense with peculiar care. Separated by wide seas from all those Governments whose power we might have reason to dread, we have nothing to apprehend from attempts at conquest. It is chiefly attacks upon our commerce and harrassing in-roads upon our coast against which we have to guard. A naval force adequate to the protection of our commerce, always afloat, with an accumulation of the means to give it a rapid extension in case of need, furnishes the power by which all such aggressions may be prevented or repelled. The attention of the Government has therefore
865 been recently directed more to preserving the public vessels already built and providing materials to be placed in depot for future use than to increasing their number. With the aid of Congress, in a few years the Government will be prepared in case of emergency to put afloat a powerful navy of new ships almost as soon as old ones could be repaired.

870 The modifications in this part of the service suggested in my last annual message, which are noticed more in detail in the report of the Secretary of the Navy, are again recommended to your serious attention.

The report of the PostMaster General in like manner exhibits a satisfactory view of the important branch of the Government under his charge. In addition to the benefits already secured by the operations of the Post Office
875 Department, considerable improvements within the present year have been made by an increase in the accommodation afforded by stage coaches, and in the frequency and celerity of the mail between some of the most important points of the Union.

Under the late contracts improvements have been provided for the southern section of the country, and at the same
880 time an annual saving made of upward of \$72K. Not with standing the excess of expenditure beyond the current receipts for a few years past, necessarily incurred in the fulfillment of existing contracts and in the additional expenses between the periods of contracting to meet the demands created by the rapid growth and extension of our flourishing country, yet the satisfactory assurance is given that the future revenue of the Department will be sufficient to meets its extensive engagements. The system recently introduced that subjects its receipts and disbursements to strict regulation
885 has entirely fulfilled its designs. It gives full assurance of the punctual transmission, as well as the security of the funds of the Department. The efficiency and industry of its officers and the ability and energy of contractors justify an increased confidence in its continued prosperity.

The attention of Congress was called on a former occasion to the necessity of such a modification in the office of
890 Attorney General of the United States as would render it more adequate to the wants of the public service. This resulted in the establishment of the office of Solicitor of the Treasury, and the earliest measures were taken to give effect to the provisions of the law which authorized the appointment of that officer and defined his duties. But it is not believed that this provision, however useful in itself, is calculated to supersede the necessity of extending the duties and powers of the Attorney General's Office. On the contrary, I am convinced that the public interest would be greatly
895 promoted by giving to that officer the general superintendence of the various law agents of the Government, and of all

law proceedings, whether civil or criminal, in which the United States may be interested, allowing him at the same time such compensation as would enable him to devote his undivided attention to the public business. I think such a provision is alike due to the public and to the officer.

900 Occasions of reference from the different Executive Departments to the Attorney General are of frequent occurrence, and the prompt decision of the questions so referred tends much to facilitate the dispatch of business in those Departments. The report of the Secretary of the Treasury hereto appended shows also a branch of the public service not specifically intrusted to any officer which might be advantageously committed to the Attorney General. But independently of those considerations this office is now one of daily duty. It was originally organized and its
905 compensation fixed with a view to occasional service, leaving to the incumbent time for the exercise of his profession in private practice. The state of things which warranted such an organization no longer exists. The frequent claims upon the services of this officer would render his absence from the seat of Government in professional attendance upon the courts injurious to the public service, and the interests of the Government could not fail to be promoted by charging him with the general superintendence of all its legal concerns.

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Under a strong conviction of the justness of these suggestions, I recommend it to Congress to make the necessary provisions for giving effect to them, and to place the Attorney General in regard to compensation on the same footing with the heads of the several Executive Departments. To this officer might also be intrusted a cognizance of the cases of insolvency in public debtors, especially if the views which I submitted on this subject last year should meet the
915 approbation of Congress -- to which I again solicit your attention.

Your attention is respectfully invited to the situation of the District of Columbia. Placed by the Constitution under the exclusive jurisdiction and control of Congress, this District is certainly entitled to a much greater share of its consideration than it has yet received. There is a want of uniformity in its laws, particularly in those of a penal
920 character, which increases the expense of their administration and subjects the people to all the inconveniences which result from the operation of different codes in so small a territory. On different sides of the Potomac the same offense is punishable in unequal degrees, and the peculiarities of many of the early laws of MD and VA remain in force, not with standing their repugnance in some cases to the improvements which have superseded them in those States.

925 Besides a remedy for these evils, which is loudly called for, it is respectfully submitted whether a provision authorizing the election of a delegate to represent the wants of the citizens of this District on the floor of Congress is not due to them and to the character of our Government. No principles of freedom, and there is none more important than that which cultivates a proper relation between the governors and the governed. Imperfect as this must be in this case, yet it is believed that it would be greatly improved by a representation in Congress with the same privileges that
930 are allowed to the other Territories of the United States.

The penitentiary is ready for the reception of convicts, and only awaits the necessary legislation to put it into operation, as one object of which I beg leave to recall your attention to the propriety of providing suitable compensation for the officers charged with its inspection.

935
The importance of the principles involved in the inquiry whether it will be proper to recharter the Bank of the United States requires that I should again call the attention of Congress to the subject. Nothing has occurred to lessen in any degree the dangers which many of our citizens apprehend from that institution as at present organized. In the spirit of improvement and compromise which distinguishes our country and its institutions it becomes us to inquire whether it
940 be not possible to secure the advantages afforded by the present bank through the agency of a Bank of the United States so modified in its principles and structures as to obviate constitutional and other objections.

It is thought practicable to organize such a bank with the necessary officers as a branch of the Treasury Department, based on the public and individual deposits, without power to make loans or purchase property, which shall remit the
945 funds of the Government, and the expense of which may be paid, if thought advisable, by allowing its officers to sell bills of exchange to private individuals at a moderate premium. Not being a corporate body, having no stock holders, debtors, or property, and but few officers, it would not be obnoxious to the constitutional objections which are urged against the present bank; and having no means to operate on the hopes, fears, or interests of large masses of the

community, it would be shorn of the influence which makes that bank formidable. The States would be strengthened
950 by having in their hands the means of furnishing the local paper currency through their own banks, while the Bank of
the United States, though issuing no paper, would check the issues of the State banks by taking their notes in deposit
and for exchange only so long as they continue to be redeemed with specie. In times of public emergency the
capacities of such an institution might be enlarged by legislative provisions.

955 These suggestions are made not so much as a recommendation as with a view of calling the attention of Congress to
the possible modifications of a system which can not continue to exist in its present form without occasional collisions
with the local authorities and perpetual apprehensions and discontent on the part of the States and the people.

In conclusion, fellow citizens, allow me to invoke in behalf of your deliberations that spirit of conciliation and
960 disinterestedness which is the gift of patriotism. Under an over-ruling and merciful Providence the agency of this
spirit has thus far been signalized in the prosperity and glory of our beloved country. May its influence be eternal.

ANDREW JACKSON

(15097 Wörter)

Quelle: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=29472>