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## Legislature of Vermont.

Reported for the Watchman and Journal.  
Surplus revenue—IN SENATE, NOV. 14.

### DEBATE.

On the proposed amendment to the revenue bill, reported by the committee on finance...Concluded.

Mr. WATSON said he did not rise to enter into a full investigation, or a protracted discussion of the subject; but the report of the committee of finance proposed a course to be taken in the disposal of the people's money, so utterly at variance with sound policy and the dictates of common sense, he could not permit the question to be taken without making a few brief remarks. In his estimation, the report was a tissue of sophistry and false reasoning. It proposed to place the money of the people in banks, instead of placing it in the hands of the people themselves. He had too great a respect for the talents of the gentlemen comprising the committee, to attribute to them the paterfamilias of the report—he would sooner regard it as emanating from some pedant of the schools, than from the mature and well balanced mind of a statesman. It was so utterly at variance with the sentiments and opinions of the people, he would rather place it under foot than give it the sanction of his vote.

Mr. CONVERSE. Mr. President,—It is said by gentlemen that this is an important question. I believe it, sir. It is also said that we should regard the voice of our constituents in acting upon this matter. This I also believe. And I trust, sir, no one bows with more deference to the will of the people, deliberately expressed, than myself. I know too well, the intelligence, the sagacity, and the wisdom, in matters of this kind, of the community among which I reside, and which I have the honor in part to represent, to disregard their voice, when deliberately uttered. I know too well, sir, my own weakness and fallibility, to set up my own will in defiance of their wishes and opinions. Yes, sir, no one regards with more veneration, the will of their constituents, than myself. And, sir, give me opportunity to consult them, and whatever they direct in this matter, I will most implicitly obey. Then, sir, I beg of this Senate to give me opportunity to consult my constituents. But pass a law to receive the money from the United States, and provide for its safe keeping till the session of the next legislature proposed by this amendment, or in some other similar way, and let us go home to our constituents, and wherever they have the honor of representing them upon this floor in the next general assembly may be instructed by the people, and I will be bound, sir, they will most cheerfully and heartily respond to their wishes. If the people direct the distribution among the towns agreeably to the provisions of the original bill,—believe me, sir, such direction would be most implicitly obeyed. But, sir, I have received no such instruction. So far as I heard an opinion expressed on the subject among my constituents, it was in favor of receiving what might fall to this state in the division of the surplus revenue, and providing for its safe keeping, with what interest could be realized from it till the next session of the general assembly, when such disposition could be made of it as the people might then direct. This amendment, sir, contains a provision in accordance with these views. And for one, sir, I am opposed to making any final disposition of the money the present session. But here permit me to remark, I am not particularly in favor of banks being selected as the depositories of this money, should we get any; although, by the amendment, they are required to give satisfactory security for the same. Should any Senator propose any other safe and proper receptacle for the money, I, sir, would go for such proposition. I have no such partiality for banks as would induce me to jeopardize one cent of this money by putting it under their control; nor would I take any measure to pamper their pride or further their interest at the expense of one single individual on earth.

But, sir, it is said by gentlemen who oppose this amendment, that this is the people's money—admit it; and let me ask, sir, by adopting this amendment, whose money is it to be? Will it not still be the people's money? Who but the people would have authority to control it? And will a division of it among the towns agreeably to

the provisions of the original bill, make it any more the people's money? Gentlemen seem to have entertained strange notions on this subject, by supposing that by depositing this money where it will be perfectly safe and where it will be productive of the greatest amount of interest, and subject to the unlimited control of the people by their representatives, is depriving the people of their money. To me, Sir, it is clear, that if by adopting this amendment, you deprive the people of their money, by a division among the towns you equally deprive them of it. Let the doctrine of gentlemen be carried out, the money must be divided per capita. Yet if the reasoning of gentlemen be correct, this splendid edifice in which we sit from day to day should be demolished, and each man should take his lump of granite and carry home with him. The vaults of the treasury should be opened, and if a dollar is there found, it should again be sent to the pockets of the people.

It is said again, sir, that the original bill passed the other House by a large majority, and that should have an influence upon the legislation of this House. Sir, I hope I never shall be wanting in a proper respect for the decisions of that House; I know there is eminent talents and high attainments to be found there. I hope I shall ever appreciate the candor and fairness that characterize the decisions of that House. Whatever vote I feel it my duty to give on this question, or whatever I may feel it my duty to say on this subject, it will be understood, I hope, that I cast no imputations upon the integrity or candor of the other branch of this Legislature, or upon any individual who may differ from me in opinion. I am certainly disposed most heartily to extend to others the same charity that I claim for myself, that of honesty of intention.

I have already said, sir, that I am in favor of this amendment, as it provided for the receipt and safe keeping of whatever might be received from the Central Government, till another year. But aside from this consideration, I have strong and insuperable objections to the original bill in its present shape, and I will here state some of them. In the first place it is premature—making a final disposition of what we may never receive. But if received at all, it is not to be received except in part, before the session of the next Legislature. Again the bill directs the Treasurer to deposit the money when received, and as often as received, with the town treasurers of the several towns, &c. The money, if received at all, is to be received in four instalments, at four different times during the coming year. By the provisions of the bill, then, the Treasurer must make four different journeys into every town in the State to deposit the money. This, to say the least of it, is no small job, and attended with no little expense, and which might be prevented in a great measure by retaining the same till the whole is received. But, sir, suppose a portion of the towns should refuse to receive their proportion upon the terms specified in the bill, what is to be done with that? Is it to be forced upon them against their will? or is it to be returned to the general fund, and a new distribution made among such towns as are willing to receive it? Certainly the bill provides for no such emergency.

But, sir, admit that the towns will receive their proportion upon the terms specified in this bill. What is to be done with it? Gentlemen say it must be kept for the use of schools; but what is there in the bill which directs that application? Where is there any provision in the bill that directs any specific application? What is there to prevent an immediate division of it among the citizens per capita? And how many towns, think you, sir, would not make such a division of it?—How many, let me ask, where a majority in town could not be found to respond to the sentiments promulgated from this Hall, that this is the people's money, and that the people want no guardianship over their purse strings, give us our share?

And let me inquire, sir, how this division is to be made? Are the farmers only to receive it; or is it to be distributed indiscriminately among all classes of men, women, and children—the man of three score years and ten as well as the infant at its mother's breast?—The bill does not say. But does not every one see that endless broils, contentions, and even law-suits, would grow out of any attempt at distribution among the people? The question of who was a citizen of the town would spring up in innumerable instances; and questions the most vexing, intricate, and uncertain would arise in relation to who should receive. Do we not now find in every county in the State questions of citizenship under our paper laws a most fruitful source of litigation? And would not such questions multiply under any attempt at distribution, owing to the ever varying and shifting character of

a portion of the population of the several towns?

But, sir, it is said by every Senator who has spoken upon this subject, that we are to regard this money, not as a gift to the State, but as a loan; and although we may never be called upon for repayment, still it is but the dictate of sound legislation, to provide for such an event. Suppose, then, that the money should be divided among the people, and in the course of a few years, it should be called for by the General Government, who, let me ask would have the same to pay? Would it be those who received it, or in proportion as they received it? No, sir, the many would receive it, but the few would have it to repay. It could only be raised by a direct tax upon the people, and would be forced, in many instances from the pockets of those who never received one dollar of the money, and who never were and never could be benefited by it. And let me ask again, is not such a state of things to be anticipated from the passing of this bill in its present shape?

But, sir, whatever might be the final determination of the towns with reference to the disposition of this money, does not any one see that strong excitement and bitter contention would arise in the towns on this subject? Some would desire that it should be kept for schools, some that it should be invested in stocks, some in rail roads, and indeed the projects for its disposition, I apprehend, would be almost as various as the individuals who had a voice in the matter.

These, sir, are some among the many reasons why I cannot give my vote for the original bill, not to say anything of the gross partiality and injustice which would result to the small towns in the newly settled parts of the State, owing to their increased population since the census of 1830.

But, sir, I have already occupied the attention of the Senate too long. I am aware, sir, there are many Senators here older and abler than myself to discuss this important subject.

But, sir, before I resume my seat, I beg to be permitted to advert for one moment to the remarks that have fallen from the hon. Senator from Bennington, in relation to the report of the committee on finance. The report has been extremely liberal, yet, in his approaches of that report, and the principles it inculcates. He has been pleased to call it a mere tissue of false reasoning and sophistical bombast; conceived by, and emanating from, a brain wholly ignorant of political economy, or financial legislation, and totally at war both with common sense and sound policy. Yes, sir, that Senator has accused it as being unworthy the consideration of rational men, and fit only to be trodden in the dust.

Sir, when honorable Senators make such broad and bitter denunciations against the report of an honorable and able committee of this House, I for one want their reasons. I want the *whys* and the *wherefores*—I want he should put his finger upon the spots and blemishes worthy of such condemnation. I demand of that honorable Senator to point me to the paragraph, or even the sentence, that is worthy of such unqualified denunciation.—This, sir, he has not yet deigned to do. If, sir, he can show me that this report is obnoxious to the wholesale charges brought against it, I can assure that gentleman that I will be the first to join him in opposition to the report and the amendment; but, sir, I want something more than mere bold assertion. I want facts rather than reproaches, and reasoning rather than mere empty declamation.

For one, sir, I had really supposed this to have been an able report, distinguished alike for the correctness of its reasoning, and the justness of its conclusions. I, sir, expected an able report—I knew that an able committee had the subject under consideration, and were fully competent to a thorough investigation of it; and I had sincerely supposed, that the fondest anticipations of the friends of the committee had been most fully realized. And sir, as I have before remarked, before I can consent to brand that hon. committee with the epithets of ignorance or corruption, I must be allowed to call on gentlemen for their proofs. Till then, sir, I must again be permitted to pronounce this a very able report.

Sir, some uncourteous allusions have been made by another hon. Senator, to the Treasurer, in connection with this subject, as though he was desirous to have the control of this money, to gratify his pride, or further his own interest. Sir, I must again call upon that Senator for his proofs. I hope, sir, I never shall be so uncharitable as to impugn the motives, or assail the characters of honorable men, without at least some shadow of proof; and when hon. Senators upon this floor, take it upon themselves to make such sweeping charges against any individual, or any class of individuals, I hope they will hereafter accompany them with their reasons.

### DEBATE.

IN THE SENATE OF VERMONT, on Mr. Grandy's resolution in relation to the subject of slavery, as it exists in the District of Columbia; the resolution having been so amended as to insert the query, whether slavery in that district can be abolished in a constitutional manner, and

without injury to the enslaved in the adjoining States.

Mr. YOUNG moved to erase the expressions which he understood from their sanction necessarily involved this doubt—one which did not, in his mind, at least, exist.

Mr. WATERMAN said, he hoped the proposed amendment would not prevail.—The resolution read very well in its present shape; and as to the constitutional right of Congress to legislate upon the subject, or of the necessity or expediency of instructing our Senators, and requesting our Representatives to take part in a question so agitating in its very nature, and filling the country with excitement, he at least for one, thought we might well hesitate.—The question was one of great moment, and required the decision, not of a moment, but of time, and of men well versed in constitutional law.

Mr. RANNEY said, the resolution now expressed not only a doubt of the constitutional power of Congress to abolish the evil of slavery in the District of Columbia, the very heart of this nation, boasting of its freedom, and the excellency of its free institutions; but it went even further—it expressed an opinion, an implied one, at least, and gave it currency, that the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, would add to the miseries of the slave another link in the chain of his bondage, if he happened to be dragged out of a life of involuntary servitude in a State adjoining to, or in the vicinity of that district. He entertained no such opinion, and would vote against any resolution expressing such opinion, as the one now under consideration would, unless the amendment prevailed.

Mr. YOUNG said, the form and intended effect of the resolution as first introduced had been neutralized, if not entirely done away, by the *whys* and *wherefores* in which the amendments had enveloped it. This proposition was intended to clear the resolution of all mystification and doubt, and to make it speak not in *whys* and *wherefores*, but in truth and soberness. If the resolution passed without the amendment he proposed, or something similar from other gentlemen, he should care neither *yea* nor *nay* about it; it would not be worth the effort required to sound the one or the other.

Mr. PORTER said, he would not agree entirely with the views expressed by the gentleman from Orleans, (Mr. Young,) as he understood the resolution, even as amended. It recognized slavery as an evil, and had reference to its abolition; not, however, unless it could be effected in a constitutional and legal manner. Senators, surely, were not prepared to preach insurrection—no! The resolution as it now reads, contemplates the removal of slavery in accordance with the constitution and laws.

Mr. HERARD remarked that, narrowed down and neutralized as the resolution had been by amendments, if it expressed any opinion upon the subject of slavery as it exists in the District of Columbia, that expression was made only in the preamble as a new form of introduction. The only remaining reference to the subject left in the resolution was an *if*, calculated to perpetuate doubts, and engender difficulties real or imaginary. He was in favor of no insurrectionary movement—the constitution and the laws must be our guide in this as in every other question of national concernment; but will Senators pass this resolution with an *if* engrailed on its visage, and send out to tell the country and the world, that Vermont is enveloped in a fog of doubt whether man, whatever may be the color of his skin, "is, or of right ought to be free" in the Capital of the American Republic? It would be a stigma upon the Senate, and a reproach upon the intelligence of the State. The resolution permitted, if it did not design to do so, an inference which did not exist either in the head or the heart. Another branch of the subject—he did not intend to express an opinion as to the right or the duty of instructing our delegation in Congress upon the subject of slavery—that was an important question which he did not rise to discuss; but he was unwilling to pass a resolution, which created a doubt even of the constitutional right of Senators and Representatives in Congress, to legislate upon the subject at their discretion.

Mr. SHELDON said, he entertained no doubt of the constitutional power of Congress to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia.

Mr. PORTER moved that the resolution be laid upon the table with the expectation or understanding that it should not be taken up again. Motion lost.

Mr. RANNEY, with a view to test the sentiments of the Senate upon the subject in

debate, moved to strike out, all after the preamble, and insert the following:

Resolved, That Congress possess the power, and ought, in justice to the slave and to suffering humanity, to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia.

Mr. SHELDON said he was in favor of the amendment proposed by the gentleman from Windham, (Mr. Ranney) and as the object was to test the sense of the Senate, he thought no one could doubt the expediency of the measure. Aside from the tremendous moral evil of slavery, in point of national pride, it ought to be abolished.—Mr. S. said, we were a hissing, and a by-word to the people of Europe. Who shared the infamy of the traffic in human flesh, and who the guilt attendant upon holding men in bondage? It is not, said Mr. S., confined to the south—we of the north come in for a share of both the guilt and the infamy, and the odium. The north and the south, the east and the west, are alike responsible for the existence and continuance of a very in the heart, the seat of political life of this nation. The District of Columbia is the common property of the nation—over its territory, Congress, comprised of senators and representatives from every State in the Union, has unlimited constitutional control. If the South say, we will not consent to loose the profit, let her share the odium. It is time for the people of the north to wash their hands of the foul stain, and say to the world we will have no part nor lot in the matter. Mr. Sheldon said, other gentlemen might prefer a different, and perhaps, a better course than the one contemplated in the amendment in debate; but it met his most cordial approbation. It appeared to him that any man with a particle of national pride, would feel it high time to clear his skirts—he was prepared to do it so far as in his power, and do it promptly—fearlessly. He had no fears of excitement in the south—no desire to promote it. Slavery might be more their misfortune than their crime—but as it existed in the District of Columbia—it was both, to all parts of the country, and the misfortune could not too soon be repaired, nor the crime too thoroughly repented of by the removal of its cause—the blot upon the nation's honor, would not too suddenly or too thoroughly be wiped away.—The sooner and the more effectual the better for our country, and the brighter its future character and prospects.

Mr. BELL followed. His remarks have been given in a previous paper.

Mr. BRIGGS said he could see no reasonable objection to the motion to amend. He hoped all would vote in favor of its adoption. Amendment adopted, one senator only voting in the negative.

Mr. PORTER then moved to add to the amendment just adopted, the words,—*"whenever the same can be done consistently with the rights of the slave-holder, and without increasing the burthens of those held in servitude."*

Mr. RANNEY said he was opposed to this amendment; it again brought up in a little different form of expression, the same evasion of the main question, which had so often been attempted. His object was to meet manfully the question, and answer it *yea* or *nay*, that the people might distinctly understand whether the Senate of Vermont, did or did not entertain the opinion that a slave market ought longer to exist at the capital of this nation; whether thousands of human beings there shall be held in perpetual bondage, liable to be bought and sold like sheep in the shambles, or live cattle in the market. If we adopt the amendment now proposed by the gentleman from Windsor (Mr. Porter) it will in effect, according to my understanding, said Mr. Ranney, be saying and giving our official sanction to the opinion, that the owner of a slave in the district of Columbia has a right to hold his servant, or slave, in bondage, and that Congress does not possess the right, or the power, to give liberty to the captive in chains. Was this the sentiment of the people of Vermont? Was it the deliberate opinion of their representatives here, or in the halls of Congress? He thought not, and for one at least, he was not willing to hush to silence the expression of opinion upon the subject—he would speak out fearlessly, and with fidelity to truth and duty. The rights of slave holding States he would by no means invade—the resolution means no such influence or invasion—it touched the subject of slavery only as it existed in the District, over which the nation as a whole, held undeniable jurisdiction. Although we would concede that the slave states had constitutional right on their side, it did not of course follow that they had the moral right to con-

time or to perpetuate slavery among themselves, much less in the small portion of national domain, embraced in the circumscribed limits of the district of Columbia.—He had desired nothing more nor less by the amendment he had proposed which had been almost unanimously adopted, than to bring the question to a definite point, and by the simple answer of *yea* or *nay*, to give the opinion of the Senate of Vermont, on the subject of slavery as it existed in the national district, and no where else. The resolution day after day, and week after week, had lain upon the table; the subject had been ably and thoroughly discussed in Congress, with their tables groaning under the load of petitions coming up from the people. Surely gentlemen, after all this, could not be unprepared for the final question.

Mr. MERRILL said this was a kind of extra-legislation of which he was not a particular friend—it was no favorite of his—he was not sent to the Senate upon such an errand by his constituents; but if he must decide upon it, he wished for time to deliberate—reflect; to consult authorities, and be enabled to give such an opinion as a Senator acting under oath, he should be enabled to maintain and defend.

On motion of Mr. Converse, the resolution was laid upon the table—*yeas*, 17; *noes*, 8—where it sleeps; the resolution having been superseded by the resolutions from the house on the same subject, concurred in and passed by the Senate.

Remarks of Mr. Watson, on introducing his amendment to the bill making appropriation for surveys of railroads.

Mr. WATSON said, that in proposing the amendment, he was actuated by no hostility to the provisions of the bill on the table. The Senate, he said, could recur to the fact, that various memorials had been presented to the Senate, praying for a survey on both sides of the mountain, and he would take upon himself to say, that those petitions embodied some of the highest intelligence and public spirit, to present the amendment to the Senate. The bill as it now stood, contemplated an object entirely local in its interests and effect. The fact was well understood, that there was little identity or connection in the business in commercial relations of the sections of the state, divided by the mountains. He was unwilling to administer to, or cherish feelings of local hostility, or sectional prejudices; but he felt he should do injustice to the rights and wishes of his constituents, to silently witness an appropriation of the public moneys to a local purpose, in which they had no interest, and the application for their own benefit, denied and disregarded. Their interest would be better promoted by an appropriation to survey a route to the Hudson river or Lake Champlain. He believed he could say, without contradiction, that no other section of the state possessed higher capabilities and resources than the county he represented, or that could be more conveniently benefited by the contemplated public improvement. He hoped the liberality of the state would be dispensed with a hand of equal and exact justice.

Methodist Bible Society.—We have heretofore mentioned that the general conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church had recommended the dissolution of the Bible Society connected with that church, with a view, as we understand, of uniting all the energies of that body with the American Bible Society in circulating the holy Scriptures. We are happy to state that, agreeable to the recommendation of the conference, the society has been dissolved, and arrangements are now in progress to carry forward the great work, in accordance with the wish of the highest ecclesiastical body of the Methodist Episcopal Church. [N. Y. Com. Adv.]

There is said to exist among the Russian girls the following innocent superstition.—On the Thursday previous to Whit Sunday, they try what is called "the prophetic swimming of the bridal wreath." A wreath of flowers is placed together and thrown into the stream, when, if the wreath swims on the surface of the water, they will, in the same year, exchange the maiden for a nuptial state; but should it sink they are to wait still longer for the happy change.

Republican Creed.—Republican Constitutions are established for the benefit of the whole people, and all measures of Government ought to be adopted with strict regard to the greatest good to the greatest number; the laws should favor the distribution of property, to the end that the number of very rich, & the number of the poor may be diminished as far as practicable, consistent with the rights of industry and property; and all legislation in this country is especially bound to pay particular respect to the earnings of labor—Labor being the source of comfort and independence to the far the greatest portion of the people. [Daniel Webster.]

The President's Health.—The effusion of blood from the President's lungs has ceased. His physicians now anticipate speedy recovery.—*Wash. Globe.*