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AND SWITZERLAND COUNTY DEMOCRAT.

BY ISAAC STEVENS.

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POLITICAL.

SPEECH OF MR. DUNCAN,

OF OHIO.

In the House of Representatives, April 10, 1840.

On the bill making appropriation for the civil and diplomatic expenses of the Government for the year 1840.

Mr. DUNCAN, having the floor, said:

Mr. Chairman: I believe the bill before the committee is the general appropriation bill.

[The Chair answered it was.]

I will inquire if there is any particular amendment, or any particular section of the bill, now under discussion?

[The Chair answered no.]

I suppose from the range and character of the debate yesterday. The debate yesterday was monopolized by the opposition; and they talked of every thing that is now, ever was, and is to come—abuses of power, panic, ruin and desolation, of an embattled country—and the profligacy and extravagance of the administration formed as usual, the principal theme. Well, sir; I like such latitude in debate; it is in character with the liberal latitudinarian, and free spirit of our political and religious institutions. I think I will take advantage of the latitude in debate now enjoyed, and talk of some things too, not immediately connected with the subjects before the committee.

It is perhaps unnecessary for me to inform the people of this country that such is the frame and character of the government, that the executive has no power to appropriate a dollar of the public money for any purpose, nor has he power to spend a dollar only as he is authorized by Congress.

Whatever of profligacy may exist in the management of this Government must be exclusively charged to Congress; and yet the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. Wise] stated on yesterday, that the executive is, and has been responsible for the last six or seven years for every dollar which has been appropriated and expended by Congress.

The gentleman holds the Executive responsible for that over which he has no control. Can the President control the expenditures of Congress? No, sir; Congress has the power of making appropriations to any amount, and for any purpose, without consulting the President—without his approbation, and contrary to his wish.

The power of the President to prohibit extravagant appropriations is negative; and even that power avails him nothing, provided two-thirds of each branch of Congress vote for an appropriation; for the bill making the appropriation in that case, is a law with or without his signature or approbation.

Sir, I refer you to the President's messages, and to the report of the estimates of the Secretary of the Treasury for the truth of the fact, that one half of all the money appropriated is done by the authority, and upon the responsibility of Congress alone.

The Secretary of the Treasury, presents to Congress estimates of the amount of appropriations necessary for government purposes, and the President endorses these estimates and recommends them. Here his responsibility ends; but Congress have yearly made appropriations far above the estimate of the Secretary of the Treasury, and for other purposes entirely, than those recommended. Is the Executive to be held responsible for such appropriations as these, and, in consequence of them, denounced for extravagance and profligacy, far and wide as the Union? The intelligence of an honest community supersedes the necessity of reply to such denunciations.

But let me refer you to the journals of this House, for the truth of another strange fact.

That is, that more than three-fourths of all the appropriations made over and above the estimates recommended by the Secretary, and endorsed by the President, have been proposed by the opposition, and carried by a majority of their votes.

How does this fact correspond with the never ceasing howl of extravagance with which we are annoyed and with which the country is perpetually alarmed?

The gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. Cushing] followed in the wake of the gentleman from Virginia, and concurred with him in holding the Executive responsible for such appropriations.

Yes, sir, he goes farther: he not only holds him responsible for such appropriations, but he holds him responsible for any estimates that he may recommend over and above what may strictly be wanted for the ordinary support of the Government.

Further, he holds the executive responsible for failure to recommend estimates and appropriations for the purposes of internal improvements, when, and where they are or shall be necessary.

This is strict accountability on the broadest principles; and what does it all mean? It means, sir, 1st. If Congress appropriates money without the knowledge and contrary to the wish of the President, he is to be held responsible.

2d. If the President recommends one dollar over the estimates, actually necessary for government purposes, for internal improvements, or any other purpose, he is to be held responsible, and denounced for extravagance and profligacy; and lastly, if the president withholds his recommendation of appropriations for the purposes of internal improvements, security on the seaboard, &c. he is to be held responsible, and denounced for "meanly sneaking and skulking" from the responsibilities and duties attached to his office.

Verily, these gentlemen remind me of a cer-

tain Procrustus I once read of—a man of horrible cruelty. It is said of him that he used to place on a bed, travellers who fell into his hands, and if they were too long for his bed, he cut off the projecting part, and if they were too short he placed anvils under their feet and beat them out till they equalled the length of the bed.

Mr. Chairman, I am not extravagant when I say one half of the time of this House is consumed by the opposition in denouncing the administration for its profligacy and extravagance. If the opposition are sincere in the charges they make, will the people not hold them to a fearful accountability for their gross neglect of duty when they are apprized of the fact that not the first attempt has been made by that party to reform the abuses of which they complain? If such abuses exist, the solemn oath they have taken, in presence of heaven and man, to faithfully discharge their official duties, binds them to the throne of eternal responsibility to their conscience and to their country, to point out those abuses, and to recommend a remedy. If they will, the democratic party here, to a man, will gladly join, with heart and hand, in assisting them in reformation. Where are the abuses of which you complain? Are there more officers than are necessary to manage the Government? Then point them out, and they will be reformed. Are the salaries of officers higher than necessary to secure men competent and qualified to discharge the duties and trusts severally connected with their offices? then point them out, and they will be reduced. Sir, I have a right to demand that the opposition shall discharge the duties I have here proposed. The country will demand it at their hands, or they must cease their clamor of profligacy against the administration. But they will not attempt to propose a reform, or point out an evil. They know the year that a President has had to be elected, is a year of panic and desolation. The cry of "panic and desolation" is one of the standing modes of electioneering. The people understand it, and are no longer to be gulled by it; and they look with contempt upon those who make it, as they do upon the slanderer and calumniator of American institutions and the American character. The yelp of panic, ruin, and distress, is now over spreading the land and doing its bale and dirty work of slander upon the character of our country. Where is the panic and distress to be found? Where it always will be found, among the penniless losers of your country—those who are too lazy and too proud to work, and have nothing to trade upon. All the panic and distress we have, consists in the inability of that class to enjoy the "glories of the credit system." Show me the man in our wide spread Union (except he has been the subject of misfortune) who depends, upon his own industry and his own resources, that cannot laugh at your panic and sneer at your demagogical cry of distress. And here I must qualify this general remark, by the exception of many hundreds of persons of the most useful class of society. I mean those who labor in manufactures. They are, no doubt, seriously affected by the depressed and deranged state of the currency; but all their difficulties grow out of their connection with institutions, the proprietors and owners of which have not capital of their own by which to conduct them. If such persons will study their own real interests, they will cut loose from such establishments and such proprietors, change their business, or engage in the employment of those who have not to depend upon the smiles and favors of banks, and the uncertainties of the "glorious credit system."

Extravagance and profligacy is the howl of the demagogue in all governments, and it is the howl of the demagogue in this government.

I have said that the opposition have pointed to no instance of extravagance. I allude to the public printing. That item has been thrown up to the Democracy more than one thousand times this session; and from the fact that that single item has been harped upon in almost every speech that has been made by the Opposition, it is fair to presume they know of no other instance of extravagance; and how do they stand in relation to that? During the last Congress the Opposition had a decided majority in this House. They elected a Printer of their own party. Yes, sir, they elected a man of their own; and who was he? A miserable tool of a miserable faction (I mean the Conservatives)—an empty, brainless coxcomb without a name, a residence or a foothold on the face of the earth—a penniless loser; one of the gaunt, lounging office seekers that beset this Capitol, and ride you like the nightmare, without the means of doing the printing, and I believe, without the first dollar to procure the means; and what was the consequence of his election? The public printing, in place of being done by the Government's confidential sworn officer, was farmed out to Gales and Seaton, not confidential and sworn officers of the Government. Yes, sir, the public printing was farmed out; and the man of straw elected (I mean the Editor of the Madisonian) received ten thousand dollars per annum for the office and trust thus reposed in him, and Gales and Seaton did the printing for the balance of the profits. What was the course of the Opposition then, think you? Was it to reduce the printing? No, sir; not a word was then said about the extravagance and profligacy of the public printing; but on the contrary, more fat jobs of printing were thrown into the hands of that corrupt and fraudulent combination that has ever been known in any Congress since the organization of the Government, or the establishment of public Printer, by which the public printing was swollen to upwards of \$231,000, which is more than double as much as it ever amounted to before, and that enables Gales and Seaton to pay the enormous rent of ten thousand dollars. But as soon as the party character of this House was changed, and the printing was about to fall into Democratic hands the yelp of extravagance in the public printing was raised by a hundred Whig tongues, that had before been as silent on that subject as the grave. But, sir, what did the Democracy do on the resolution of the gentleman from Georgia, [Mr. Black] They ordered a committee to investigate the subject of the public printing, and to report to this House what they might find to be a fair and just compensation for the public printing; and Blair and Rives were elected public printers on the condition that they were to receive a fair compensation. That committee have made their report, it is now on the Clerk's table; it is in favor of retrenchment, and the Democracy will sustain it. So much for reform in the public printing, the only item of pretended extravagance pointed out or attempted to be exposed by the Opposition; and that item would have remained unexposed by them if the printing had remained in the hands of their party pals.

"Office holders and spoils party." Sir, have not every feeling you possess, physical and mental, been nauseated and sickened at that incessant cry—that miserable hungry howl of lamentation, which is never permitted to die out of the credit and banking system, by the facilities they afford to live without labor, and temptation to speculate.

While I am unwilling to admit that any man

political right:—composed, as they claim to be, of "the decency," and "better sort of people," they "are born to rule the swinish multitude." This right has been disputed by the Democracy, and it is this dispute, and the rights and principles involved, that have produced all the political struggles and turmoils that have been witnessed since the commencement of our Government. Will the Democracy now surrender? Heretofore for the claims of the Federalists for all the offices have been made in blustering demands; now they are made in pitiful, whining, ebbing, croaking whimperings.

The Democracy, in the support of stern principles, resisted the one! Will they now permit their sympathies to be so overcome as to yield to the other? Will they permit their principles, to maintain which they have so long, and so manfully contended, now to be sacrificed at the hungry yelp and pitiful whine of a host of lean, lank, lazy, lounging office seekers, which beset this Capitol, and annoy the country elsewhere? "The spoils party," and what would the hungry Federal office seekers be, if they were to get all the offices and spoils? would they not be "the spoils party" too; and how much would the community be benefited by the change? I ask what benefit the tax paying community would derive by turning out the well fed, fat, clean, sleek, demagogic office holders, and putting in a swarm of hungry, lean, starved, Federal office seekers?

Panic! panic! panic! That's the string to pull. Turn back to the history of your Presidential elections, and show me one in the political statistics of your country, if you can, that has not been swamped in the federal cry of PANIC. Examine the public journals from the commencement of the Presidential elections to this time, and you will find by them that every year that a President has had to be elected, is a year of panic and desolation. The cry of "panic and desolation" is one of the standing modes of electioneering. The people understand it, and are no longer to be gulled by it; and they look with contempt upon those who make it, as they do upon the slanderer and calumniator of American institutions and the American character. The yelp of panic, ruin, and distress, is now over spreading the land and doing its bale and dirty work of slander upon the character of our country. Where is the panic and distress to be found? Where it always will be found, among the penniless losers of your country—those who are too lazy and too proud to work, and have nothing to trade upon. All the panic and distress we have, consists in the inability of that class to enjoy the "glories of the credit system." Show me the man in our wide spread Union (except he has been the subject of misfortune) who depends, upon his own industry and his own resources, that cannot laugh at your panic and sneer at your demagogical cry of distress.

Well, sir; we see that men become deranged on religion, mechanics, metaphysics, &c., why may they not become deranged on the subject of politics? They do. Our medical records furnish many instances of the kind; so they do on subjects of finance and economy. The celebrated Dr. Eberly informs us that he knew a person who for more than twenty years was firmly, perched that he was the President of the United States; and yet this man would converse and think rationally upon all, the ordinary concerns of life. We have all heard of persons of affliction circumstances pinching themselves with hunger, and clothed in rags, lest they should come to want and die in poverty. Such is the political monomania under which some of our politicians are now raving; and if Alexander Pope lived at this day and in our country, he would sing thus:

"Unnumbered throngs on every side are seen,
Of bodies changed by various forms of spleen,
Hero living teapot stand, one arm held out,
One bent; the handle this, and that the spout;
A pipkin there, like Homer's tripod, walks,
Here sighs a jar, and there a goose-pie walks,
Men prove with child, as powerful fancy works,
And maids, turned bottles, cry aloud for corks."

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"Men often turn from reason's shining way,
To chase a phantom in the light of day;
Sins in all matters save the affaire of state,
And wild in them as in the rest they're great.

Now preach they panic with a sing-song tone,
When panic lives within their breast alone;

Now hear they Furies yell in deep despair,

With deadly serpents hissing from their hair."

Politically mad as Bedlam's King,

Around the world their doleful song they sing,

Over fertile fields they leave their baleful track,

Blow up the world, and chuckle at the crack.

Such is the hell-born phantasy that holds
The federal prophet in its crimson fold;
Makes banks perfect; by a simple thought,
And strikes to teach men, what can never be taught."

But, Mr. Chairman, I told you I intended to talk of some things not immediately connected with the bill under consideration. I desire to talk some about the Presidential election. I hope I will not be considered out of order. When the simple proposition to instruct the Committee on Finance to report an appropriation for the Cumberland road, was before the House, the Whigs used up one entire week in attempting to prove that General Harrison ought to be elected President of the United States. I hope it will now be in order, on the general appropriation bill, for me to use an hour or two in attempting to prove that he should not be elected.

So, sir, I proceed with my proofs and objections.

One of the modes now employed to secure the overthrow of the Administration, and to ensure the election of the Federal candidate, is to impress on the minds of the people that General Harrison is a poor man; and therefore the poor man's friend; that he is the inmate of a log cabin, drinks hard cider, and is compelled, now in the sun-down of his life, to toil in sweat and dust for his daily maintenance; and therefore, I

elect to the Presidency, will be capable of appreciating the poor man's condition, and will direct the administration of the Government with reference to the interests and benefits of that class of the community. These, if true, are powerful inducements for the poor and the friends of the poor to sustain General Harrison for the Presidency, all other circumstances being favorable.

But that he is, or ever was, at heart, a friend to the poor man, I am prepared to doubt; and with a view of being as brief as possible, in support of this belief, I will give one

"The Furies were said by the ancients to have fiery serpents hissing from their hair."

no power to tax one portion of the community to relieve the distresses of another. Such a power cannot be exercised in justice, nor did ever the framers of the Constitution contemplate such an exercise of power. Congress can give no relief on any other principle than by an unjust and unconstitutional system of taxation either directly or indirectly. To all such applications for relief, (I mean for such distress as is now said to pervade the country,) as a representative, I must say, (however cold, heartless, and disconsolate the advice may be considered,) go home, work harder, and live more economically, and relief will be your reward. Sir, I have

said that the cry of panic, as in time before, is made for political effect and party purposes. It is so, and such is the object of the demagogue. But I have the charity to believe that some of those who are attempting to spread the alarm of distress are, or think they are, sincere, but I am constrained to believe that many of that class are laboring under a species of derangement.

There is a kind of derangement called monomania, which leaves the individual effected with it in full possession of his reasoning powers, on all subjects except the one on which he is deranged. For instance, the monomaniac is deranged on subjects of religion, and perfectly rational on all others. Hence it is that some persons fancy themselves to be the Saviors of mankind, or to be one of the ancient prophets, and in some instances, to be the Almighty himself; or may be deranged upon the subject of mechanics; hence it is you hear of persons spending a great portion of their lives in attempting to invent the perpetual motion. So it is with the chymist, who spends his life in pursuit of the philosopher's stone. So it is with metaphysics, &c. And yet persons laboring under this species of derangement may be perfectly capable of attending to ordinary business. Professor Titus of Jesus continued to perform his professional duties for some time, although laboring under the fixed hallucination of believing himself to be Emperor of Rome. Many other instances of a similar character could be cited—Alexander Pope, in a few lines, illustrates, in an interesting and forcible manner, the various effect of monomania on different individuals.

He sung thus:

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