

Sweetzer, to oppose the bill incorporating a company to improve that part of the Wabash river which is under the joint jurisdiction of Indiana and Illinois.

What influence, if any, Mr. Sweetzer may have exercised over Mr. Beckes, is unknown to me, but I am confident that I exercised none. I may be mistaken in the character of Mr. Beckes, but from the opinion I have formed of him, he is the last man with whom I have any acquaintance, over whom I should expect to be able to exercise any influence. And although Mr. Beckes and myself are on terms of uninterrupted friendship, yet if my recollection serves me right, we never had any conversation with each other about the "Wabash Bill." I had no knowledge whatever of the course that Mr. Beckes intended to pursue on that subject.

I neither advocated nor opposed that bill, other than by my silent votes, for I saw from the beginning it would not pass. —It would have been rejected on its first reading on the motion of Mr. Hawk, had he not withdrawn that motion at the request of Mr. Beckes. I did not approve of the bill, because I believed it to be defective in all its parts—that it was not calculated to promote the best interests of the community, but would be a direct clog on those interests. It appeared to me to be a private speculation, without any direct view to the public good; and what was most extraordinary, donated public funds to this private company for their own individual benefit. I viewed the improvement of the navigation of the Wabash river, a matter of great importance to the public at large. I considered this navigation as one of the great western links of internal communication, and that it would not be long neglected, and that if a little patience should be exercised the aid of the general government would in due time be extended to us. As to the subject of internal improvements, I stand in the front ranks of the advocates of the system, but I have had sometimes to differ with my friends as to modes of proceeding.

Your friend, S. C. STEVENS.

Indianapolis, May 11, 1827.

Mr. Stout—A recent publication of G. W. Johnston Esq. addressed to the citizens of Knox county has just been handed me. In it I perceive a charge against Mr. Beckes of representing Mr. Stevens and myself, in the last legislature, instead of his constituents—or in other words, acting by our dictation. With the design of Mr. Johnston's publication or his difference with Mr. Beckes, or the election of either, I have nothing to do; but when a charge of the present kind against Mr. Beckes is wholly unfounded, I feel it a duty to contradict it. The conversation I had with Mr. Beckes in relation to the bill for the improvement of the Wabash river was very general. He always expressed himself very anxious for something to be done, but I did not know what course he would pursue last winter, nor did he know mine. The integrity, independence and good judgment of Mr. Beckes, always precluded the idea of undue influence over him to be acquired by any person; nor do I conceive it possible.—The interest of the people of Knox county, I believe he at all times intended to advance.

The charging of Mr. Beckes with hostility to the bill for improving that part of the Wabash river under the joint jurisdiction of this state and Illinois, by my suggestion, is in effect charging me with the same. That hostility I avow, and I believe I moved to postpone it indefinitely. I have always been in favour of internal improvement, and I would not vote for any person unfriendly to it. The connecting the waters of the lakes with the Wabash, and improvement of the latter, is of the first importance to the state, and by the aid of congress last winter, will shortly be effected.

The legislature has heretofore had no data by which they could estimate the expense of improving that part of the river above alluded to, and if they had, the state had no funds to appropriate. The bill of last winter I considered to be *puerile*, and directly opposed to the objects of its friends.

It vested in a speculating corporation the entire control of the Wabash for thirty years, & excluded the state from making the improvement, should the corporation fail to do it. It also appropriated a sum of public money to be squandered away at their pleasure, and they were amenable to no tribunal for their improper conduct.

I do not impute improper motives to any one who supported that bill, but Mr. Johnston will permit me to exercise my own opinion as to the utility of a measure proposed, as I alone am answerable for my conduct. Had that bill passed into a law, I believe the people of the Wabash would have regretted it, although I may

be mistaken. Respectfully Yours.  
B. SWEETSER.

Mr. Stout—In answer to a publication in the Indiana Journal of the 15th inst in which I am addressed personally by S. C. Stevens—And as I am informed that that address, by particular request, is to appear in your paper of this week; you will please to give the following, a cotemporary insertion—with a request to the Editor of the Journal that he will give it an insertion in his paper.

I am &c G. W. J.  
Vincennes, May 22, 1827.

S. C. STEVENS, Esq.—Sir: I have this moment received the Indiana Journal of the 15th inst. containing your *insinuating* letter to me. Had you sir, adopted a *different course* of communication, I should have *appreciated* your motives much more highly.

Your *acknowledged* acumen should have enabled you to discover the ironical view I had in making the reference to you and Mr. Sweetzer, therefore I supposed you would pass the thing over *sub-silento*.—But your anxiety, it seems, to gratify a new to an old, a quandum to a real friend, or *something* either better or worse! excites you to address me in the public prints.

You sir, and the public will excuse my laconic style. And with the same charity you seem to have adopted towards me, I will on the present occasion, use towards you—And say, that you formed your letter in the *lodging room* of Mr. Beckes, or any where else where the Journals of the last session were not to be found, than in the Secretary of States' office where they were to be found. You say, my pamphlet "is the offspring of *personal difficulties* between Mr. Beckes and myself." Had you sir, upon *this* occasion shown the least degree of respect to either yourself or me, you would not have made *this* assertion, for in the commencement I avowed the intention of investigating his conduct as "a politician and one of the peoples representatives;" and it was my privilege and duty to do so.—With his private character I have not interfered, had I or should I yet be drove to it, a single sheet would not contain its true delineation!

You say you "are an entire stranger to those difficulties"—what "difficulties" other than those stated in my pamphlet, in regard to the bill for the improvement of the Wabash, &c. and which were the subject of your scrutiny? And if so, you must be a very *wertesome* man to form and express a positive opinion upon subjects with which you were an "entire stranger."

I did not, nor shall I charge you and Mr. Sweetzer with "influencing Mr. Beckes." But as you were both opposed to the passage of the bill, in which opposition Beckes joined; and in his address to the citizens of Knox boasted of having "represented his constituents," I therefore had the right to ask him whether you and Sweetzer were the "constituents" he referred to.

You say you and Mr. Beckes "are on terms of uninterrupted friendship".—Surely sir, you *here* forget yourself, or you must refer to a period posterior to the last session, when some sharp sparring took place between you, on the floor of the House, in consequence of the amendment offered by Mr. Boon to the section (3) in the special appropriation bill, respecting C. G. Brown's claim—Or may be, you intended the observation to apply and be confined to the sittings of the last Federal and Supreme courts, when, as I am informed, you endeavoured to persuade some of the jurymen from Knox, to support Mr. Beckes at the approaching election. This being taken as fact your *opinion* of the bill, of myself—and of Mr. Beckes; And the *causes* and *motives* which induced you to address me, in the artful manner you have, are stripped of their fine drapery and tinsel.

You say "I neither advocated nor opposed that bill," (meaning the one for the improvement of the Wabash.) Now, by reference to the Journal, page 506, you not only "silently voted" for, but moved the House to adhere to the first amendment!!

You speak of Mr. Hawk—and wherefore, unless to boulster up your quandum friend? You say "it (meaning the said bill,) would have been rejected on its first reading on the motion of Mr. Hawk."—I was ignorant of the fact, if it be so, until now, that Mr. Hawk's dictum was a law, a sine quanon, to the House of Representatives!!! But now for the whole truth—Had you examined the Journals a few pages further on, after the withdrawal of Mr. Hawk's first motion, viz. page 311, you would also have recollect ed that Mr. Hawk moved to reject the bill, and which was not "withdrawn at the request of Mr. Beckes"—and the vote by A. and N. upon *that* question decided whether your prediction as to the fate of

the bill, is partial or impartial, true or fallacious—(In favor of rejection 9, against it 45—a fearful odds, is it not my friend Stevens!!!)

The Wabash bill, as it is generally termed, "appeared to you as a private speculation" O! my dear sir, you above all other of my friends, ought to be the last who should complain of "private speculations"!! But to my understanding the bill was not so; but has already been demonstrated to be otherwise.

You say the bill "donated public funds to a private company, for their own individual benefit". Your best friends admit you possess some talents for investigation and discrimination; but this remark staggers them—for they dislike to admit you are a mercenary writer!!

You say you "stand in the front ranks of those in favor of internal improvements". The "tree is known by its fruit"—and you gave but poor and weak evidences of your assertion, three years ago, and at the last session; particularly when you voted to lay the "Joint Resolution approving of the exercise of power by congress, to make internal improvements," upon the table—and afterwards, upon Mr. Beckes' motion, voted for "an indefinite postponement," see Journal page, 420 and 421.

Your friend G. W. JOHNSTON.

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Office of the Saturday Evening Post, Philadelphia Dec. 2, 1826.

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