

change beneficial to the new states.

The course I have taken on this subject, is probably known to all. It has long been my opinion, that the public lands of right belong to the several states in which they lie, and that but for the compacts entered into with the federal government, previous to their admission into the Union, they might constitutionally have taken possession of them, in virtue of state sovereignty, and their equality with the original states. In accordance with this opinion, I did at the present session, as I had done at the last, propose a direct cession of these lands to the states in which they lie; giving to the new states, *unconditionally*, all the public lands to which the Indian title is extinguished, and that subject to the Indian title, on condition of extinguishing that title at their own expense; an expense averaging heretofore from two to five cents per acre. This proposition was on the table of the senate the greater part of the last session, but no opportunity was afforded for its discussion until the present session; and the bill to graduate the price of the public lands to which it was offered as an amendment, although reported for five successive years, never met the final consideration of the senate, until a few weeks ago.

The public lands, especially of every new state, are the primary interest of that state, and reason as well as justice would surely say, that based as our institutions are, on the public will, that public will should control that interest. The legislatures of the new states are, in my opinion, much better qualified to make proper disposition of the public lands, than is the congress of the United States. They are better acquainted with the condition of the people, their wants and their wishes. The states would better know how to graduate, and when to give pre-emption rights and donations to actual settlers. Under the auspices of the state legislatures the lands of inferior quality would be given to actual settlers who might be unable to purchase, and prosperous and compact settlements would be formed, in districts of country, which under the present system are almost wholly neglected.

The bill to graduate which had been long before the senate, and had from various circumstances excited a considerable interest in its favour, was all that had prospects of success at the present session, and of course the proposition above referred to, was not pressed to a final decision; no vote was taken on it. The bill to graduate proposed to cede to the states such lands as could neither be sold in a given time for twenty five cents per acre, nor given away to actual settlers; but this section was stricken out, and the bill as amended and finally voted upon, proposed a graduation of prices down to twenty-five cents per acre, falling every two years twenty five cents, and selling at prices somewhat reduced, to actual settlers one quarter section each. I voted for the bill and was anxious that it should pass, as the best that could at the present be done, and as a step towards my own proposition, to which I have little doubt the matter must ultimately come. The graduation bill was rejected by a vote of twenty one to twenty five in the senate. Two senators who were absent would in all probability have increased the majority against it.

The condition of the public lands in the new states, is one which cannot last. Equality with the original states, was guaranteed to them on their admission into the Union, and their inequality is too grossly manifest, to be unobserved by an intelligent people. It is not satisfactory to be told, that many of the old states had no public lands at their disposal, those lands having passed from the British crown to individuals before the revolution; for such states, though they may not have had the primary disposal of the soil have always had the power over it in the form of taxation. The sovereignty and independence of a state, is indeed better consulted, by the soil being in the hands of patriotic and industrious citizens, than in the hands of its own government; but the people are mere tenants, whose soil is neither in their own hands, nor that of their legislature; and the government is any thing else than independent, whose soil is owned by, subject to the jurisdiction and at the disposal of any other legislature than its own. A respectful and persevering assertion of our right to the public soil, as incident to the sovereignty and equality of the states, is in my opinion, the attitude the new states should assume on this subject. While divided among themselves they cannot expect success. —Any thing short of this attitude, acknowledges inferiority and dependence. So doubtful at least is the argument of constitutional power in the federal government, to hold the lands within the limits of the states, that the compacts with the new states, not to interfere with the primary disposal of the soil, and not to tax the public lands, seem to be chiefly relied on; as if power could be acquired by compact, which was not given by the constitution, and as if compacts made by sixty thousand people before they were admitted into the Union, could equitably be binding in all future time upon millions.

The present condition of the public lands must forever keep the new states, not only dependent on the federal government; but absolutely poor. By the operation of the land offices, the country is drained almost to its last dollar, and this must continue as long as the public lands belong to the Union. It is a singular fact, that on the seaboard, in the

commercial cities, there has been for years past, a redundancy of capital. It has been seeking investment, at four and a half and five per cent. while in the north western states there is scarcely any circulating medium at all.

An appropriation of five hundred dollars, for surveying the obstructions to the navigation of the Wabash river, between its mouth and Eel river, has passed. A bill for the continuation of the Cumberland road through the state of Indiana, appropriating fifty thousand dollars to cut the timber off and dig down the banks, has also passed the senate, and should the time of the house permit, it will no doubt become a law. A further appropriation of one hundred and seventy five thousand dollars has been made, for the completion of that road to Zanesville, and to continue its location to the seat of government of Missouri; also, an appropriation of thirty thousand dollars, for continuing the surveys under the act of 1824.

In addition to the appropriations already mentioned, that of \$1,000,000 payable in five years, to the stock of the Chesapeake and Ohio canal company has passed the house of representatives. The work to which this is a subscription, is one of the greatest importance to the western country, and especially to that portion of it bordering on the Ohio river. This canal will terminate at Pittsburgh, and unite the navigation of the Ohio, with the tide waters of the Potomac and this city.

The army of the United States consists of six thousand. These are stationed at about forty posts, embracing an extensive line of western and north western frontier. The preservation of public property, and the occupancy of posts in the vicinity of the various Indian tribes, necessarily distributes this force into small corps, requiring a greater proportion of officers than would be necessary if embodied in the field. A less army than that in actual service, would, in the opinion of many military men, be insufficient for the necessary purposes of the government even in time of peace. I voted however for the reduction of the army in 1821, to its present establishment, and was then, as I still am of opinion, that it might have been further reduced.

The whole naval force of the United States authorized by law previous to the 3d of March 1827, consisted of twelve ships of the line, exclusive of two on lake Ontario, seventeen frigates of the first class, three of the second class, sixteen sloops of war, four schooners and three other vessels. Some of these are yet on the stocks, but this whole force is in condition, to be put into active service in a short period of time, should the exigencies of the country so require. By act of the 3d of March, 1827, a further appropriation of five hundred thousand dollars per annum for six years, for the gradual increase of the navy was made, and under this act, number has been procured, for construction of five ships of the line, five frigates and five sloops of war.

Of the vessels of the navy there are now in commission, one ship of the line, three frigates of the first class, two of the second class, ten sloops of war and four schooners. These are stationed in squadrons in the Mediterranean, the Brasils, the West Indies and the Pacific, for the protection of our commerce, which the enterprise of our citizens has carried into every ocean and every sea. The war between Buenos Ayres and the Brasils, and the protracted contest between the republics of the South and Old Spain, have been fruitful sources of piracies, and have largely contributed to the necessity of our armaments on coasts of South America and the West Indies, and the lawless and sanguinary struggle between the Greeks and the Turks, has produced the like necessity, for an imposing squadron in the Mediterranean for the suppression of piracy, and the protection of our commerce there.

The foreign relations of our country are as tranquil as at any period since the last war. Questions however of some embarrassment exist, in relation to boundary, between the United States and Great Britain, on our north eastern and north western coasts. To attempt a history of these disputed points, would be too long for this letter. Suffice it to say, that difficulties heretofore insurmountable have prevented the designation of our north eastern boundary between the United States and the British provinces, and the progress of settlements on both sides, have led to collisions of an unpleasant character. The state of Maine has been considerably agitated, on account of the violation of her territory and the maltreatment of her citizens by British subjects. The same difficulty of boundary exists westward of the Rocky mountains. On this subject a temporary compromise was effected by a convention of 1818. Which expires by its own limitation in ten years from its date. By this convention it was agreed that no exclusive jurisdiction should be exercised by either party; but that the citizens of the United States, and the subjects of Great Britain, should have equal rights on the disputed territory. This convention has been renewed for an indefinite period of time, which however may be terminated, by either giving twelve months previous notice to the other party. This question of boundary heretofore has been, as at present it is, the basis of unyielding objections on the part of many members, to the proposed occupation of the mouth of the Columbia river, a measure not likely to be adopted, until all questions of boundary in that quarter be settled. The ses-

sion will terminate on the 26th of the present month — With much respect, your obedient servant,

WILLIAM HENDRICKS.

TO THE VOTERS OF THE FIRST CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF INDIANA

Fellow Citizens—The twentieth congress having closed its first session on the 26th of May, I set out without delay on my return home, and had the pleasure of arriving among my constituents on the fifth instant.— Being again amongst you after an absence of so many months, and of incessant engagement in public service, I presume it to be a matter of some interest to you as it is one of imperative duty to myself, to give some account of the manner in which I have executed your trust which your kindness has heretofore confided to me. I shall proceed cheerfully to do this, so far as the ordinary limits of a circular will permit, by laying before you a statement of the acts passed at the late session, which are deemed particularly interesting to you, to all of which I have given my feeble support, and by submitting some other subjects of legislation which were but partially acted upon.

An act has passed, imposing additional duties on imports, commonly called the tariff act, which, although it does not adopt the system of protection to the extent I desired, will in some measure answer the expectations of our countrymen who are engaged in the patriotic employment of domestic manufactures, and will doubtless enhance the value of the staple commodities of the west.

An act has passed, for the further relief of the purchasers of public lands—the first section revives and continues in force until the 4th day of July 1829 the various land laws which expired on the fourth day of July last, and the second section extends the provisions of the act to all lands on which a further credit has not been taken, and which have become forfeited since the first of July 1820 and remain unsold.

Another act has passed, for the relief of the purchasers of public lands, which directs the forfeited money to be paid back to the unfortunate purchaser of public land in all cases, as well where one twentieth part of the purchase money was deposited, as in cases where the payment of entire instalments has been made. This repayment is to be made in the shape of certificates of scrip, which are to be issued by the register of the land offices where the payments were made, and will be received as cash at par in every description of land payments.

A bill was also introduced in the senate, and there discussed, having for its object the graduation of the price of public lands, but it was lost in that body, which was considered as deciding its fate for the session, and the subject was not therefore taken up in the house of representatives.

A proposition was also introduced in the senate by Mr. Hendricks, that the general government should make a direct cession to the new states respectively, of all the public lands which lie within their chartered limits, but this also failed, although it was supported by Mr. Hendricks with an energy and argument highly honorable to him and the state he represents.

An act has passed, providing for the correction of errors in the entry of lands, extending relief to cases where patents have been issued, as well as in others, upon condition that the party shall relinquish his title in such form as shall be prescribed by the secretary of the treasury.

An act has passed, to authorize the state of Indiana to sell the lands appropriated within her limits for the use of schools, to invest the money arising from the sale thereof in some productive fund, and the proceeds to be forever applied under the direction of the legislature to the use and support of schools within the several townships and districts, but this is not to be done without the consent of the inhabitants of the townships or several districts respectively.

An act has passed, appropriating thirty thousand dollars for examinations and surveys in the country generally, as preliminary to the expenditure of the national treasure on such objects of internal improvement as may be deemed of primary & general importance.

An act has passed, appropriating five hundred dollars for defraying the incidental expenses of the engineers in making an examination and survey of the Wabash river alone, from the mouth of Eel river to the mouth of the Wabash. When inviting the attention of congress to this subject, I also made an effort to obtain an appropriation of money to be expended immediately at the grand rapids below Vincennes, and besides appearing before the committee of the house of representatives, I addressed a letter explanatory of my views to the proper committee of the senate, and which the whole delegation from Indiana and Illinois were pleased to sign with me, but there existed an insuperable unwillingness to make such an appropriation until there had been a previous survey by the United States officers.

An act has passed, granting a quantity of land for the extension of the Miami canal from Dayton to lake Erie, equal to one half of five sections in width on each side of the canal so far as the same shall be located thro' the public land, and it further authorizes the states of Ohio & Indiana to hold a convention in relation to that part of the route of the Wabash canal which lies within the limits of Ohio. This act is of great importance to the

Wabash part of the state, as it makes further provisions towards the prosecution & accomplishment of the great object of the Wabash canal, provisions that were indispensably necessary, and it brings together the state of Indiana and the populous and wealthy state of Ohio and has a tendency to unite them in this splendid undertaking.

An act has passed, appropriating \$175,000 for the completion of the Cumberland road to Zanesville, and which is to be continued thro' the states of Indiana and Illinois to the seat of government of Missouri.

A bill has passed the senate, introduced into that body by Mr. Noble, appropriating fifty thousand dollars for opening the Cumberland road through Indiana alone, but it came to the house of representatives at such an advanced stage of the session, when so much of other business had precedence, that it could not be reached. My colleague Mr. Smith and myself, made repeated efforts to have it taken up out of the order in which it stood on the docket of business, but as it required the consent of two-thirds of the members to effect this, and as there was a general struggle among the delegations from the different states (as it often happens at the close of a session) each trying to get the balance of its local business first attended to—it was found totally impracticable to disturb the established order of business or suspend the established rule of the house.

An act has passed appropriating one million of dollars payable in five years in the investment of the stock in the Chesapeake and Ohio canal company. This canal will extend from Pittsburgh to Washington, will unite the waters of the Ohio river with those of the Potomac, is deemed one of infinite importance to the nation at large, and its advantages will be more especially felt in the western country.

An act has passed granting to the officers and soldiers of the revolution full pay for the balance of their lives—thereby discharging a sacred obligation to those gallant spirits who suffered for us in the most trying times, and secured for us the liberty we enjoy. The old soldier may now repose in comfort through the remnant of his days, and when he is about to depart this world to be again united to his early companions in arms, amongst his last aspirations will be a blessing upon his country and his countrymen.

These acts, fellow citizens, have all been approved by the president and become laws, and I need not remark that they embrace measures as prominent and interesting as any which could have been presented to the councils of the nation. In addition to these, one hundred and fifty other laws have passed, of a mixed character, general, local and individual—but they are not of sufficient interest even if the space of a circular permitted it, to require that they should be specially laid before you.

It is now in proper place for me to say to you, that, *I am again a candidate for congress*—and if the above measures which I have been in some degree instrumental in getting adopted, should meet your approbation, I trust I shall be again honored with your suffrages. But it is said, that in one of my speeches on retrenchment I made use of a highly improper remark, declaring (as some have it) that I would sink or swim with the present administration right or wrong—and that I gave a vote for pensioning the widows of the six militia men who were shot at Mobile! *These things I never did*, and although it would justify some violence of passion that I should be so charged, my only feelings are those of deep regret, that any portion of my fellow citizens should have given credit to such ungenerous and unwarranted accusations. In my speech on retrenchment, and as reported in all the newspapers which gave a full report of it, I said that "I was willing to sink or swim with the cause of the present administration"—thereby meaning as the words themselves plainly convey, that I was determined to support the administration to the last extremity in the cause they had espoused, a cause characterized by the support of *internal improvements*, the encouragement of *domestic manufactures*, and an extensive relief to the *purchasers of public lands*. This was the cause I pledged myself to support, one as much the cause of the people as of the present administration, and if general Jackson should be elected the president of the United States, I would cheerfully and zealously support his administration in the same cause. I am for measures in preference to men, and however much I may be devoted to Henry Clay, or to any other member of this administration, the very moment they should abandon the present policy of the government, which I consider necessary to the prosperity of my constituents, required by the interest of the Union, and equally necessary to the glory of the nation that very moment I would abandon them. In the language lately used in con-

*Mr. Adams in his message to the last congress, claims the public lands as having been purchased by the blood and treasure of the whole Union. And the secretary of the treasury, in his annual report, labors to shew that no change should take place in the price of their disposal—that no new inducements should be given to the poor, and other classes to remove to, & populate the new states—I do not pretend to give the words, but merely their meaning.—And this is one of the *causes* of the present administration, upon which Mr. Blake is willing to sink or swim.