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SPEECH OF MR. STEWART, OF PENNA., ON THE THREE MILLION APPROPRIATION BILL AND THE MEXICAN WAR.

Delivered in the House of Representatives of the
U. S., February 13, 1847.

The House being in Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union on the Three Million Appropriation bill—

Mr. STEWART said he proposed, in the first place, to inquire briefly into the true purposes and objects of this bill; for it seemed to him that, in the course of the present debate, almost every thing else had been discussed but the bill itself. This bill grants the President what he demands, three millions of dollars to make a treaty with Mexico, and authorizes him to pay the money before the treaty is submitted to or approved by the Senate; and the Senate are thus required to ratify this treaty before they see it or know what it is. Is it not in effect a ratification of the treaty beforehand? How can the Senate object to the treaty, no matter what its character or provisions, after having authorized the payment of the three millions in advance? If they do, the money will be lost, and lost by their act in authorizing its previous payment. He contended, therefore, that any treaty which the President might choose to make for the acquisition of Mexican territory, would in effect be at once binding upon this Government. Let this bill once be passed, and I say that neither this House, nor the Senate, can, with any consistency, object to the treaty. The appropriating power is the only control this House can exert over the Executive in the making and executing of treaties. This it is proposed to exercise beforehand, and thus surrender to the President the whole control of the treaty-making power. By this act we tie our hands and seal our lips. We have no right to object to any thing the President may do, and this is manifestly the object and design of this bill. In originating the present war without consulting Congress, then in session, the whole war power of this Government has been practically usurped by the President. He has carried it out in fact. He has made war while Congress was in session, without submitting the causes to their consideration, or asking or obtaining their concurrence. He did not ask us to declare war, but ordered the army to advance and bring on the war, and then called upon us to "recognize its existence," and appropriate money and men for its prosecution. Having thus seized upon the war-making power, he now wants us to surrender to him the treaty-making power also. As he began the war without the consent of Congress, so now he wants the means of making a peace without the aid or concurrence of either the House or the Senate.

By this law we authorize him to pay Santa Anna, or any body else, three millions to purchase a peace, which he has failed to conquer. And, if the Senate shall refuse to ratify it, the three millions are gone! This bill empowers the President to make a treaty when, how, and with whom he pleases. If he shall be pleased to make a treaty exchanging Oregon for California, to give northern for southern territory, to surrender free territory for the acquisition of slave territory, and give these three millions to boot as earnest money, what right has the Senate to object? If they do, may not the President say "what do you object to the treaty? Did you not authorize me by law to make a treaty that should put an end to this war, and did you not give me three millions to do it? I made the treaty; Mexico has ratified it, I have paid her the three millions, and she has paid it to her army; and now, if you refuse to ratify it, the money is a dead loss, and worse," it has gone to "aid and comfort the enemy."

To obviate this objection, I have moved an amendment in the 11th line of the 2d section of the bill, inserting after "ratified by Mexico," the words "and the United States." This will, if adopted, keep the money in our own hands till the treaty has been approved by the Senate. But, if the amendment be adopted, the real intent and object of this bill will be defeated. For if you postpone, as you ought clearly to do, the payment of the money till the treaty is ratified by the Senate, what is the use of passing this bill? Can't Congress appropriate the money simultaneously, with the approval and ratification of the treaty? Certainly.

My objection to this bill is, that, having surrendered the war power to the President—having given up to him both the purse and the sword, I cannot consent, to give him the treaty-making power also, thus enabling him to impose on Congress and the country just such a treaty as suits himself. Is this to be tolerated? I trust not, unless it is resolved, by the majority here to convert this free Government into a despotism, and sacrifice our liberties on the altar of arbitrary power.

I have voted, and I intend to vote, for all the men, money, and measures, that may be necessary, in my judgment, to bring this unhappy war to a speedy and

an honorable conclusion; but this bill goes too far. I am ready to do whatever is proper and necessary to strengthen the Executive arm in maintaining the honor and interests of the country; but this bill proposes a surrender of more power into the hands of the Executive than I can consent to grant. So much for the bill and its objects.

And now, in regard to this Wilmot proviso. What is it? It is a proposition to prohibit the extension of slavery in the new territory we may acquire with these three millions of dollars, and which is now free territory. Where can be the objection to an object like this? Gentlemen say that this is not the time; that this is not the place, that it is a mere abstraction, and will have no practical operation. But I say it will have a practical and most salutary operation, as I shall show directly. But even if it were an abstraction, if it were merely a declaratory resolution, saying that Congress is in favor of liberty and opposed to slavery, how would gentlemen vote? Shall this American Congress, which claims to represent the freest people on earth, dwelling in the home, the citadel, the cherished land of liberty, vote that we are in favor of slavery? Let the South so vote, if they choose; he did not blame southern men for maintaining their own side of the question; but let northern men beware.—For his own part, while he would faithfully abide by all the compromises of the Constitution, while he would not invade, in the slightest degree, any of the constitutional rights of the South, he would never extend, by any vote of his, slavery over one foot of territory now free. I will, then, vote for this proviso, not only because I think it right in itself, but because I believe it will have a more powerful effect in restoring peace than any other measure that can be adopted—peace abroad and peace at home. I beg gentlemen to recollect that the acquisition of territory was the original design, and is now the declared object and purpose, of this war. The acquisition of New Mexico and California is, we are now told on all sides, the object of this appropriation. It was for this purpose that James K. Polk brought the war on the first instance. It was a scheme, a notable scheme, for the acquisition of territory by conquest; but that object was to be concealed, and therefore he began the war without saying a word to Congress about it. He feared they would not sanction his scheme, and bring on a war for such a purpose.—Here was the great error committed by the President, "a blunder worse than a crime." When Mexico refused to recognize our minister, the President instead of sending his army to the Rio Grande to bring on the war, should have sent his message to Congress, setting forth the causes, and recommending, if he chose, a declaration of war; and then, if Congress had declared war, it would have been constitutionally declared by the people's representatives, and they would have cheerfully sustained it. But, instead of adopting this course, though Congress was in session at the time, he ordered the army to march from Corpus Christi (where he himself says it had been posted for more than six months, without objection or molestation from Mexico) to the Rio Grande, into the disputed territory, directly opposite to Matamoros, a Mexican town, blockading the river, cutting off their supplies; and erecting a battery within gunshot of the city itself—an act of war, and producing war as a necessary and inevitable consequence. It did produce war.—Battles were fought. Our brave little army was cut off from its supplies; and, when his plot had thus succeeded, then he called on us "to recognize the existence of the war," and provide men and money for its prosecution. And why did he not send us his message, and leave it to us to judge whether the nation had good cause of war or not? Because he was afraid to trust the House with the question. He knew that it never would sanction a war for the acquisition of territory, and that was the reason why he took upon him to send his army to bully Mexico into a war.

Mr. MARTIN, of Tennessee, here interposed to inquire, whether war had not been declared against us by Mexico as early as April?

Mr. S. No, sir, she did not. No declaration of war was ever made by Mexico against the United States, or by the United States against Mexico. It is an Executive war—a war brought on by your President, without a declaration of war on either side. Mexico, wishing to avoid hostilities, sent, by her General in command, a notice to our commander (General Taylor) not to cross the Colorado, otherwise they would regard it as an act of war, and an invasion of Mexico. They were not only willing to leave our army undisturbed at Corpus Christi, but were willing we should march to the Colorado without resistance. No, sir, the Mexican Congress never declared war against us, and the President did not give us the chance to declare war against them. I tell the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. Martin) who represents Mr. Polk on this floor, that this is a war made by his President, and, for all the consequences of which he is responsible to, and will be held responsible by, the American peo-

ple. Peace is the true policy of this country; war, and especially wars of conquest and invasion, are dangerous to the character, integrity, and best interests of this Union. As a friend of peace, present and prospective, I am in favor of this proviso. The object of this war being the acquisition of southern territory, as long as there is a hope of accomplishing this object, there will be no peace. Put an end to this hope, and you at once put an end to the war, by defeating its object. The moment the President finds this proviso accompanying this grant of money, he will be for making peace; and so will all the South. They want no restricted territory. If the restriction is imposed, and the territory acquired is to be free, from that moment the President would pay Mexico to keep her territory, rather than bring it in on such conditions. I am for the proviso, therefore, because it will bring us peace. Impose this restriction, and Mr. Polk will say he wants no territory—the South will say they want none; we say, agreed, we want none. Then, if Mexico is to lose no territory, she will be for peace; and if we are to acquire none, what are we fighting for? Then, impose this restriction, and the war will be promptly ended, to the great benefit and joy of both Republics.

But this restriction would not only terminate the war, but it will promote peace at home, domestic peace. It will avoid civil, and perhaps, in the end, servile wars.

The acquisition of unrestricted territory will be an "apple of discord" to the States of this Union. New questions will at once spring up—new lines of party distinction will be drawn, and the old ones obliterated. We shall be no longer divided as Whigs and Democrats. As long as our party distinctions are founded on abstract principles, and measures of internal policy, they never will divide this Union—never; but as soon as you make a geographical division—a free party and a slave party, a northern party and a southern party—you at once strike a fatal blow at the integrity of this Union. I want to shun all these dangers—dangers which, I believe, can be avoided only by keeping out foreign territory. But the President tells us, in his message, that this war was not commenced, and is not prosecuted, for conquest. Sir, I am sorry he has said so. I am sorry for the credit and character of my country; for what man is there so blind as not to see that conquest is the whole and sole end and object of this war! Whether we look to the manner of its commencement, or the manner of its prosecution, every one must see that territory, the acquisition of territory, was the first and last, the cherished and darling object of the President. But the President tells us that Mexico began this war; that she struck first; that she invaded our territory, and "shed American blood on American soil." If this be true, it is sufficient.—Then why go back twenty years to give what the President calls "a history of the causes that led to this war." Led who to this war? That led him to make it of course. Why rake up and cite, in order, this long string of old grievances and causes of quarrel, long since settled by treaty? Why dwell on Mexican outrages, and what Mexico owes us? She has acknowledged the debt, and has agreed to pay it; and did pay as long as she had the means. But will war bring the money? Or will it not rather destroy both the ability and disposition of Mexico to pay? Suppose a man living in Texas or Florida owes Mr. Polk, not \$3,000,000, but \$3,000; he sends a man over there to collect the money. The man acknowledges the debt, but says he can't pay. Mr. Polk flies into a passion, and says, "I'll make him pay." He hires a hundred men, agrees to pay them \$10 per month, gives them 160 acres of land, finds them horses, borrows \$50,000 to pay expenses, and away he goes. The man collects his neighbors, they have a fight; Mr. Polk, with the loss of half his men gains a glorious victory; he burns the man's barn; he sets his stacks on fire; destroys his cattle, and kills his wife and children; and what is the result? Mr. Polk has ruined the man, and ruined himself; the debt is lost, and Mr. Polk's property is sold by the sheriff to pay the expenses of his folly, and that is the end of it. Such a course would be just as reasonable as this war upon Mexico to collect what she owes us. But who believes Mr. Polk to be in earnest? Who does not know that this is only the ostensible motive, the pretext for the war, and that the true, the real object is, and was from the beginning, the acquisition of territory?

But the President insists, that Mexico struck first. Is this true? If so, that is enough; why assign twenty other insufficient reasons for this war? The course of the President puts me in mind of a case of outrageous assault and battery tried in the West. The defendant's counsel admitted the charge, but undertook to justify. He came into court with his plea, something like the message in length containing twenty-four distinct grounds of defence. To the terror of the court he opened his volume, and commenced reading: "If the court please, our first ground

of defence is, the prosecutor struck first." "Stop," said the court, "stop—that's enough—prove that, and we want no more." "Aye, but," said the lawyer, "unfortunately for my client, that's just what we can't prove!" "Then, why did you put it in?" "To save appearances, if your honors please." Just so in this case—"To save appearances," the President says, Mexico "struck first;" but, not being able to prove it, he goes back twenty-odd years to give, what he calls, "a history of the causes that led to the war," instead of giving the true causes in a word, by saying, "first, the annexation of Texas; second, the acquisition of California."

But gentlemen dwell much upon the "glory" of this war. Glory!—is there any glory to be got by the conquest of these miserable demi-savage, down-trodden, and distracted Mexicans? Is it glory for an elephant to kill an ant, or a lion to murder a mouse? Glory? No, sir; that won't do. There would be more true glory in exercising generosity, magnanimity, and forbearance towards poor Mexico, than in killing her people, and robbing her of her territory. A war with Mexico can be glorious in no event, it may be disgraceful; victory over such an enemy is not glorious, while defeat would be the deepest disgrace. Individuals have acquired and may acquire glory by brilliant achievements and deeds of noble daring, but NATIONAL GLORY is out of the question.

Now, sir, though I disapprove of this war, in its origin and in its objects; though I condemn both the manner of its commencement and the manner of its prosecution, yet I have voted both the men and money asked for by the President to bring it to a speedy and honorable termination. And why? Because we had no escape. The President had plunged us into the war without our consent. Our brave little army was cut off from its supplies, and in danger of utter destruction. We were obliged to rescue them by sending speedy succor. But I never voted to prosecute this war for the purpose of acquiring additional territory by conquest. No, sir, never. If we shall succeed in getting this territory, what shall we do with it? Shall we hold it by military occupation? By sending an army there, and keeping it there forever, with all its appendages and oppressive burdens of taxation, crushing the people of this country to the earth? Or shall we incorporate it into the Union? And, if we do, are those semi-barbarian, half-breed, negro, and mulatto Mexicans fit for freedom? Are they capable of being free? Can you force them to be free? No, sir; you know you cannot. But, even if you could, have you any right to force freedom upon these unwilling men? Are we to go and bring them in by force—drag these resisting people into our Union by the hair of their head? But, even if willing to come, what preparation have they? Are they qualified to exercise the rights of American citizens? But, more than that, they are in a state of the highest exasperation against us. Sir, I would as soon bring a den of exasperated rattlesnakes into the midst of my family, as attempt to force these treacherous Mexicans into political union with ourselves—unwilling and exasperated as they are. The result would be discord, strife, civil war, and, ultimately, and perhaps at no distant day, the dissolution of this now happy and glorious Union. I cannot sanction this appropriation for another reason. To do so would be to sanction the doctrine so boldly and unflinchingly avowed here by the gentleman from Indiana, over the way, (Mr. Wick) who says, that we are here simply to give the Executive what he wants; and that, if we are not willing to grant it, and in the room in which he asks it, we ought to go home, and let the people send here those who are. That is the rule he prescribes for himself and all good Democrats.—Yes, that is the doctrine openly preached on this floor—the floor of an American Congress—by the gentleman from Indiana, who assumes to be "Sir Oracle"—the official whipper-in of the Democratic party—the grand sheriff and head constable, set up and authorized to bring the Democracy to order. And has it come to this? Is this your modern progressive Democracy, that the President must have not only whatever he wants, but in the form he wants it? The purse and the sword he already has, and this bill adds the treaty-making power. A more despicable slavish creed never was taught under the dagger and the cord in the most grinding despotisms that ever has outraged the rights of man. What does it make of the representatives of a free people? The poorest, meanest, most syphantic, subservient, and crawling slaves that ever licked the foot of arbitrary power. We must give the President all he asks! Indeed! what business, then, have we here! Why not go home, and save expense! OXE MAN IS ALL WE WANT. And yet that is a self-styled political philosopher, who prides himself greatly on his wisdom, but more on his transcendental Democracy. This is not Democracy; it is the reverse of the old and true Democracy to which I belonged, and still belong; it is the con-

centration of all power in the President, the one-man power; monarchy in fact, and not checked and rebuked by the people, will soon be monarchy in form as well as in fact. But, sir, the day is now dawning in the East. The clouds and darkness that overshadow us are fast disappearing. The decree has gone forth. The time is at hand when the people will redeem themselves from the doings and the doctrines of this destructive Democracy.

Sir, I here venture to say, that if Jas. K. Polk, when he came into power, had set himself down, in the Cabinet council, to devise a system of measures to destroy, first, his country, and next, his party, he could not have contrived a system better calculated to achieve the object than the one he has adopted and carried out.

As to its effect upon the party, look at the scenes of this morning—look at the scenes that daily surround us—the divisions, dissensions, quarrels, and fights, that are daily occurring on this floor, between the belligerent divisions and regiments of the "harmonious Democracy." Ask the Democrats from Pennsylvania, New York, and Ohio, what turned them out last fall, and they will tell you, and tell you truly, "it was Polk and his policy" that done it. As to its effect upon the country, look at its condition when he came into power, and look at it now. Who could have believed that such a change could have been effected in so short a time? Then the country was in the enjoyment of peace and prosperity, already both are destroyed. Then the national industry was protected and prosperous, and the revenue abundant under the tariff of '42; now our national industry and our revenue have been both put down together by the infamous British tariff of '46. True, sir, Providence has, to some extent, counteracted the destructive effects of the Polk policy, by visiting with a famine, a failure of the potato crop in Ireland, and of the wheat crop throughout Europe, while we have been blessed with an unusual, a superabundant crop, to supply this deficiency. This has greatly increased our imports, and sustained, to some extent, the revenue; but this will be temporary. Yet, notwithstanding all these favorable circumstances, look at one great and undeniable fact: when Mr. Polk came in to power the U. S. stock stood \$116 for \$100; now it is down to \$98. This fact speaks volumes as to the disastrous effects of his policy on the public credit, at home and abroad. Polk found the country with a sound treasury, now we have the Subtreasury and Treasury note bills. The one says we will take nothing but specie, the others we will pay nothing but paper. Treasury notes are in fact the paper issues of a suspended non-specie-paying bank. It is a national bank without specie in its vaults—it is this, and nothing else.

The Subtreasury and Treasury notes are inseparable; they have always come and went together. They came in with Van Buren, and they went out with Van Buren. They have come in with Polk and they will go out with Polk. It is a contrivance to get money after the Treasury is exhausted, to feed and fatten the hundreds and thousands of hungry partisans with offices and salaries, good contracts and jobs, at the expense of the honest, hard working, and tax-paying farmers and laborers of the country; and, to cover their extravagance, they get up a war, no matter with whom, what for, or how. Van Buren made a war something like the present in its origin and objects, to rob a few Indians in Florida of their land, because they would not sell it at his price; but this war has cost the people more than forty millions of dollars, and we are now supporting these Indians beyond the Mississippi, at an expense of nearly a million a year. Well, Mr. Polk, following in the footsteps of his illustrious predecessor, has made war upon Mexico, with the same object in view, to acquire territory and give fat jobs, contracts, and offices to his partisans, at the expense of the people; but when, where, and how, the Polk war is to end, God only knows. What it is to the nation is being involved in debt at the rate of forty or fifty millions a year, without any measure of revenue proposed to discharge the debt, or even to pay the interest. Why not meet the crisis you have created like men?—Why shriek and skulk from the responsibility? Two months after the declaration of the war with Great Britain, Congress promptly, and without hesitation passed an act to double the duties on foreign goods, and imposed shortly afterwards internal duties to meet the expenses of the war; but now nothing can be done but pass enormous appropriation bills, issue Treasury notes, and divide the proceeds among greedy partisans, who stand with open mouths to seize the bread and bones distributed at the White House. The Democratic plan seems to be to pass appropriation bills, take the money, and leave the Whigs to foot the bill as in 1840. The only legacy they will leave us when they die will be their debts, with the privilege of imposing taxes to pay them. The Democrats it seems, have discovered Mr. Law's plan of getting clear of taxation. Some years ago, when taxes were very high in this city, my old

friend Thomas Law, (brother of Lord Ellenborough,) who was very heavily taxed for unproductive property on Capitol Hill, one day gave out that he had discovered a plan to get rid of his taxes; his neighbors, who had a fellow-feeling on this subject, flocked in to find out what his plan was; after a great deal of importunity, the old gentleman at last said, "well friends, if you must know, I am going to die."

Now, the Democrats have found out that they are going to die soon, and they are determined to get all they can while their time lasts, and leave the Whigs to impose the taxes, and to pay them.

But we were told the other day, that the Democratic party had carried out all its measures, and the results would contrast favorably with those of the Whigs. I am glad to hear this admission. They confess that their system of measures is in full and successful operation, and they all can see the beautiful results. I will avail myself of the occasion which is thus presented to me, and will follow out the contrast a little farther.

But I must go back a little, and I mean to inquire what has been the effect of Whig policy on the prosperity, the character, and the credit of the country; and then what has been the result of the opposite!

In this inquiry, I shall deal with facts—I mean to speak from the record, and I challenge contradiction. Then I state, in the first place, that the average expenditures of the Government, during the four years of Mr. Adams's Administration, was but twelve millions and a half a year, and part of this was to cover the expenses of an extensive system of internal improvements; and during the same four years, there were paid forty-five millions of the public debt, out of twenty-five millions of revenue. Mr. Adams was turned out for his extravagance, and Locooco economy substituted. Mr. Van Buren came in as a personal embodiment of Locooco principles, and what was the annual expenditure during his four years? The average instead of twelve and a half was twenty-eight millions; (in one year the expenditure reached thirty-seven millions.) Twelve and a half millions under Mr. Adams, twenty-eight millions under Mr. Van Buren; this is the difference between Whig and Locooco policy. With a revenue of more than 30 millions, they paid, not one dollar of the public debt, but increased it, in effect, thirty-one millions; the expenditures having exceeded the revenue during his term by that amount. Mr. Van Buren found in the Treasury a surplus of 45 millions; of this, 28 millions were deposited with the States, leaving 16 millions of available revenue, and to this add the proceeds of the sale of the Government bank stock, \$1 millions, making a surplus of 24 millions, the whole of this, with all the revenues of the Government, was expended during Mr. Van Buren's four years, and a large debt left to the Whigs upon the accession of General Harrison to the Presidency in 1841.

When the Whigs came into power, they found in the Treasury, not a surplus of 45 millions, as did Mr. Van Buren, but they found, on the contrary, a large debt, and the revenue ran down to less than half the amount of the expenditures. In 1840, the net revenue was but \$10,150,339. When the Whigs came in, they passed the Tariff of '42, (that tariff law which we, in our wisdom, repealed last winter, and what did that law accomplish? It raised the net revenue to \$25,748,406 in 1841—it restored the credit of the nation—it raised up and protected the national industry, and made the nation prosperous. It paid off, in four years of its operation, (1842 inclusive,) 34 millions of the public debt, and left, in 1846, a balance of 6 millions in the Treasury; and raised the revenue from 12 to 27 millions a year.

This Whig Administration was turned out by frauds and deceptions of the grossest character. James K. Polk came in, Locooco doctrine was again in the ascendant. The tariff of 1842 was repealed, and that of 1846 substituted, Texas annexed, and then, as was predicted, came war, with all its unhappy and disastrous consequences. Here are the fruits of Locooco policy. What is the condition of the country now? It is worse than it was even under the ruinous reign of Martin Van Buren, whom the people turned out, head and heels. Mr. Van Buren spent for us 28 millions a year; and how much is James K. Polk spending? God only knows. Just what he pleases to ask for—forty or fifty millions at least. We have given him men and given him money—millions upon millions—regiments upon regiments—treasury notes, loans, all he asks, and as fast as he asks; yet his friends here complain daily that the President is "not sustained" in his patriotic purpose! What have we refused him? We granted him ten millions of dollars and fifty thousand of volunteers, who promptly tendered their services, and he has not called out much more than half of them. What have we not done? And, after all, what has Mr. Polk done? Has he prosecuted this war as he ought to have done? No. He had

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