

United States Senate.

JANUARY 25, 1847.
LIEUTENANT GENERAL: VINDICATION OF THE PRESIDENT.

A few weeks since the President asked Congress for authority to appoint a Lieutenant General to conduct the war with Mexico, deeming that to be the proper method of bringing the war to a close with the least delay.

Mr. BENTON asked the indulgence of the Senate to make an exposition of the circumstances under which the President had proposed the appointment of a lieutenant general to command the army in Mexico, and with which appointment his name had become connected. It had been intimated, he said, on the floor of the Senate—hypothetically, to be sure, but not the less intelligently and forcibly on that account—that there might be an ulterior and covert design in the proposition—nothing less than a design on the part of the President to appoint his successor.

of which the country will some day have an opportunity of judging, the President saw fit to ask me my opinion upon the future mode of conducting the war.— This request did not strike me as being anything strange or unreasonable—either unbecoming in him to make, or for me to comply with. In my senatorial capacity I was his constitutional adviser on many great questions, those of peace and war inclusive. In my political capacity, I was the supporter of his administration, and ready to give him my opinion on any subject. As chairman of the Senate's Committee on Military Affairs, and accustomed, in that character, to communicate on military subjects with all administrations for about a quarter of a century last past, I saw nothing in the nature of the request he had made to implicate either of us.— He asked me for my opinion as to the future mode of conducting the war. I gave it to him, first in speech, face to face, and afterwards in writing. And here it is: [holding up a piece of paper.] For I chose to retain the original for myself, while sending a copy to him. Here it is; and not now; for I do not belong to the school that makes publication of plans of campaign—even rejected plans—in time of war. The President approved the plan; and it so happened that the nature of the plan required a head to the army—one head to the whole body—to unite and combine the whole into one harmonious and consistent movement. It so happened, also, that enough was known of the ideas of the two highest in rank of the officers of the army to know that their plans were different; and it is a maxim of fundamental observance in war that no general is to be required to execute a plan which he disapproves. A new commander became indispensable; and as any new major general would be subordinate to all now in commission, the solution of the difficulty lay in the creation of a new rank, superior to that of major general, and inferior to the constitutional commander-in-chief. The creation of the rank of lieutenant general, as had been done in the year 1798, at the time of the expected war with France, was the solution of the difficulty. This rank appeared to be the natural and regular derivation from the President's own political and military character, and the proper connecting link between him and the army. Mr. President he was both the civil head of the government and the military head of the army. He was commander-in-chief of the army and navy, and of the militia or volunteers in service. They were all then in service, and in a foreign country. He could not go to Mexico to command in person; paramount duties required him to remain here.—He could not send orders from the closet in this city.— That was a folly of which there was no example since the time that the Prince Eugene (of Savoy) was accustomed to return unopened, at the end of the campaigns, all the orders which the Aulic Council was accustomed to send him from Vienna.— The President was bound to command; he could not go to Mexico to command in person; and he could not command from Washington. The solution of the difficulty, which reconciled all contradictions and permitted the exercise of all duties, civil and military, was the appointment of a military deputy—a legatus—a locum tenens—a lieutenant to take the place of the constitutional commander-in-chief in the field; to give orders in his name, and to take the responsibility of plans and movements, while the generals, at the heads of divisions or columns, would only have the responsibility of execution. This, for reasons too well known to require rehearsal in this chamber, it was thought would be entirely agreeable to the generals of highest rank in our army in Mexico; it would secure their rear at home, and leave them free to contend with the enemy in front. It was not intended to diminish the fighting vocation of the two generals, but to reconcile and accomplish two desirable objects, namely, the execution of the President's plans, and the release of the major generals from responsibility for plans and movements.

This was the view of the office of lieutenant general; as to the proposed officer, there was no breach of military rule, law, etiquette, or propriety in the proposed appointment. The office was original, and belonged to no person. The President had a right to nominate, and the President to confirm whom they pleased. Personally, I would take no concern in it. I only asked the President to make known the name intended for the place to the members of Congress, that all objections to the officer, as well as to the office, should be open to full inquiry. I forbade my friends to say a word on my account. I would not say a word for myself. I would not even obviate a prominent objection by reminding any one that, in 1812, I was the military superior of every general now in the service, and had a right to have commanded the whole of them if we had chanced to serve together. I was then colonel in the service of the United States, commissioned by President Madison, under a law of Congress, and led a regiment of my own raising from Tennessee to the lower Mississippi, under General Jackson, to meet the British then expected at New Orleans, but who did not come till 1814. I was then of a rank, and in a position, to have commanded, if we had met, every officer now in service. Even in the regular army, in 1813, I was lieutenant colonel, while most of the present generals were company officers, and only one of them of the rank of colonel. Yet I scorned to mention these things, even to bosom friends, while the measure was depending, and only do it now for the purpose of rescuing the President from the supposed breach of

military decorum which the appointment of a citizen from civil life (myself being that citizen) to the command of the army. Finally, and to conclude the vindication of the President in this particular, I can say that Mr. Polk is not the first President who proposed to give me the command of the army against Mexico—that Gen. Jackson himself proposed it in 1836, when our affairs with that country looked warlike; and that then, as now, I agreed to take it.

And here, Mr. President, having fulfilled my task of vindicating the Chief Magistrate of the Union from the design, hypothetically imputed to him, of wishing to appoint his successor, in my person, and by means of this lieutenant generalship, I might close my remarks; but as my name has been coupled with this business, and as I have remained silent, and even left my seat, while the measure was depending, I must now take leave, with the kind indulgence of the Senate, to proceed a step further, and to say a word on my own account; and to show that service, and not rank, was my inducement to agree to the offer of the President; and that there might have been cases in which I would not have accepted the office of lieutenant general even if it had been created. I have already said that I will not now show what my own plan was; but I can say of it that it was a plan which looked to a result, and promised an issue, and that briefly; and that I would have had nothing to do with any plan of any other kind!—nothing to do with any plan that would have contemplated a long and moderate war, or a war of masterly inactivity, or of retreat upon the Rio Grande, or of defending a line, or of attack upon the idle and solitary castle of San Juan of Ulua—especially at the commencement of the season for the black vomit. In no one of these cases would I have been lieutenant general, or captain general, or major general, or colonel general; or any other sort of general that ever was heard of. I know very well that the President had no idea of any one of these most amiable plans; but there is a way to give him an idea of them, and even to force them upon him; and that would be, by the simple process of denying him the means of doing any thing else. I shall not state my plan; but I will say of it, that, besides intending a result, it proposed to carry on the war, while there was war, according to the usage of all nations in the case of invasive war—the invaders to be paid and subsidized by the invaded. Contributions regularly levied—duties regularly collected—would accomplish these objects, and leave the United States free, or nearly free, from the expenses of the war. I can say, further, than my plan was not limited to a mere military view of the subject; that it comprehended a union of policy and arms—the olive-branch to go with the sword; ministers to treat, as well as an army to fight. A diplomatic mission, nationally constituted both in a geographical and in a political sense, was to attend the headquarters; and, while the ministers stood ready to negotiate at every step, the army was to take an organization and an attitude to give emphasis to negotiation. And this combination of arms and of policy was not mere guess work, the idle conception of fancy; but the result of a knowledge of the state of parties in Mexico—a peace party, for honorable peace; a war party for endless war—as was solemnly shown by the senator from N. York [Mr. Dix] a few days ago. My plan was adapted to both of these parties—honorable peace for one; the sword for the other. The military part of the plan has fallen to the ground; the diplomatic part falls with it; and now it devolves upon those who have frustrated the plan of the President to present him a better. I counted much on the efficacy of the diplomatic part of this plan; for great errors prevail in Mexico with regard to our designs and feelings towards them, and which nothing but an authentic mission could remove.— The war party is incessant in its calumnies against us, artfully contrived to operate on every class of the people, and to render peace impossible. It has a falsehood for every class. To the religious, the war was represented as a war of religion—the Protestant against the Catholic—and a war of sacrifice—the spoliation of the churches. To the creole Spaniards and the Indians of mixed blood, they present it as a war of races—the Anglo-Saxon against the Spanish American—and the subjugation of the latter intended.— To the mixed Indian race, (nearly the one-half of the whole population, and the sole resource of the army for its rank and file,) it is presented as a war of extinction, or of slavery—their race to be extirpated, like so many tribes in our North America; or, to be carried into slavery to work the fields of their masters, like the slaves brot from Africa. And, to all, it is presented as a war of ambition and conquest, in which there is no peace for Mexico but in the degradation of her citizens and the loss of her independence. A mission, such as I proposed, would authentically contradict all these calumnies, and show the deceived people of Mexico that just and honorable peace is all that we want; and that, far from wishing her degradation, both policy and interest unite in making us wish to see her prosperous, happy, and independent. She is a republic—our neighbor—who did us the honor to copy our form of government, and had a great commerce with us. The injuries of which we complain were the work of a few, while the great majority of the people have done us no harm, are willing to do us justice, and reciprocate the wish for that close connexion, political and commercial, between the two republics which is necessary to their own prosperity, to the stability of the republic

[Here we omit the remarks of Mr. BLACK who spoke against the resolution, and those of Mr. JOHNSON (the author of the resolution) in favor of it.]
Mr. BIGLER said he did not rise to discuss the supplement in its details. The Senator from Erie would get at his object without offering his resolution; that was, he would be put in possession of the sentiments of the committee, to whom these petitions on the subject were sent, when they came to make their report upon them.— Now he (Mr. B.) could not think of voting for this resolution, and thus imposing upon the industrious charlatan of the committee on banks the duty of making a voluminous report on the question. He could not remain silent in his seat on hearing the remarks of the Senator from Allegheny, [Mr. Darsie,] and therefore felt himself compelled to express his gratification at their tenor and character. He [Mr. B.] could not forego the present opportunity of congratulating the Democracy on their acquisition in the person of the Senator; for it was evident, judging from the language to which he had given utterance, that he was coming over to the democracy, and commanded his party to go over, who were, on this question. Mr. Sprague, [said Mr. B., addressing Mr. Carson, who was in the chair,] come, we extend to you a hearty welcome. Mr. B. further remarked that if the Whig party should have come over to the democracy on one of the few other great questions now agitating the public mind, we might expect a political millennium; there would then be no further personal strife.
The debate was further continued by Messrs. Smith, Bigler and Darsie, who opposed the resolution, and by Messrs. Sanderson and Gibbons, who were for a postponement.
Mr. Johnson's name spoke again and finally withdrew his resolution.
Gen. Taylor's Letter.
A long letter is now going the rounds of the papers purporting to have been written by Gen. TAYLOR, dated Monterey, December 9, 1846, in which that officer endeavors to cast censure upon the administration, together with General Scott, for the tardiness with which the war has been prosecuted.— We shall not publish any such letter—it would be doing an injustice to Gen. Taylor. But we refer our readers to the following notice of it by the Washington Union: The letter is very clearly written, and its whole tenor, character, and style, would create the impression that the author had not the most distant idea that it would ever appear in print.
We deeply regret the publication in the New York Express of the following letter from Major General Taylor to a friend, the authenticity of which, on its first appearance, we were disposed to doubt. We cannot now, however, but consider it as genuine; and uncontradicted points to Major Gen. Gaines as the friend to whom it was addressed and by whose permission it was published.— In justice to General Taylor, we will not suppose this letter was ever intended for publication because its effect will be to place Santa Anna in possession of information which cannot fail to prove most injurious to us and advantageous to the enemy. Santa Anna will thus be encouraged, by the high and authoritative source from which it proceeds, to direct portions of the large force collected at San Luis Potosi to other points where it is clearly indicated by the letter that a blow may be expected, and in this manner it may seriously endanger the success of our arms. We make these remarks on the supposition that the letter truly presents the plan of the campaign, of which, however, we are entirely ignorant.
It is only in view of the public mischief resulting, we regret that this letter has been written or published. We have no fears but that the administration, whose course towards General Taylor is known to the world, will be able to show that there is no foundation for the complaints made against them in this publication.
U. S. SENATORS ELECTED.
Hon. PIERRE SOULÉ, of New Orleans has been elected a U. S. Senator by the legislature of Louisiana, in room of the late Hon. ALEXANDER BARROW.
R. M. T. HUNTER, from Va. in room of Senator Archer whose term expires on the 4th of March next.
J. M. MASON from Va., in room of Senator Pennypacker, deceased.
All Democrats.
27 Days Later from Europe.
Advance in Cotton—Advance in Flour—Great demand for American Provisions—Arrival of Specie.
The steamship Hibernia, Capt. RYRIE arrived at Boston on Monday last, in 103 days from Liverpool. The following synopsis gives the most important items of news:
It will be seen that cotton, flour and corn have advanced at a very rapid rate, and now command very high prices. The Hibernia brings from one million to one million and a half in specie. Corn had advanced and the best quality closed at 68 to 72 shillings. Flour has also advanced, and the best closed at 37 to 39 shillings per barrel in bond. There was an excellent demand for American beef and pork at stiff prices, supplies large. Lard was 48 to 50 shillings, in kegs.

Democratic County Meeting.
The Democratic Republican voters of Clearfield county are requested to meet in the court-room on Tuesday evening, the 21st of February next, for the purpose of appointing a Senatorial and representative delegate in connection with the other counties of the district to the next Fourth of March Convention—and to transact any other business calculated to promote the welfare of the party.
By order of the STANDING COMMITTEE.
Jan 24, 47.
Our thanks are due to Messrs Buffington and Banhard for useful Congressional documents—and also to Messrs Bigler, Warrell and Reynolds for various favors from Harrisburg.
GRAIN AND FLOUR.—On the receipt in Philadelphia of the news brought by the Hibernia, there was quite a rise in the grain market. On the 28th inst. flour was selling at from \$6 12 1/2 to \$6 25 per barrel.— Corn meal at from \$4 25 to \$4 50 per bushel. Wheat at \$1 32 1/2 to \$1 37 per bushel. Corn at 78 to 85 cents per bushel. These rates show an advance on former prices of \$1 12 per bbl. on flour, from 87 1/2 to \$1 00 on corn meal; 25 to 35c. per bushel on wheat, and from 15 to 20 cents per bn. on corn. Truly, our farmers are ruined.
More Help.
We extract the following from among the proceedings of the Upper Branch of our State Legislature on Thursday the 21st inst.—not because of any intrinsic merit it may possess, or as throwing any new light upon the mysteries of the banking system—but to show our readers what a powerful reinforcement the Democracy have received on their side of the bank question. This is the effect of the secret operation of public opinion—of "progressive Democracy." The rank and file of the Whig party—or at least a large portion of them—always thought with the Democracy on this question, and now we see their leaders reluctantly falling into line. So will it be on the Tariff question, and we hope, speedily. Mr. Darsie, it should be remembered, is an active and leading Whig.
Mr. JOHNSON offered a resolution that the committee on Banks be requested to inquire into the expediency of reporting a bill providing for a general banking system, similar to that of the State of New York, with such alterations and modifications as may be required by the laws of the Commonwealth.
Mr. JOHNSON briefly explained the object and purposes of his resolution.
Mr. BIGLER observed that the banking system was connected with all the great interests of the country, and it was a question whether the agitation of this subject might not have an effect in the business circles of the country, of an injurious character; and if the Senator (Mr. Johnson) obtained what he desired, it would be a lengthy report on the subject, going into its principles, details and operations. He, (Mr. B.) for one, while he would not make a motion, felt disposed to let the resolution lie over a day or two.
Mr. JOHNSON said he had no objection to let it lie over a day or two. He avowed that he was extremely anxious to have a report on a subject of so much importance, from the committee on banks.
Mr. DARSIE remarked that the public mind had been too much agitated, of late years, on the subject of banking, and he was therefore opposed to letting the resolution lie on the table. He thought it should be acted upon at once, and rejected. The party with which he was connected had been charged with being a Bank party, but whether rightfully or wrongfully, he would leave others to say. Now, it was supposed that inasmuch as the Whig party were now in power in the Legislature, they would run wild on the subject of banking. He didn't want to agitate the public mind at all. He wanted to let that question lie just where it was. If a good bank came there for a renewal of its charter, it should receive his vote; but he would vote for no new bank as he believed there was already a sufficient number in operation. He conceived that we ought not to alter our system of banking, and he was sorry that his friend from Erie should have suggested it. However, he (Mr. D.) did not impute anything else to him than the utmost propriety in presenting his resolution. The people in his district might wish a change in the present system of banking, although he (Mr. D.) did not believe there was a general desire on the part of the people of the commonwealth for a change.