

The North Branch Democrat.

HARVEY SICKLER, Proprietor.

"TO SPEAK HIS THOUGHTS IS EVERY FREEMAN'S RIGHT."—Thomas Jefferson.

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SPEECH OF HON. D. W. VOORHEES, OF INDIANA.

Delivered in the House of Representatives of the United States, March 5, 1861.

(CONCLUDED.)

But, sir, I will be told by the advocates of force and violence as a remedy, and the sole remedy, for our troubles, that although the South might send commissioners to treat for peace, yet they would accede to no terms save recognition and separation. In support of this view, certain propositions recently offered in the Congress at Richmond are cited. To my mind they indicate a far different conclusion. It is true they do not signify to me that the power of the southern people is exhausted; that the rebellion is crushed; that a panic of fear prevails in the Southern mind; that a government, whether de facto or de jure, which can maintain an army of half a million of well armed men in the field is conquered. I do not see the evidence of all this as some have professed to do every sixty days since the war began; but I do see in these propositions an earnest desire upon the part of the South to conform to the usages of the civilized world, and to bring this unhappy and disastrous conflict to a close by the power of reason. It is true that certain objects are declared for which they desire to negotiate; but does that fact include final results which may grow out of negotiation when once commenced? What nation at war with another ever opened communication for a treaty of peace by pre-claiming in advance the precise terms on which it was to be concluded? Such a course pre-emptorily excludes the very idea of negotiation. Commissioners would have no discretion, and reason and argument would have no room to act. Such is not, in my judgment, the meaning of this movement in the Confederate Congress. Sir, what is this contest? What interests does it involve? They are very distinct and simple when divorced from fanaticism. On the part of those who have kept their allegiance to the Republic, it is to maintain the boundaries of the Republic, and thus defeat the ruinous doctrine that a State has a right to secede. On the part of those in rebellion, it is an effort, in their estimation, to preserve the integrity of their laws, their social institutions, the right to control their domestic affairs free from Federal interference. With some, this attempt is made under a claim of the right of secession; others proclaim a revolution, which is the right of all people if grievances sufficient exist as a justification. But the people of the South are united in the objects at which they aim, and if they could be attained in the Union, and without war, would they gladly embrace and accept them? Their claim is to a state of endless hostility, which is destroying the very interests they seek to protect? Why the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. G. W. Felt) declared a few days ago on this floor, that if the privates of the opposing armies in the field were permitted to come together in peace; they would speedily remove all our troubles; and yet he spoke and voted in favor of taking from even the wives and children of the Southern masses, who he asserts, are thus willing to return to the Union, the last bit of soil, and the last crust of bread by which life is sustained. With such evidence then as this can we justify ourselves before God or man if we fail to respond to the action of the South in favor of negotiation, which promises in advance such happy results? Let all grievances, whether fancied or real, be considered by candid statesmanship. Let there be safe and unreplicable guarantees, adapted against those that are found to be real; and those that are fancied will be easily explained away. Five enlightened commissioners from each section, imbued with the spirit of Christian benevolence animated by an unselfish love of country and of their fellow-men, meeting by the consent and encouragement of their respective authorities, could, and in my solemn and deliberate judgment would, in ninety days agree upon terms which would be acceptable to a large majority of the American people, and by which the Union of these States would be more firmly established than ever before—the lives of millions spared, the half a century of blood shed left for how to enjoy peace and domestic tranquility restored. I would temper the armistice which winter declares to achieve their bloodless and permanent victories in favor of the Union and the Constitution. I would not stop here. I would extend the armistice as long as there was hope of inducing the return of a single State. But suppose would this Administration be armed with an argument in favor of war which it has never yet possessed. This fact is well understood by the Executive and his advisers, but they refuse to negotiate because they have reason to believe that the Union would thus be restored and the war ended. But slavery would not thereby be abolished, and the scheme of building up a despotic, centralized Federal Government would be defeated. The war, therefore, goes on; the young men of this nation are swept into their graves upon the plain of battle, and the old men become slaves to the tax gatherer, not to restore the Union, but to give a worthless liberty to the black man, and to strike down the legal rights and privileges of the white man.

Sir, upon this question of negotiation, on occasion compromise and Union, I appeal for approval to my own conscience. It sustains me with all the force of a burning conviction of duty. By I am lifted beyond the reach of partisan malice. I appeal to the people! The voice and humane instincts of honest nature will plead my cause in their hearts. At their hands I fear no evil for the country. They are just, and will appreciate a plain and inherent element of right. I appeal to future years. When candor, reason and Christianity sit in judgment on this struggle, every line which records the history of war or peace in an former ages, tells me that their verdict will be in favor of the principles which I advocate. I seize this hour of future triumph by anticipation. That it will come I entertain no more doubt than I do that I breathe the air of life this moment. I appeal, finally, to God, before whom I stand, and into whose presence we all hasten to answer for our conduct and our motives in that awful hour I humbly trust and be-

lieve that my feeble efforts to turn aside the devouring edge of the sword; to stay the hand of the great reaper, death; to pause in the horrid work of sending souls to their eternal account without repentance or pardon, to stop bereavement, war and tear-around every fireside; to brighten the mournful face of the land with the radiance of peace; to reconstruct and restore a fraternal and harmonious Union will meet the approval of the Father and go far toward relieving the new world and trembling spirit of the terms which I propose.

But, Mr. Chairman, what other declared purposes of the Constitution for the accomplishment of which this Government was established have been carried out by the policy and administration of the party now in power? Do they promote the general welfare? With the principles of justice everywhere suppressed, the blessing of liberty annihilated throughout all our borders, and the domestic tranquility utterly destroyed, it is almost needless to inquire what is left to constitute the general welfare. But it is my painful duty on this occasion not only to show that the principles of free government are dying, rapidly dying before our faces, but that the material prosperity, the absolute physical resources of the country are perishing also. The welfare, the strength and glory of a nation are dependent in a vast measure upon the extent of its population, and the amount of its wealth. Next to the virtue and intelligence of the people, their numbers constitute the power and dignity of a State. The ancient commandment and the blessing delivered to the original founders of the human race was to be fruitful, multiply and replenish the earth. And one of the richest promises to the Patriarchs of old was that their tribes and their descendants should increase until they became as the waters of the forest and the sands of the sea shore. Every public ruler who by wise political and social economy has rapidly swelled the population of this country, holds a place in history as a benefactor of his kind. Every man being a machine of labor. Each hand and each head is a producer. The busy brain and active muscles are perpetually adding to the storehouse, the granaries, and the merchant ships of the world. It was a blessing and not a curse; it was in mercy and not in wrath that man was commanded to eat his bread in the sweat of his face. By obedience to this command the glory of civilization adorns the earth, and commerce penetrates the most distant seas. The fulfillment of this decree redeems the savage face of nature, builds up the great marts of trade, patronizes sciences and letters, erects temples to act in progress, and is a forerunner to the Christian faith. Labor is the foundation of all wealth, and of all happiness. Nations and individuals are alike utterly and entirely dependent upon it for their prosperity. And national prosperity is simply the result of individual labor. The noble and obscure toil of the honest ploughman, who

"Homeward plods his weary way."

at nightfall is the source of all the nation's greatness, the foundation of all its vast enterprises, the support of all its boasted revenues; it is the small spring breaking into a rill, and merging with the other waters of its kindred at last swells into an ocean on which the destinies of the world are determined. All the great authors who have written on the subject of the wealth of nations have recognized this as a fundamental truth. Adam Smith embraces it in the first sentence of this immortal work. He says:

"The annual labor of every nation is the fund which originally supplies it with all the necessaries and conveniences of life, which it annually consumes and which consists always either in the immediate produce of that labor, or in what is purchased with that produce from other nations."

Locke, in his equally celebrated treatise on civil government is still more explicit and clear upon this point. He uses the following language, which covers the whole philosophy of labor:

"The laborer, which puts the greatest part of the value upon the land, which it would scarcely be worth anything. To that we owe the greatest part of all its useful products; for all that the straw, bran, bread of that acre which is more worth than the produce of an acre of good land which lies waste is the effect of labor. For it is merely the ploughman's pains, the reaper's and the thrasher's toil, and the baker's sweat, is to be counted into the bread we eat; the labor of those who break the oxen, who digged and wrought the iron and stones, who stand and framed the timber employed about the plough, mill, oven, or any other utensils, which are a vast number, requisite to this work, being all to be reckoned as being in the bread, must all be charged to the account of labor, and received as an effect of that nature; and it is worth furnishing only the almost worthless materials in themselves. 'T would be a strange catalogue of things that in industry provided and made use of about every loaf of bread, before it comes to our use, if we could trace them. From wood, leather, bark, timber, stone, brick, coals, lime, cloth, dyeing, dress, pitch, tar, masts, rope and all material made use of in the ship that brought away the commodity made use of by the workmen to any part of the world, all which would be almost unnumberable, it is to be reckoned up."

Sir, as do then from motives of humanity which shall be said of an administrative policy which is unnecessarily depopulating the nation? Every unrequited field of strife covered with the noble and once animated forms of American citizens, is an irreparable loss to the true wealth of the country. When the last call for troops which has been made upon the laborers of the land, by the Executive, shall have been complied with, more than two millions of men will have gone to the fields of death. In the year 1860, the number of voters in the United States, including all the sections was 4,651,189. The States which remained faithful to the Union contained, at the commencement of this war, about three millions. This may fairly be computed as the number of laborers in the loyal States three years ago, for while many who vote are too old to work, yet, perhaps an equal number are capable of labor who are too young to vote.

It will thus be seen that two-thirds of the laboring population of the country have already been lured upon by this remorseless administration and drawn away from the business of production. Figures cannot lie, and the census tables do not deceive. The prosperity of this government consists in the labor of its people. This is its only capital. In proportion as the population is diminished or diverted from productive pursuits, in the same proportion is the general welfare destroyed. And no nation ever long survived the shock which the abstraction of two-thirds of its population inflicted upon every branch and department of industry. A parallel will seize every healthful function of

government. The sap of life will cease to ascend, and the green tree will wither and die. The fountain will be dried up, and the river will cease to flow. Sir, I am dealing in no imaginary figures. Go to the regions of agriculture on which all else depends. You will there hear the cry that the laborers are few. One man cannot do the work of three; and two are gone and but one is left to sow the seed and reap the harvest. I have seen the wife and the mother, tilling the soil in my own district; her children following in the furrow, and their father away in the army. I have seen broad fertile acres in the West lying waste and idle for the want of hands to place them in cultivation. How long can this state of things continue? How long will one-third of our usual produce meet the demands of our increased and stupendous expenditures? How long can diminished production and multiplied taxation go hand in hand? How long can you continue to destroy the laborer, and at the same time raise a revenue from the products of labor? The tendency and speedy result of our present career are plain and inevitable. Soon, very soon, the fruits of industry will prove inadequate to meet the annual demands of the National Treasury, and then the land itself, the farm, the homestead, must be exhausted and swept away. Are you ready for this? Are you ready for the land tax upon unimproved lands, in addition to the tax upon the cultivated soil, for the maintenance and corruption? If you are, then eternal war, vast conscriptions, no negotiation, no remission, no peace, will bring with fearful rapidity the realization of all your hopes. But in the profligate destruction of human life, and wanton and wicked overthrow of the whole natural system of American labor, how much longer do you expect the tolling muffled drum to endure in silence? When the curtain first rose on the hateful scene of this civil war, the country was mocked with a call for seventy five thousand men, and our greedy ears were soothed from high quarters with the flattering story that the nation would scarcely wax and wane until the Government would again possess its own. You tell me of statesmanly wisdom; you tell me of the present conduct of our disastrous affairs. Sir, note a plain laid down in the beginning but what has failed, and not a promise made by this Administration to the people but what has been broken. The armies of the rebellion still stand with a defiant front almost in sight of the Capital; and the horrid and terrible demands of a next conscription are now going out over the country as fatal to the peace and happiness of the people as the croak of the raven to the life of the Danaan. Do the few who now roam in the lives and fortunes of the many imagine that they can prolong forever the deception which they have imposed upon an anxious and trusting people?

But on this vital question of the rapid decrease of our laboring population, and the consequent prostration of the general welfare, I will dwell less by mere argument, and more by the other side of the chamber. I submit, therefore, the following extract from the last message of the President:

"I beg to submit to your consideration the expediency of establishing a system for the encouragement of immigration. Although this source of national wealth and strength is again flowing with greater freedom than for several years before the war, it is still a great deficiency in every field of industry especially in agriculture, and in our mines, as well as in the precious metals. While the demand for labor is increased here, tens of thousands of our countrymen are being offered to emigrate to the United States, if essential, but very cheap assistance can be afforded them."

I am a friend to the foreigner—to the stranger who seeks our shores to enjoy liberty, or to increase his store of life. I stand by him when the Executive and his chief supporters took the midnight oath to disfranchise him because of his religious faith, and oppressed him in all our borders. I welcome him now with a warm and extended hand to the equal enjoyment of all that our shattered and defaced institutions. But work which sorrowful emotions will the people of this once proud land listen to the voice of America pleading with the population of Europe, and offering them pecuniary inducements to come and take the places of our lost and dead to fill the empty chairs around the bereaved fireside—to supply the demands which war and death have made in the battlefield and in the harvest time; and yet the destroying angel is to continue to hover in every blast; the flower of the glass and the seeds to produce his insatiable career; the flower of our manhood are to be cut down; strangers from foreign lands are to occupy their vacant seats; and it is reason to attempt to stay this horrid holocaust of human sacrifice by a restoration of the Government upon the principles which were satisfactory to Washington! The rebel chief at Richmond, who makes open war against the Union, and the Executive here who does not make war for it, who would not accept its restoration to day on the ancient doctrines of the Constitution, are engaged by conscription, force and violence in hurling against each other the unwilling and peaceful populations of every section; bleeding, palpitating and mangled; to struggle, to combat and to die, like the gladiators in the amphitheater of Rome, butchered to make a Roman holiday. These are facts which will not escape history, and yet, the consent of the governed is the just measure of power which a public ruler can exercise in a free government, and we fondly imagine that we still are free!

But in immediate alliances with the question of population arises the consideration of the amount of burthen which is to be borne. While looking on the one hand in sadness and grief at the depletion and destruction of the laboring masses, we are compelled to turn and gaze with apprehension and terror at the frightful proportions and increasing magnitude of our public indebtedness. As the ability of the people to meet taxation becomes each day more feeble, the demands upon their toil and their resources accumulate with appalling velocity. I shall deal in cold and steady figures. What I assert upon the subject of the national debt I stand prepared to make good, as time, the test of truth, has done for me heretofore. On the 31st day of May, 1862, on this floor, I made the following statement:

"It is safe, then, to conclude that the year that is to come, and on which we are just entering—the second year of the war—will witness the indebtedness of this Government to the alarming sum of \$2,000,000,000."

The fierce clamor which broke upon my head here and elsewhere, for that statement,

will not be easily forgotten. I was honored by an official contradiction from the Secretary of the Treasury himself, produced on this floor by the gentleman from Massachusetts, (Mr. Dimes.) Then came an outburst of cries of injured patriotism from the throats of that vocal and slavish class who care not for the prince, and purchase privileges of a plunderer by emptying the words of their master. But I appealed to time for my vindication, and now here again to day, I challenge my accusers to the issue.

On the sixth day of March, 1863, when the Thirty seventh Congress adjourned, less than one year from the date of my estimate, the appropriations of money from the Federal Treasury, in the payment of the public expenditures, stood as follows:

First session 37th Congress..... \$279,071,500
Second do do..... 578,109,600
Total do do..... 857,181,100

Total amount..... \$2,128,309,200

It will thus be seen, that in less than one year from the date of my estimate of May 21, 1862, that same Congress, of which I was then a member, appropriated \$128,309,200 more than even I predicted would be consumed by our alarming rate of expense. Reports may be written by able and skillful pens, and speeches may be made by eloquent and plausible tongues in order to disguise these figures, and to delude the people still further to their ruin, but the number of the nation's welfare will not be deluded, and bankruptcy, like an army and a troubled ghost with its shrouded face and skeleton fingers, will come to plague and torment the nation's leaders. It may be an unwelcome hour to portray these facts now, but the hour is fast approaching, in which the sons and daughters of honest toil will lay bitter imprecations on the authors of this oppression and thank those who have pointed out their danger.

In the report of the Secretary of the Treasury submitted at the opening of the present session of Congress, we find his estimate for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1864, of the expenses of the Government amounting to \$1,099,731,950. It is true that the indebtedness of the country by a conscription that is considerable portion of that sum will not be expended at the close of the fiscal year. It is true that it may all be appropriated, but gently intimated that some of it may remain in his hands, not paid out on the 30th of June, 1864. But inasmuch as we have already at this season passed deficiency bills over and over, and estimates to the extent of more than a hundred millions of dollars, I must decline making any calculation on any lower basis than the full amount of his own figures. Then asking the appropriations already made up to March 4th, 1864, as above stated:

At..... \$1,128,309,200
Add the estimate of the Secretary up to June 30, 1864..... 1,099,731,950
..... \$2,228,041,150

We thus have from the official records, an indebtedness on the 30th of June, next, no more than four months distant, reaching the sum of three thousand, two hundred and twenty eight millions, forty-one thousand—no hundred and sixty dollars. Praise for a moment, ye swarting tax payers, and comprehend, if you can, the weight of this load I impose with you, for my heart is now a home-clothing to the scenes of intellectual slavery which I represent here, and which I seek to save from dissolution.

But the Secretary of the Treasury has given us a forecast of another year of the future. Commencing again on the 1st of July, 1864, and closing June 30th, 1865, he gives his estimates of the expenditures of another fiscal year. He gives them:

At..... \$1,515,815,058
Add the amount already estimated up to June 30th, 1864..... 3,228,041,150
Total debt, June 30th, 1865..... \$4,743,856,208

From this statement must be deducted the actual receipt from every source of revenue during the years of 1862 and 1863, and the estimated receipts for the years of 1864 and 1865. Allowing that the estimates of the Secretary will prove correct in the future—when it is exceedingly charitable to view of the past, and we find that these receipts will amount in all to \$3,196,643,155. Subtract this amount from the above sum, and we have left \$1,547,213,053. To this amount, however, must be added at the lowest calculation, one hundred and fifty millions to cover the claims of States for advances to the Federal Government, and the claims of citizens for the destruction of their property by the inevitable operations of war. This is the probable debt will stand, June 30th, 1865 at \$1,701,213,053. Sir, in this calculation I have striven nothing to do to swell the amount. Far otherwise, I would gladly diminish it in my power. I have simply taken the amounts appropriated by a former Congress, and added the amounts which the Secretary of the Treasury shall be appropriated for the years of 1864 and 1865. I assume, and most safely I think in view of the past, that all the money thus appropriated by Congress for specified objects will be spent. This is all, and you behold the appalling result. I do not stop to take an account of State debts, which count by hundreds of millions. I pass by the debts of counties, cities, towns and various corporations, all of which are a direct tax upon the people. I simply compute the Federal indebtedness, and you have these frightful figures.

Sir, this debt now inevitably fastened upon the wretched people, has no parallel in the history of nations. Its like, unknown in the annals of mankind, the power of language cannot exaggerate it as an agent of destruction. More than four thousand millions of dollars! The debt of England, which is now a permanent curse, is less. Yet, since 1829, to British statesmen has thought for an instant that it would ever be fully paid. I am encouraged according to similar proportions during the reign of Charles II.—a man of great age. Succeeding wars rapidly increased it, and he left all the wisdom and sagacity of the English people, in their long and faithful efforts to accomplish its payment. They pay the interest and bear the burden of the principle with all its crushing weight, to each succeeding generation. A debt thus burdened on the labor of England is so great and so perpetual, that one eighth of her citizens are inmates of the poor house, and another eighth are being driven by the sword from their native land. We are to tread in the same blighted pathway, growing wretchedly under a still heavier load—the cursed

fruits of a sectional party, and financial corruption. We look out upon the field of the future. It lies dismal and endless before us. There is no halting rest in the distance for the tired tax payer. There is no promise of a brighter day beyond the sky before him. His step from this on is a ceaseless treadmill, from which he will never escape. A new Africa, more of labor throughout America, to look at this picture? Will you turn away your faces and hug yourselves in the delusion that all is well, a little longer?—Will you punish and denounce the faithful sentinel who cries out to you the approach of destruction? It may be so yet awhile. It is in the heart of man to put off the evil hour. We often take refuge from danger by affecting not to see it when we know it is inevitable. Death itself at last surprises us in the midst of the busy plans and pleasing aspirations of life. The voice of warning dies away on the ear unheeded by the heart. But this fact does not drive a man in public station from the performance of his thankless duty. I shall here perform mine, and take all the reward I seek or desire, in the approbation of my own conscience—in the very presence of my fellow citizens. I know that I am acting for the welfare of my country.

Sir, in order to enable us to grasp the mighty figures which will sum up our national debt in sixteen months hence, let us indulge for a moment in comparisons. The growth of the American Republic, in all the elements of material wealth, from its birth to the hour of its present misfortunes, had been the marvel and wonder of all time. It had strode upon the loftiest peaks of greatness with an easy familiar step. In peace or in warfare glory was the same—the first of all nations. Our actions at home and abroad were up on a scale of magnitude which dwarfed the giant achievements of history by contrast. But in all that time every item of our public expenditures would scarcely suffice to meet the demands of one year under our present system of ruin. Take the period of seventy two years—before the late acts of liberty and franchise—from 1789 to 1861—During that space of happy time, for every year and for all purposes, the expenses of the Government were:

For four years from 1861 to 1865..... \$1,453,790,796
..... 4,010,213,993

Increase of expense in four years over seventy two years..... \$2,556,423,207

Four times that terrible years under the present Administration will have consumed more than three times as much of the wealth of the labor, the taxes of the people as every other Administration of the Government put together from Washington to James Buchanan! Do you still say, in view of this startling fact, that there is no necessity for a change in our policy and in our rulers in order to save us from utter overthrow? Are you still content that this rate of expenditure shall continue? How long can it continue? By the statistics furnished in the census of 1860, the value of the real and personal property of the personal property of the United States, before war and destruction had assailed it, was \$12,084,660,005. Even supposing that it possesses the same value to day, yet the debt is one third of the whole amount. But every one will acknowledge that an assessment of the value of the property brought to the United States now would not show more than two thirds of its former value. This would be about \$8,000,000,000. Of this sum the public debt, in a few months, will be more than one half. Half the grain in the field; half the horses in their stall; half the cattle in the pastures; half the hogs in the pens; half the wool itself, every other article, will stand mortgaged for the payment of a few years' indebtedness to the use of the sword and the sword arm, in attempting a restoration of the Union and even over all the land, the execution of the tax gatherer's swearing and relentless mortgages. It is held by the creditors who have iron hearts. There will be no grace given, no equity of redemption. Abolitionists are the principal holders, and their outlets and hand hold the balance.

By allow me to make an application of this debt to that same \$8,000,000,000, a portion of the debt people represent on this floor. The assessed value of all the real and personal property of the people of Indiana in 1860 was \$111,042,424. The proportion of the Federal debt which will attach to that state June 30, 1865, will be \$285,980,510. It will, therefore, be seen that it bears forth a every thing which the citizens and property holders of Indiana possess was put up at the auction and sold according to the appraisement of the census report, it would barely suffice to meet the demands which the Federal Government is making upon the wealth and industry of that State. I am aware that all this will fall fully upon the ears of those who are profiting this war in an insatiable and unbridled gain; but I speak to day for the farmer and the mechanic—for the laborer whose heart is filled with unselfish patriotism, and whose hands are unshaken by pliancy. I call upon that class to carefully estimate these burthens, for as their weary shoulders they are to be borne.

But again, I will be met here by the fact that the payment of the principal of the public debt will be postponed from one generation to another, and that like the people of England we will only be called upon for its interest. Taking even that unworthy view of the question let us see what will be the inevitable annual demands upon American labor in order to avoid open and acknowledged bankruptcy. This estimate I make up on the basis of peace, after this war shall have closed, and the utmost reduction made consistent with our altered condition. Let a large security into its substantial contents:

Foreign interest..... \$5,500,000
Foreign pensions, Indians, etc..... 20,000,000
War Department..... 120,000,000
Evy Department..... 25,000,000
Miscellaneous, Lighthouse, sailing..... 25,000,000
..... \$201,000,000

Interest on the public debt..... 246,612,733

..... \$447,612,733

Every one of the above items is put much lower than its actuality it will be, but even at these rates we find that each year of the darkened future, the Treasury Department will reach forth the hungry hand of revenue and seize upon the fruits of industry to the extent of four hundred and forty-seven millions six hundred and twelve thousand, seven hundred and eighty five dollars. And the