

Circular. Washington, February 26th, 1825. To the free and independent citizens of the 8th Congressional district in the State of Tennessee.

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FELLOW-CITIZENS:

Deeming it the duty of a Representative of a Free People, to inform his constituents regularly of the proceedings and acts of their own government. In pursuance of this obligation, and in addition to the information already forwarded, I shall now proceed to lay before you in as concise a manner as I can, the most prominent measures adopted and discussed during the present Congress, now about to close, with a very brief declaration of my own judgment on those topics; that you may more easily determine, whether I have discharged with fidelity the high trust reposed in me by your kindness and partiality.

The great subjects which have earnestly engaged the attention of Congress, are:—what may be called the tariff, or the imposing of additional duties on foreign articles imported into this country, for the express purpose of encouraging our own domestic manufactories; and, secondly, to promote and establish a system of internal improvements throughout the Republic. These important measures were discussed at great length, and have finally become the laws of the land. On the first bill, respecting the tariff, there were a very great diversity of opinion, and indeed a variety of interest and feeling displayed. When we look at the vast extent of country, possessed of the finest soil in the world, with climates congenial to the growth of every production desirable to man, with great and flourishing towns and cities, it is not surprising that a difference of sentiment should prevail. I considered, however, the measure inexpedient to the extent proposed, at this time, because it endangers the reduction of the revenue, out of which the public debt is to be paid, and the government supported in the payment of the current expenses annually. Now, by increasing the duties on foreign goods by a tariff, so high as to put the prices beyond a reasonable consumption, or a total prohibition of them, it must follow, irresistibly, that an immediate diminution of the resources of the nation will be the consequence. But every government, independent of every other consideration, ought to encourage and foster manufactories, to the full extent of the real and substantial necessities and comforts of life in time of war. I have always been an advocate of the system so far, and did support it in 1816. It must be conceded, also, that there is no country on the globe, with a dense population, better calculated for manufactories, than our own; and

nothing can establish the opinion more clearly, than the pleasant and elegant exhibition of the different specimens of manufactories, from all parts of the Union, now displayed at this moment in the great Rotunda of the Capitol. I have hastily examined some of the articles, and particularly the broadcloths, and judges inform me that some of them are as good and of as fine a quality as any imported, and for nearly one half the price. And, moreover, when we look at our great rivers and water powers, the great quantity of minerals of every description and value, with a soil capable of raising all the raw materials in the greatest abundance for every kind of manufactories, are weighty considerations, which cannot be overlooked in the situation and grand destiny of this great Union, and no doubt, in its march, the system will be adopted to the full extent. Yet the policy of the government, in my judgment, ought to be, to keep this branch of our national industry and wealth, in subordination to agriculture. Such an immense quantity of lands for cultivation, and so easily procured, will certainly determine a large majority of our citizens, to give the preference to the latter occupation for many years to come. It is the most delightful employment, of all others, and conduces more to the happiness and independence of man, than all others. For who is it in this country, that will be engaged a whole life time in throwing the shuttle and directing the loom, when he can proudly look around him, and cultivate his own land held in fee simple? Yet in time there will be flourishing manufactories with us, rivalling and competing with Great Britain and the rest of Europe—but surely this great competition should be limited until agriculture, the great source and foundation of our wealth and greatness, can well spare the labour, and sustain the means of such a course of things. For in one word, how is the government to support itself without the revenue, arising from foreign commerce? Cut it off, and my word for it, that in less than two years we must have recourse to a direct tax upon the people.

But the great topic which has always had my warmest and most cordial support, is internal improvements. I view it as the great link in the chain which is to bind and unite those powerful states together, and establish the pure and solid foundation of their prosperity and happiness. It is by inland navigation and roads, that you firmly cement and draw them close together. With these great facilities in operation, our citizens will become acquainted with each other in the most remote parts of this Union. Whether in the pursuit of knowledge or business, they will have the opportunity of knowing the laws, the institutions, customs, and manners, of the respective states; afford to our farmers and planters a safe and speedy route for conveying their produce to market, and facilitate to the man of business or pleasure, the great comforts and ease in travelling. It will also establish, in the different states, a laudable emulation in the pursuit of education, and engage the generous youth in the attainment of useful knowledge, to qualify him to defend the constitution, and the rights of his country. But 2 in time of war, those national improvements are incalculable in their value, and will be a saving of millions on millions to the United States. In all our endeavours, however, to promote those great objects, we ought to approach them gradually, and keep strictly within the pale

of our resources. The bill on this subject, authorizing the President of the United States to make surveys for Roads and Canals, passed. At the last session an appropriation was made to improve the navigation of the Mississippi. An appropriation has been made the present session to extend the Cumberland Road. An act has passed, authorizing the government to subscribe a certain number of shares in the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal Company, for the express purpose of aiding in making said Canal. Somewhat connected with the national improvements of the country, a bill passed the house, authorizing the President to take possession of the Oregon River on the Pacific Ocean. An appropriation has also been made to make a road from a point on the Missouri river to Mexico.

Under the able administration of the great financier, who has been at the head of the Treasury Department for eight years, our fiscal concerns will be found in a flourishing condition. The public debt during that period has been reduced from the sum of \$123,491,965 to \$86,045,003. And after meeting all the ordinary expenses of the government, there remains in the Treasury on the 1st day of January last, the sum of three millions of dollars. And should the country remain at peace for ten years, without any material diminution of our revenue, arising from the new tariff, or any other cause, the whole of the public debt will be extinguished. If this data be correct, how cheering and delightful is the prospect, that the surplus of the revenue can be applied to the internal improvements of the country.

The Army and Navy are in good condition. No additional appropriations have been required. The Fortifications on our sea-board are nearly all completed. Many abuses have been corrected by the able and intelligent Secretaries who preside over those Departments, and their administration have evinced a determination to pursue economy and accountability. Congress have been attending to the good management of all the Departments for some years past with a very vigilant eye.

We are at peace with the whole world, and with the exception of a horde of pirates, that infests the West Indies, or more properly speaking, the American Islands, our commerce is perfectly secure, and uninterrupted in every sea. Our government has recognized all the South American Provinces, together with Mexico in North America. And the British Government have lately adopted the same wise policy. The President of the United States, in his important message to the first session of this Congress, called the attention of the nation to the suffering and bleeding Greece, struggling for her long lost liberty. All sympathised and wished her great success. And our citizens throughout the Union, manifested a holy devotion to her cause by liberal donations. And our passions and patriotic feelings were much enlisted and aroused in behalf of these people by the greatest display of ability and eloquence, I ever heard in the Representative Hall. This debate was admired every where it was seen, and part of it was published in Europe, and read with great interest and delight. It has really added new laurels to the American Statesmen for eloquence in debate, and probably

may have aided abroad the patriotic cause of Greece. But, however much we may sympathise with suffering humanity, felt in other nations, we are not authorized by an enlightened policy to involve the peace and repose of our citizens in the conflicts of Europe. In all the vortex of folly, madness, and corruption of the Governments of the Old World, the true and wise policy of the New, is, to keep aloof from all such human strife, and to preserve and maintain a high, dignified, and neutral ground towards all. The resolution to appoint an agent to ancient Greece, was, upon the most mature deliberation, permitted to lie ou the table.

It has been our great endeavour, during the present Congress, to direct the attention of the Government to the commencement of internal improvements in the West, and particularly in our own State. The respectable Committee on R ads and Canals, on a resolution, directed to them, have included Cumberland River in their very able Report, which recommends to Congress a general system of internal improvements. And they not only consider the great propriety of removing the impediments in the navigation of said River as high as the growing flourishing and towns of Clarksville and Nashville. But in a national point of view, the Committee goes infinitely beyond that consideration. They deem it quite practicable, to unite the Cumberland with the Tennessee and Alabama Rivers, and at once open a direct communication by water to Pensacola in Florida. When we contemplate the immense advantage of such a route, and viewing the inexhaustible banks of iron ore in our own State, her water powers for manufactories, the salubrity of her climate, the exuberance of her soil, and the opening of a market to the Western and Southern citizens in the extreme boundary of the South of this growing and extended empire; and that point, the most vulnerable in times of war, furnish to the patriot and statesman the most delightful and cheering anticipations of the greatness and grandeur of his beloved country!

The Western Armory Report, which I felt so much solicitude about, was presented to the House at so late a period of the session, that it was impossible to act upon it with any probability of success. The Commissioners have displayed much learning in their profession, and no doupt great accuracy of observation. But Congress never contemplated to have a National Armory in any part of the Eastern section of the Union at this time. It was therefore an oversight in those gentlemen. They have thought proper to locate it on Beaver in Pennsylvania. Yet hopes may be entertained that it will be located by Congress in Tennessee, and that too on the Harpeth River. A bill has passed the House of Representatives, authorisiug a survey of the ground, between 3 the Potomac and Ohio Rivers, for the purpose of uniting them by a Canal. This is another important link to the Union, and will be of great advantage to the Western States.

The Presidential election was a subject, in which all of you felt a deep and sincere solicitude in the result. Honour and gratitude were the great leading motives in your determination: Honour to

the State who had cherished and exalted their favourite and adopted son: Gratitude for the signal and glorious services he had achieved to the Union, in the most gloomy and desponding period of it. The Electoral Colleges having failed in making a choice, it became the duty of the House of Representatives to select the President of the United States from the three highest voted for by the people. On counting the votes in the presence of both Houses of Congress, it appeared that General Jackson had 99, Mr. Adams 84, and Mr. Crawford 41. The House then immediately proceeded, in obedience to the provisions of the Constitution, to ballot by States; and on the first balloting, the votes were for Mr. Adams 13, General Jackson 7, and Mr. Crawford 4. Mr. Adams having a majority of the States, was declared elected President of the United States for the period of four years, commencing the 4th of March, 1825.

This event, I know, is contrary to your best wishes, and I believe contrary to the will of a majority of the people of this Union. And if I am not greatly deceived in the disposition and determination of them, the Hero of New-Orleans will be the next President who shall preside over the destinies of this great and growing Republic. Tennessee, on this occasion, done her duty. The delegation were unanimous for her Jackson, it being almost the universal voice of their constituents. My course was consistent with your dignity and honour, and my own feelings. I found no concert or management among the friends of General Jackson. I sought for no combinations, if any there were, to promote his election, by placing him under obligations beyond his duty afterwards to perform. I reiterated to every gentleman with whom I conversed on the subject, his character, talents, and services, and submitted his claims to their consciences and judgment. If any improper combinations or corruption have been employed in the elevation of Mr. Adams, it is unknown to me. I should most inevitably have exposed it to public view. But in the absence of all proof, who, I ask, has made me the arbiter of men's motives and actions, and pronounce them infamous, because they differ with me on subjects of deep interest to the country, acting under the same solemn obligations of honour and duty, which binds us all to Heaven? I hope the charges are unfounded. Men of great talents, who have heretofore stood high in the regard and affections of their fellow citizens, for their patriotic and distinguished services, and who have been honoured with the most important offices within the gift of the people, *and now enjoy them*, ought not to be put down on slight grounds or jealous suspicions. But if it is possible to fix guilt by evidence, the business ought not to rest in newspaper essays, and the murmurs of the disappointed; for much as I esteem, and honour some of them, I would not hesitate a moment to hurl them from their high offices, in the manner pointed out by the Constitution. I had no favours personally to ask any of those eminent men, who might succeed to the Presidential Chair. I want, nor expect, no office. My duty and obligations are exclusively yours while in your service.

Mr. Adams is a man of eminent and distinguished talents, and I trust will have an honourable, prosperous, and happy administration, during the term of his election, for the benefit and glory of



our common country. But it cannot be concealed that he is now placed in a singular and unpleasant dilemma, unknown to our political history. He has been elected President of the United States, with a minority smaller than the votes of the Electoral Colleges to General Jackson. This is a circumstance of great moment, and demands the serious attention of the people of this Union. The Constitution ought to be amended, and the election given to the people; for I deem it of vital importance to the well being and prosperity of our country, that the Chief Magistrate should have, at the commencement of his administration, the confidence and esteem of at least a majority of his fellow-citizens.

In concluding this letter, my fellow-citizens, allow me to offer you my sincere and most lively acknowledgements, for the many manifestations of your regard and confidence for me, at different periods of our acquaintance, and to believe me, that I remain with the most perfect respect and esteem, Your very obedient Servant, JAMES B. REYNOLDS