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SPEECH

OF

W. L. Pitt

MR. FESSENDEN, OF MAINE,

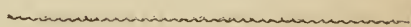
ON

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE,

DELIVERED

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES, DECEMBER 4, 1856.

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THE HISTORY OF THE

REPUBLIC OF THE UNITED STATES

OF AMERICA

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1861

S P E E C H .

The Senate having under consideration a motion to print the President's Message with the accompanying documents—

Mr. FESSENDEN said :

Mr. President, I have but a few words to say. Like other Senators, I may premise by remarking that I did not intend to speak even the few words which I now propose to submit; but the remarks that have fallen from the honorable Senator from South Carolina, [Mr. BUTLER,] followed by those made by the honorable Senator from Texas, [Mr. RUSK,] induce me to say something by way of defense for myself, and those whom I represent.

The President has sent us a message, certainly of a very singular character. I believe that, in the history of the country, he is the first Chief Magistrate of the Union who has used his high station for the purpose of assailing a large portion of his fellow-citizens, the most of whom he admits to have been actuated by good motives. I was disposed, however, with my honorable friend from New York, [Mr. SEWARD,] to let that pass; I had some consideration for the position in which he finds himself placed. My feelings towards him were rather those of compassion than of a different character. But, sir, I must say that, after the attack he has made, and after the sort of argument, if it may be dignified with the name of argument, which he has endeavored to palm upon the country in his annual message, in relation to political affairs, we certainly may be excused, I beg leave to say to the Senator from Texas, if not for using words which are not of a strictly parliamentary character, yet for stating some things in reference to the message, from which conclusions may be drawn quite as little to the credit of the Chief Magistrate.

I hold that upon all occasions we ought to be exceedingly careful in relation to the language we use in addressing each other, or in speaking of each other, or of any co-ordinate branches of the Government; but if a high officer will avail himself of the station in which he is placed to assail, and moreover to insult, a large portion of the people whom he claims to represent—for he asserts that he is the representative, and the only representative, of the whole people—it ill becomes the representatives in Congress, either of the States or of the people, to sit perfectly silent and allow it to pass without remark, unless they can give a reason for doing so. If I had

kept silent upon this occasion the only reason I should have given is that which I have already intimated—that his fallen position may induce men to pardon very much that could not otherwise escape without rebuke.

Mr. President, the Chief Magistrate, in my judgment, has, either by himself or by another,—for some say that he is the author of his own message, and some pretend to see in it the hand of another person,—in this message studiously misrepresented facts; he has sedulously endeavored to fix upon a very large portion of the people of this country accusations which he knows to be applicable to but few. There are in the free States of the Union, as everybody knows who reads the newspapers, or who is at all familiar with the history of the country, two classes of men who have opposed the present Administration, with reference to the slavery question. One is a very small class, a very powerless class, having no direct influence in the councils of the country, having no very considerable influence upon the public opinion of the country, known as ultra-Abolitionists; who profess to have no attachment to the Constitution of the United States; who profess, even, that under the Constitution there is power to abolish slavery in the States, and who avow a willingness to exercise that power. It is well understood that those men are few; that their opinions are not represented here; that they have no power to be represented in those opinions here, in either branch of Congress; that they have in fact almost as little influence upon public opinion in the whole North as they have upon public opinion in the South.

There is another class of men—a class which has carried eleven States of this Union, and would have carried every free State, in my judgment, if the votes had been fairly given, except California, of which I know nothing—a class disclaiming all connection with the opinions of that set of men to whom I have just alluded, all connection with their principles—

Mr. PUGH. Will the Senator allow me to ask him a question?

Mr. FESSENDEN. Yes sir.

Mr. PUGH. I would like the Senator to show me an authoritative paper, either the platform of the Republican party, or anything else, which disclaims connection with those gentlemen. I ask him to show me in the platform of the Republican party any

section denying the right of Congress to legislate on the subject of slavery in the States.

Mr. FESSENDEN. Sir, I have not spoken of party platforms.

Mr. PUGH. The Senator will understand me. I did not interrupt him for the purpose of being impertinent. I understood him to say that the Republican party has denied its connection with the faction which advocates the right of Congress to legislate upon the subject of slavery in the States, and I ask him to point me to the place where they have denied such connection.

Mr. FESSENDEN. I was speaking of classes, not of parties. I say there is a large class—a class which has carried these elections—a party, if you please to call it so, which does not agree with, but disavows all connection with the sentiments of that small portion of the people of whom I have spoken. They do not disavow the connection in their platform. They are not called upon to say in their platform what they do not believe, and do not affirm. It is sufficient that the platform affirms positively what they mean—states their positive opinions and positive intentions. It is not necessary, nor is it proper, that the platform of a party should undertake to deny what it does not hold. But I say that in the speeches of all their public men, and in all their leading newspapers, they have, unquestionably, without any hesitation, laid down principles entirely at war with the principles assumed by what are called ultra-Abolitionists.

Mr. PUGH. It was stated on the day before yesterday by the Senator from Mississippi, [Mr. Brown,] and my own recollection corresponds with his, having seen the article, that the New York Tribune appealed to these men to vote with the Republican party, because the Republican party in due time would take their position.

Mr. FESSENDEN. I cannot deny that, because I do not know that it is not so; but I can say that although a reader of the New York Tribune, I never saw it. Whether it is there or not I cannot say. But even if it were there, it by no means follows that it is a part of the creed of the Republican party. I hold that no party is responsible for all that appears in all the newspapers which support its candidates. Do you hold that the Democratic party in the North is responsible for the doctrines of the Charleston Standard?

Mr. PUGH. No.

Mr. FESSENDEN. Why, then, do you hold the Republican party at the North responsible for the doctrines of the New York Tribune, if it made any such announcement?

Mr. PUGH. I wish to be fair with the Senator. I understood him first to assert that the Republican party disavowed its connection with these other gentlemen. I then asked him to show me the place where they disavowed it. He said it was not in the platform, but in the newspapers; that every newspaper disavowed it. I named one which did not.

Mr. FESSENDEN. I said nothing about its connection. I said it disavowed those principles; and there is no paper of the Republican party which has ever advocated the doctrines of the ultra-Abolitionists. No Senator can cite me to one. If there be such a one, it is not an authoritative exponent of Republican doctrine.

Mr. BROWN. If the Senator from Maine will yield me the floor for a moment, I will ask him one question.

Mr. FESSENDEN. With great pleasure.

Mr. BROWN. The Senator says the newspapers of the Republican party have not advocated the principles of the ultra-Abolitionists. Does he not know that the ultra-Abolition papers have advocated and sustained the principles of the Republican party?

Mr. FESSENDEN. Suppose they have, what of it?

Mr. BROWN. A great deal of it. It shows that sort of affinity between the two parties which, it seems to me, on the basis laid down by the Senator from Maine, ought to be exceedingly objectionable to him and the objection he ought to manifest. If, he entertains principles so close to those of the Abolition party that they, seeing they have no chance to elect a man of their own, readily fall into the support of his party, is it not apparent that, whenever they have gained sufficient ascendancy in the party, they will control everything to their own advantage? Things having a tendency in that direction, we are left to conjecture how soon the time will come when the Abolition element of his party will be the predominant element.

Mr. FESSENDEN. It is precisely that kind of logic to which I object as altogether unfair and inconclusive. I ask the honorable Senator from Mississippi, in reply, does he not well know that the Charleston Standard supported the candidates of the Democratic party? I cite this as a mere example. Is the Democratic party responsible for it? Are we to understand that the Senator from Mississippi and all his friends maintain the doctrines of that paper—that they are in favor of disunion—hold that disunion would be the very best thing that could happen for the people of the South, and that a party should

be formed to accomplish it? Does he endorse all those doctrines as the doctrines of the party?

Mr. BROWN. The Senator speaks of the Charleston Standard. I suppose he means the Charleston Mercury.

Mr. FESSENDEN. No, sir; I mean the Charleston Standard.

Mr. BROWN. It is a paper I never read, and I do not know anything about it.

Mr. FESSENDEN. It has had a long series of articles to the effect which I have stated.

Mr. BROWN. Sentiments reflected by particular newspapers are one thing. The sentiments reflected by an organized political party are altogether a different thing. Now I state that the whole Abolition party of the North, the Garrison and Gerrit Smith and Fred Douglas party—the party known to the country as the Abolition party *per se*, went for John C. Fremont for President, and were invited to do so by the leaders of the Republican party.

Mr. FESSENDEN. I know nothing about the invitation, and I do not know whether they were invited by the leaders or not. That a part of them voted with the Republican party, and that a part did not, I am well aware. The Abolition party itself was not sunk in the Republican party. That individuals of that party voted for the Republican candidates may be true; but how does that prove that the more than one million of men who voted for John C. Fremont are actuated by the same principles? Is a party responsible for the principles of every man who chooses to act with it as a matter of choice? The reasoning is illogical. In my judgment it is unfair—I use the word in no offensive sense. We do not hold ourselves responsible for the private opinions of all who choose to vote with us; nor do we hold our fellow-citizens of the South responsible for the private opinions of all men who choose to vote with them; nor for all the opinions expressed in the public newspapers of the South, some of which are unquestionably offensive to southern people—quite as offensive to them as to us, for I believe there are as good friends to the Union in the South as in the North.

What I object to in the message, therefore, is this: the President well knew, well understood, that there was a wide distinction between the small, powerless class of ultra-Abolitionists in the free States, and the great party which nominated John C. Fremont as a candidate for the Presidency; and yet, throughout this message, he makes no distinction between these two parties, but endeavors

to fasten on the country the idea that they are one and the same; that the same men who sustain the one set of principles sustain the other. Not only does he do that, but he endeavors to prove the principles themselves identical, although knowing very well that there is a wide distinction between the doctrines of those who maintain that slavery should not be extended, and of those who maintain that this Union should be dissolved, or that the rights of the States should be interfered with in reference to slavery. He makes the attempt, and carries it through his message, to show that the principles and objects themselves are one and the same, and endeavors to blind the country to the true distinction between them. It may be unparliamentary to impute motives to anybody; but he imputes motives to us; he attacks the Republican party, and charges it distinctly with a design to overthrow the Constitution of the United States, and to usurp power. What truth is there in this? Are we going beyond the limits of propriety when we reply to the President of the United States, and say: "Sir, in that message you attempt and design to encourage and extend the feeling that now exists between the citizens of the free and slave States of this Union." I believe that was his motive; and I have as much right here in my place to charge him with a motive improper for him to conceive, and entertain, and be guided by, as he has to charge me from his place with being actuated by motives of the same character.

But I do not mean to bestow much time upon this message. I did not rise for that purpose. I rose to defend my section of the country, the people whom I represent here, the old Democratic State of Maine, in its present position, with its twenty-five thousand majority for Fremont, from the charge which has been made by the President against it. My object was to deny the truth of his statements—to repel them, so far as I can repel them, from my place in the Senate, and all charges of the same description, come from what quarter they may. I am not to be deterred from doing so by any warning given by the Senator from Texas, against making imputations, when those imputations are called for by the message itself.

The honorable Senator from Texas says he deprecates the introduction of the slavery question into the Senate. I have no doubt that he does. So do I, unless it is necessary. But let me ask him, as my honorable friend from Ohio inquired, who brought it here? Who brought here, in the first place, the agitation that has torn this country asunder

during the present Administration? Was it not the President of the United States, acting in conjunction with those who repealed the Missouri compromise line? Did it exist before the Kansas-Nebraska bill was brought into the Senate? Was not the country quiet? Was not the Senate quiet? Was not the House of Representatives quiet? Was there any agitation—any disturbance anywhere? There was none.

Mr. RUSK. Does the Senator desire an answer?

Mr. FESSENDEN. I shall be happy to receive one.

Mr. RUSK. The Senator certainly cannot have forgotten that long before the Nebraska bill was thought of there was opposition to the fugitive slave law. Petitions for its repeal were presented, and there was a constant agitation on that text before the Senate and the country, and in public newspapers. It was used for political capital. Now it has become popular to say that the Kansas-Nebraska bill introduced the agitation of slavery. Why, sir, it has been going on for upwards of twenty years. This was a better text than the fugitive slave law, and therefore the fugitive slave law was abandoned and this taken up.

Mr. FESSENDEN. Very well; I understand all that; but let me ask the Senator again, in my turn, had not all those matters been settled by what are called the compromise acts? Had not the country been quieted, or was it not supposed to have been quieted, by the resolutions of the two conventions held in Baltimore in 1852, by both of which it was resolved that there should be no more agitation on the subject—that neither party would agitate the question as it then stood, and so long as it remained in its then existing condition? Was not that the conclusion arrived at by both the great parties of the country at that time? When the first Congress under President Pierce's administration met, was there any disturbance from the commencement of it up to the time when the Kansas-Nebraska bill was introduced into the Senate of the United States? No, sir: none at all. The country had been quieted; it had acquiesced, and it was well known to have acquiesced. A very general disposition existed everywhere—it was announced here, upon the floor of the Senate—that those questions should not be mooted again, but the country be left to rest in quiet, and form its own conclusions. Was it not so? I think I shall be borne out by ample testimony on that point.

Mr. ADAMS. I call the attention of the Senator to the fact that some States, Vermont for instance, had, by their Legislatures, before

the introduction of the Kansas-Nebraska bill, passed laws against the execution of the fugitive slave law?

Mr. FESSENDEN. That may be. Suppose they did so. I am speaking of agitation here, on the floor of the Senate, and in the other branch of Congress.

Mr. JONES, of Tennessee. Will the Senator allow me to interrupt him for a moment, to give him some information which he seems not to have?

Mr. FESSENDEN. I am much obliged to the Senator. I am always glad to be instructed.

Mr. JONES, of Tennessee. I hope so. The Senator inquired whether there was agitation here. Two propositions were made in the Senate to repeal the fugitive slave law, after the passage of the compromise measures of 1850, and a vote was taken upon them in the Senate.

Mr. FESSENDEN. If the Senator had attended to me he would have known that I was speaking of the first Congress that met after the inauguration of President Pierce. I say that the platform of the two party conventions, held in the summer preceding his election, deprecated all further agitation. When he delivered his inaugural address he alluded to that fact, and claimed that no further agitation should take place upon that subject in the country. Congress met, and nothing was said. There was a general disposition to acquiesce in those measures—to do nothing and say nothing so long as matters remained in that condition. It was the introduction of the Kansas-Nebraska bill which rekindled the fires of agitation in Congress and in the country. It was his act, because he indorsed and sustained it, and used the power of his office in order to carry it through. Well, sir, it has passed, and we have gone through another election. It was hoped, perhaps generally, that we should escape from any unnecessary agitation on this subject now. But what do we find? On the second day of the session comes in a message from the President, calculated as well as any document in the world could be calculated, to effect the same object, and stir this Congress again into a blaze; characterized by violent, although covert, attacks upon the principles and motives of the great majority of the people of the free States, of one of which he is an unworthy son—insulting to men, many of whom, to say the least, are quite as good, quite as wise, and as able as himself; a document intended (for I give him credit for a reasonable degree of sense) to excite agitation, and I believe, upon my conscience, intended to do so for the pur-

pose of accomplishing his own individual objects in the future; for I can see no other reason for the course he has taken. When that document comes into the Senate, and some gentlemen do not choose to sit silent under its imputations thus thrust upon us, gentlemen from the South ask why this eternal agitation? Why not keep silent on this subject? Why is it again brought before the country, and to the consideration of the Senate? Sir, of what stuff do you suppose we are made? If we are disposed to be quiet, you call us craven, we are afraid to speak, we have not spirit enough to protect or defend ourselves! If we speak out, we are agitators, and desire to rake open the coals of discord throughout this great country. Allow us to be either one or the other—either spirited enough to answer for ourselves, or else impute to something else than cowardice our disposition to remain quiet when there seems to be no particular necessity for speaking.

Mr. RUSK. Will the Senator allow me to interrupt him for a moment?

Mr. FESSENDEN. Certainly, sir.

Mr. RUSK. Has he ever heard from me a sentiment to justify what he has just said?

Mr. FESSENDEN. No, sir.

Mr. RUSK. Or from any other southern Senator?

Mr. FESSENDEN. I do not know that I have on the floor of the Senate, but I know what is said outside of the Senate; and we are judged outside of the Senate as well as in it. To be sure, I am not disposed frequently to pay great attention to that, unless I am compelled to do so in self-defense. But there are occasions when we cannot help noticing these matters. We are forced into debate, as well as you. I have no disposition certainly (and I think, if gentlemen of the Senate will judge me with calmness, they will concede that I have shown no undue disposition) to agitate these matters here, I have never spoken upon these subjects unless on occasions when I certainly might be excused in doing so, by the necessities of my position, and the principles I hold and mean to maintain. Yet I deem it hardly right that, when we are forced into these positions, and obliged to defend ourselves by the men whom you sustain, and who speak for you and for you alone, and never for the section of country from which I come, we should at least have liberty to speak for it ourselves, without being accused of any reasonable want of courtesy or respect to the powers that be.

Of the same character is this message with regard to affairs in Kansas, and the origin and progress of the difficulties there. Look at the

message calmly. The President assumes that the people of this country have, by the recent elections, settled certain general principles—all very correct principles—such as non-interference with slavery in the States, the equal rights of the States, and of the citizens of the States. It has been well said, that nobody here ever disputed them; nobody pretends to dispute anything of the kind. Yet he goes on immediately to speak of the doctrines of the Republican party as affirming the right of Congress to legislate for the Territories, and as contravening those well-settled principles which nobody disputes. Every one can very well see that the conclusion does not follow from the premises; that the questions are as perfectly distinct from each other as white is from black, or light from darkness. They have no similarity, no connection. Southern men may argue, and do argue, that the consequences will be the same. It is not for me to say—I do not wish to say in this connection—whether they will be so or not. But the questions themselves are widely different; and still, throughout his message, the President studiously attempts to convey the idea, that when the Republican party in the North have undertaken to say that slavery ought not to be extended over territory now free, they have been contending for the right to interfere with slavery in the States of the Union, and to produce an inequality in the rights of the States, and of the citizens of the States. That is the only fair and reasonable inference to be drawn from his argument. Any one can see that the whole argument is false—I do not undertake to say that he is false—the Senator from Texas will mark me well—but I say the argument is false. The conclusion does not, and cannot follow from the premises. The questions are totally distinct from each other. He avails himself of his position to send forth to the country the impression that the people of the United States, in deciding this presidential election against the Republican party, have settled against that party a right claimed by them to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States, and have rebuked a desire upon their part to produce an inequality between the free States and the slave States of the Union. Is there any such thing in the creed of the Republican party? Not at all. It can be found nowhere—was advocated nowhere—by any individual or any press of the Republican party. The President has taken pains to say, that the people also rebuked the idea of a geographical party. My honorable friend from South Carolina—I hope he will excuse me for calling him so; I have no right

to address him otherwise than as the honorable Senator—has elaborated the idea.

Mr. BUTLER. I assure you, sir, I have always been upon friendly relations with you.

Mr. FESSENDEN. I know of none other between us; but still it is not my habit to claim any relations between myself and other gentlemen than such as I feel, from association, that I am entitled to. Did the President mean, in speaking of geographical parties, a party that nominated its candidates for President and Vice President from one section of the Union alone? Is there any man who really believes that the nomination of the Republican candidates for President and Vice President from the free States, was designed or intended as an affirmation that no gentleman from the slave States of the Union ought to be nominated for those offices? Not at all.

Mr. BUTLER. The gentleman is presenting the case fairly, but I ask him to say with equal candor whether, if, at the time this election was going on, a slaveholder had been a candidate, any portion of what he calls the free-State people would have voted for him?

Mr. FESSENDEN. For my single self I can say that, if a slaveholder could have been found, of eminence in the country, who had come forward and stood with us, and avowed, as I almost understood the Senator from South Carolina to avow, that he was opposed to the further extension of slavery over free territory—

Mr. BUTLER. I hope that will be put right. I said that I was in what we lawyers call a state of indifference on the subject. If slavery went to the Territories, be it so; but if it did not go there I would not quarrel about the matter.

Mr. FESSENDEN. Indifference would not have answered our purpose. The Senator would not have satisfied us. [Laughter.]

Mr. BUTLER. I said that you wanted to push it off, and that I did not want to push it on, but let it go or not, as the people interested might determine.

Mr. FESSENDEN. We understand each other. What I mean to say for myself is, that if a slaveholder had been presented as a candidate for the Presidency who avowed, and was ready to maintain, the sentiments of the Republican party, of opposition to the extension of slavery over free territory, I would have voted for him just as soon, and with as much pleasure, as for any man of the free States, he being otherwise unobjectionable. It would have been no objection to me; it would have been no objection, I venture to say, to the great Republican party in the free States. The objection is not to slaveholders,

as such. If I could possibly believe such a thing of gentlemen of character and manliness, I might sometimes be tempted to suppose that there was a settled determination to make the people of the South believe a falsehood. We have never maintained such doctrines as have been imputed to us. We have never maintained the doctrine that we had a right to interfere, or desired to interfere, with the institution of slavery in the States. We have never had any desire to prevent the elevation of southern men to office. We have had no desire to engross to ourselves the offices and the emoluments of office in this country. No such desire has existed, and gentlemen know the fact, and understand it well. That was not the difficulty. In the convention at which the Republican candidates were nominated, was any name presented from the slave States? Not one. For my part, I should have been very willing to find one who entertained, and was ready to uphold, what I believe to be correct political opinions, and to support him for the Presidency, either then or at any future time.

But sir, this is a false issue which the Senator from South Carolina makes upon us. It is not the issue which the President desired to present; and, allow me to say, that I think it is of too slight a character to engage the attention of the people of this country. The people of the North have not been very narrow in the matter of supporting candidates for office. I hope the Senator will excuse me for mentioning South Carolina again. [Mr. BUTLER. Certainly.] But if I were to select a State in this Union which has exhibited itself in a narrow light on that subject, since the formation of this Government, it is that same State of South Carolina. If the Senator will take this book [Hickey's Constitution] which lies on the desk, and look over it, he will see that about half the time, since the formation of the Government, South Carolina has refused to vote for the regularly-nominated candidates of either party, but has taken both its candidates for President and Vice President from the slave States, most generally selecting one of its own citizens for one office, whether he had been nominated or not. The record shows this fact. If the Senator will examine it—it lies before him—he can satisfy himself in a very few moments as to the truth of my statement. Then I say—and I say it with all respect—the charge of narrow and sectional views against us comes with rather an ill grace from the honorable Senator from South Carolina—because the Republican party of the North once, and for the first time, when it could do no otherwise—when no can-

didate from the southern States maintaining the principles of that party presented himself, or was presented by his friends, and when that party must, of necessity, nominate men who would maintain its principles—while South Carolina herself has set so ill an example on that point, from the foundation of the Government. No, sir, that is not the question. The question which the President wished to present is a very different one. He did not dare, out of respect to himself, to rely on the mere circumstance that both candidates had been taken from the North, because the history of the country would have shown that there was no foundation for the charge of sectionalism in that alone. The Senator from Texas saw this when, in connection with the speech made by the Senator from South Carolina, he introduced the phrase, “nominating sectional candidates upon a sectional issue.” To be sure, it is the issue alone that can make a party geographical. It is the issue, not the location of the candidates; to which the President refers as affecting our party with a geographical character.

Sir, you had an issue as sectional in the last campaign as we had. You contended on your side for the right to carry slavery, as you contend now, under the Constitution, into the Territories of the United States, whether free before or not. We repelled it; we fought it; we denied it; we endeavored to prevent it. We nominated candidates whose opinions were similar to our own. What else should we have done? Should we go into the camp of the enemy and nominate a man to carry out our principles who did not agree with us? By no means. You could come into the free States and find a candidate whom you relied on to carry out your views, and I suppose he will do so, although, as has been well said, you did not dare, or you did not think it wise—“dare” is not a proper word, I suppose, to be used on these occasions—to take one of the great champions of your cause, and place him before the people as your candidate. It was the issue, then, that made the party sectional. Was there not as well a geographical candidate at the South also? Did the fact that you could find at the North a candidate for President deprive the issue of its sectional character; or did it make your party any the less a geographical party? We invited votes from all sections of this country. We should have been happy to have found them in the slave States if they had chosen to give them to us. It is the last thing we desired to elect a President by the votes of the free States alone; but if compelled to it, on an issue so vital to our own interests, so im-

portant to us, is it to be thrown in our face, by the President of the United States, that we formed a geographical party; and not only that, but formed a geographical party with a design to overthrow the Government of the United States, or dissolve the Union? I repeat, that when the President made that charge covertly in the message which he has sent to Congress, he made a charge which had no foundation in fact, and is derogatory to the true character and honor of the people who compose that great party.

A word more upon that issue. The honorable Senator from Virginia [Mr. Mason] has placed, in his speech, the real issue before the people in its true character and in plain words. I am glad he has done so; and I must be allowed to say, with my friend from Ohio, that if that issue had been presented to the people of the free States, and avowed by those who supported the same candidates whom you supported, and who were successful, I do not believe there is a free State in this Union in which the Democratic party would have left a trace of its existence. In my State it was said, over and over again, by the leading men who advocated the election of Mr. Buchanan, that there was no difference between the two parties with reference to the extension of slavery over free territory. They claimed to be as strong and as firm on that subject, and in the desire to make Kansas a free State, as did the Republicans of the State of Maine. So it was universally, as far as I know anything about it, in the free States. Gentlemen need not flatter themselves, therefore, that that issue has been presented and decided in the free States. If we did so much without it; if we did so much with, and in opposition to, the acts and principles of this Administration alone; if what was done, what was said, and what was admitted, could carry the old Democratic State of Maine by a majority of more than twenty-five thousand votes, and the Democratic State of Michigan, represented here in part by the distinguished Senator near me, [Mr. Cass,] by nearly twenty thousand votes, what would have happened in those two States if the sentiment which has been stated and advocated by the Senator from Virginia had been openly advocated before the people there? Sir, there would have been hardly a vestige left of what is called the Democratic party in either of those States, or in any other free State in this Union.

What is that doctrine? The Senator from Virginia claims that the Constitution recognizes the existence of slavery as an existing institution. Grant it; so it does by clear im-

plication. He claims that it concedes to it certain political power. I grant that also; it provides for and gives it political power. He claims that to be a contract. I grant that also, and a contract to be maintained. Sir, I repudiate the idea of any intention on the part of the Republican party to interfere in any shape with that contract, or with any of the legitimate consequences of that contract—any of those advantages to which the slave States are entitled in consequence of that contract. But, sir, when it is said that a necessary inference from this is the right to expand that institution, to spread it over territory where it does not exist, and to increase its political power thus, we take issue with him; he finds no such thing in the Constitution.

Mr. MASON. The Senator I believe understands me, if I correctly apprehend the language in which he has conveyed the idea. I said this, that as a necessary inference from the recognition, the protection, and the ascription to it of political power, what followed? It should be left to its just and legitimate susceptibilities of expansion. What is the meaning of this? That those who hold slaves should be allowed to carry them into the Territories, the common property of the whole country. What is the language of the party for which the honorable Senator from Maine is now speaking? That in the organic law creating government in the Territories there shall be a prohibition against the introduction of slavery. That is the tenet of the party, I believe.

Mr. FESSENDEN. Yes, sir.

Mr. MASON. Then if Congress pass a law prohibiting the introduction of slaves, there is denied to the institution what I claim to be its just susceptibility of expansion. Now, what was the issue presented in the last canvass in the State so ably represented by the honorable Senator on this floor, or anywhere else, I know not; but I do know what was the issue on this subject which was presented in the political platform adopted at Cincinnati by the Democratic party. That issue was the doctrine of the Kansas-Nebraska bill. What was that? The territorial government was so organized there as to admit citizens of all the States, whether free or slave, to take their property into the Territories; and when they organized themselves, or were organized under the law, into a legislative body, then to determine for themselves whether this institution should exist amongst them or not. The specific difference is, that under the Kansas law citizens from the slave States might go into the Territory with their property; citizens from free States

might go there holding no such property, and, when they got there and met in common council as a legislative body, they should determine whether the institution should prevail; whereas the party which the honorable Senator is now representing here declares that, in the organic law creating the government in the Territory, there shall be a prohibition *in limine*, that no slaves shall go there. That was the issue presented by the platform adopted at Cincinnati. What collateral issues may have been presented in different States by their papers and orators, I know not.

Mr. FESSENDEN. I so understand it; but what I was speaking of was, that the precise proposition now contended for by the Senator from Virginia was presented nowhere in that form, or substantially like it. Certainly, in the free States, it was not said, and was not claimed, that a portion of the constitutional rights of those who hold slaves is the right of expansion over free territory outside of State limits. If the Senator had said they had a right to the natural expansion of political power within the States, arising from those provisions, as for instance, from the increase of the number of slaves, I certainly should agree with him—there is no disputing that; but when he claims, as part of the contract, by necessary implication, that they have a right to such expansion as might arise from transporting those slaves into free territory, and thus establishing political institutions of the same character, I say that is no part of the contract. When the Constitution was formed, that was a concession to the slave power, the slave interest. If it was intended that they should have necessarily a right, without the consent of Congress, or contrary to the laws of Congress, to spread the institution uncontrolled over free territory, and thus form new States and acquire new power, in my judgment the Constitution in that form, would never have been adopted. As my honorable friend from Ohio has said, the contemporaneous exposition of the Constitution by those who made it shows the contrary. So much political power was granted: it was granted to the States where the institution existed, so long as they chose to keep it in operation. It was not assumed that it might necessarily be extended over free territory—free from the control of Congress. It is part of our creed that Congress ought, in all cases, to provide against the extension of the institution of slavery over the free Territories of the United States. We claim that there is no right on the part of the slave States to carry it there. We argue it here, as my friend

from Ohio has said, not on the ground of humanity, not on the question, whether slavery is right or wrong in itself—with that, here, I do not choose to deal—but as a political question.

The honorable Senator from Texas will not undertake again, I think, to assert, that when slaves are transported from any State into a Territory, and that Territory becomes a State with slave institutions, the political power of slavery is not thereby increased. The object avowed by the section to which the honorable Senator belongs—the object avowed by the Senator from South Carolina, I think upon this floor, certainly elsewhere, is to enable the slave States to procure either an equality or a majority in number of Senators here, in order that they may be able to control legislation in regard to that institution, as well as in regard to other particulars.

Mr. BUTLER. I do not put it in that way. I do not think the question, whether one section or the other should have the ascendancy, ever entered the conception of those who made the Constitution. I will inform the Senator that I have never maintained that we should contend for an ascendancy in the slave States with a view to control the non-slaveholding States. I disavow any such idea. I think, however, that the most fortunate thing for both would be to have an equilibrium.

Mr. RUSK. The Senator from Maine will find that I have not contended for any such thing in regard to my own State. She is entitled to have three additional States formed within her limits, but we have not asked to bring them in.

Mr. FESSENDEN. In due course of time I expect to see them apply for admission.

Mr. RUSK. Will you vote for their admission?

Mr. FESSENDEN. That depends on circumstances.

Mr. RUSK. I supposed so.

Mr. FESSENDEN. If I be here when the time comes, I shall vote probably one way or the other on that subject.

Mr. RUSK. No doubt of it.

Mr. FESSENDEN. You say our desire is to obtain the control of the Government, by means of our greater population, and of our necessarily greater increase of numbers. You say that this increase will continue. Probably so, if you give us room to expand; but if you shut us up within the comparatively limited territory we now have, and you appropriate all the Territory of the United States, as I think you would be glad to do, for the purpose of making slave States, I do not know where, in the process of time, we may be; for

it is observable that people of the North who go into slave States are very apt to become enamored with the institution as those born and bred there.

Mr. BUTLER. And like negroes just as well.

Mr. FESSENDEN. I dare say, and perhaps a little more. Very likely they may make worse masters, as a general rule, than those born and bred in the same community with the slaves. It would be reasonable to suppose so.

Mr. BUTLER. I will here pay a just tribute to one northern man. He is, I believe, one of the best planters I ever knew, and he is the strictest governor. I think it is mercy to govern well and strictly. Those who take property by hereditary right—children who take it from their parents, are very indulgent to their slaves, and generally spoil them.

Mr. FESSENDEN. I am very glad to receive information on that subject, as I am on any subject, from the Senator from South Carolina, or any body else. But, after all, the question is simply this: the Senator from Texas does not deny, and no one, I think, will deny, that the great object of this struggle on the part of the South is to obtain an equality, or keep an equality, of political power in this body.

Mr. RUSK. I do not contend for any such ground. The ground of my contention is this: that to the Territories, the common property of the United States, the people of each of the States have a right, unembarrassed, to go with their property; and when you see proper here in Congress, without any express authority of the Constitution, to say that, owing to the moral condition of the southern States, we cannot emigrate there with our property, I regard that as an attempt to fasten on the section which I represent, and those who are to come after me, an odious distinction, which the Senator is much mistaken if he supposes we will submit to.

Mr. FESSENDEN. I do not suppose anything about it. Whether the Senator and his friends submit to it or not would not make a particle of difference in my action. As I said before, on that position the Republican party has planted itself, namely: that it will oppose to the end—I may say to the bitter end, if bitter it must be—the extension of slavery over free territory. That is their doctrine; it is mine.

Mr. RUSK. The Senator will put it in proper form. I do not like these phrases to catch popular opinion. We of the South have planted ourselves on our equal rights under the Constitution. Our number to

both
rights
s or our

weakness does not make the slightest difference. So far as I am concerned, I shall live under and support this Government as long as it maintains my equal rights. The Constitution maintains my equal rights in the State where I live, and in the Territories of the United States. When a majority, in (as I believe) disregard of the obligations of the Constitution, shall deny me my constitutional rights, against that act of usurpation, I am prepared to stand up and resist, and I will not stop to inquire what the consequences may be.

Mr. FESSENDEN. The honorable Senator from Texas is a very brave and determined man, and I have no idea that he says anything which he does not mean, and would not carry out. At the same time he will permit me to say, without regard to what the South may do, or what individuals may do, or may express their design to do, in case of a certain event, if we regard, and so long as we do regard, that matter to be essential to us and to our rights under the Constitution of the United States, we shall, with equal pertinacity, follow it out, until there ceases to be any hope to accomplish the object.

Mr. RUSK. You have the numbers.

Mr. BROWN. If the Senator from Maine will allow me, I will ask him a question.

Mr. FESSENDEN. I think I am exceedingly liberal to-day.

Mr. BROWN. I understand the Senator to take the ground, that the Republican party of the North mean to oppose, and to oppose to the bitter end, the extension of slavery to any of the Territories of the United States.

Mr. FESSENDEN. Any free territory, I said.

Mr. BROWN. I ask the Senator this: suppose the people of Kansas, uninfluenced by the action of the Government—by any interference on the part of the southern people, left perfectly free to act and elect for themselves, shall choose to introduce slavery and ask for admission into the Union as a slave State, will he oppose their admission?

Mr. FESSENDEN. I will meet that question when it comes. I have noticed the particular mode which Senators have here (and it is very acute) when gentlemen are following a particular line of argument, to interrupt them by asking what they would do in a supposable case—I presume with the object of producing embarrassment.

Mr. BROWN. Not at all.

Mr. FESSENDEN. Now, whatever the answer may be, I beg leave to say to the Senator, that in Mississippi, and all others, that I the slave be caught in any such way. I will with their

answer any question in reference to my line of argument; but whenever they attempt to get me out of that line by asking what I will do in any supposed contingency, my only answer is, that I will let you know how I vote when the contingency arises.

Mr. BAYARD. Allow me to ask a question in the Senator's line of argument?

Mr. FESSENDEN. Certainly.

Mr. BAYARD. I wish to understand on what ground he claims that it is an interference with the rights of the people of the non-slaveholding States for Congress to abstain from the exercise of any power in reference to the common territory of the Union, either prohibiting or authorizing slavery there? In what respect does it violate the rights of any citizen, or of any non-slaveholding State, for Congress to exercise no power, either for the purpose of prohibition, or for the purpose of authorization of slavery? On the other side, I suppose the prohibition infringes on the rights of citizens of the United States to go with any species of property into territory which belongs to the people of the whole Union; it is a violation of the rights of the citizens of those States who happen to hold that particular description of property. I do not see where the violation is on the other side.

Mr. FESSENDEN. If I thought that a prohibition by Congress of the extension of slavery to the Territories was interfering with the constitutional right of any man in any section of the Union, I certainly should not be an advocate for that interference. The question, however, has been argued over and over again upon this floor, I might say argued even *ad nauseam*, until everybody is tired of it. It has been argued over and over again upon every stump through the whole country. We know the force of the argument, that this is only permitting the people to act for themselves; carrying out the idea of popular sovereignty; that there is a right in the people of the Territories to form their own institutions to suit themselves, and a right in the people of the southern States to remove into the Territories, and carry their slaves with them. The question has been argued here too often not to be entirely familiar to the honorable Senator from Delaware, and he knows very well that we deny there is any such constitutional right on the part of anybody. We deny that slavery can exist in the Territories unless by force of positive law.

Mr. BAYARD. The honorable Senator did not understand my question.

Mr. FESSENDEN. I did.

Mr. BAYARD. I think not. I merely added to my inquiry my own views of the violation

of right upon the one side; I did not ask him to discuss that. My question was, what injustice, what injury results to the people of the non-slaveholding States from allowing the people of the whole country to have a right to go to any territory of the United States with any species of property they possess? In what way does it affect his own State injuriously?

Mr. FESSENDEN. I was coming to that; but being a little circuitous, perhaps, in my logic, I had not arrived at it quite so soon as the honorable Senator might have expected. I was laying the foundation for my answer by saying, that we deny all those asserted rights with which the Senator closed his question to me. We deny that there is any constitutional right, on the part of any southern man, to go into a free Territory, and carry his slaves with him, and hold them there. We say that slavery can exist there only by force of positive law. Although the contrary has become the settled doctrine of the Democratic party at the present time, we deny it still. We say, moreover—and allow me to repeat it—that when we prohibit you from carrying slaves to a Territory, we leave you still with the same rights which we ourselves possess. No law is unequal in operation, unless it acts unequally upon different persons. The Senator from Delaware can go to these Territories with his hands, and his heart, and his head, and make the most of them there, upon the same terms that I can go and make the most of the vastly inferior power, physical and intellectual, which God has given to me. We say that when we leave the South and the North, the slave States and the free States, upon that precise line, we leave them equal, and we trench on no rights of theirs by that prohibition.

We say, moreover, that the Constitution has expressly given to the Congress of the United States the power to make rules and regulations for the Territories, and that this authority includes the power to prohibit slavery in the Territories, and prevent its extension over them. I remember that the first time I had the honor of addressing the Senate, the honorable Senator from Michigan [Mr. CASS] denied this position, and told me the Supreme Court had decided otherwise. I had so much respect for him that I did not dispute his word, though I was not aware of any such decision. Since that time I have looked into the subject, and certainly none such can be found.

Mr. CASS. The honorable Senator is mistaken. He misunderstands what I said to him. The ground which he took was on the

old question of the power of Congress to extend general jurisdiction over the Territories, under that clause of the Constitution giving the power to regulate the public lands. I merely stated to the honorable Senator that the Supreme Court had decided that the term "territory" in that clause of the Constitution meant land. That they did decide.

Mr. FESSENDEN. If the Senator will refer to the printed debate of that day, he will find that he is in error. He will find that he went as far as I now state, that is to say, that the Supreme Court had decided contrary to the view which I was then taking, viz: that Congress derived all necessary power to legislate for the Territories under that clause of the Constitution. That the Senator denied, on the authority of the Supreme Court. Although I did not dare, as a young member of this body, to dispute it then, I have since ascertained that he was in error on that point.

Mr. CASS. The circumstance is perfectly fresh in my mind. I argued the question ten years ago, and ten times since. I am not going to enter into it now. The point of the honorable Senator, on the occasion to which he alludes, turned, as I understood him, upon the meaning of the word "territory"—whether it extended further than the public lands. A Senator not now in his seat—I think it was Mr. SUMNER—assured the gentleman that the Supreme Court made that decision. It was one of the Senators sitting on that side near him who declared that such a decision had been made.

Mr. FESSENDEN. It was affirmed by the honorable Senator from California, [Mr. WELLER.]

Mr. CASS. I think it was also acknowledged by one of the Senators on the other side.

Mr. FESSENDEN. No, sir.

Mr. CASS. It was touching the decision of the Supreme Court, that the word "territory" in this clause was equivalent to "public land." With respect to the other point, permit me to say that I did not put it. The main argument I produced in this body years ago. I did not assume that the Supreme Court had so decided. I stated that, in the opinion of Judge Marshall, which has been alluded to during this debate, he put the right of governing the Territories on three or four different grounds. He put it on the ground of sovereignty. He put it on the ground of the regulation of property. He put it on the ground of the acquisition of territory. Finally, he put it on the ground of protection. viz: that the power was exercised

based the view which I took of the incompetency of Congress to legislate on the domestic concerns of the people of a Territory on a decision of the Supreme Court.

Mr. FESSENDEN. I shall not attempt at this day, and on this occasion, to review any of the former speeches made by the honorable Senator from Michigan. If I misunderstood him upon the former occasion, my misunderstanding is matter of record. What he then said is also matter of record. If he refers to it, he will find that I am not out of the way, for I have looked at it since the occurrence with reference to this particular view. I take it, then, not to be disputed by him at least, that it is the settled doctrine of the Supreme Court of the United States that, under this clause of the Constitution, Congress has a right to legislate for the Territories. That right may be deduced besides from the necessity of the case. The power has been exercised over and over again. What we hold as a party is, that as this power exists in the Congress of the United States, it is the duty of Congress so to exercise it as to prevent the extension of slavery over free territory.

I come now to answer, so far as I can, the question put to me by the honorable Senator from Delaware. He asks how they interiere with us? Sir, we are a partnership. The free States and the slave States are connected together. The people of the free States and of the slave States ought to have influence in this Confederacy somewhat in proportion to their population. There is a provision in the Constitution which enables the slave States to exercise a power disproportioned to their number of free people. It is, as claimed by the Senator from Virginia, an element of political power. If it be a fact that free and slave labor cannot exist together, if the two systems be in a degree antagonistical, if their interests be in a measure opposite, everything which has a tendency to increase the political power of the slave interest in this country is a direct encroachment on the political power of the free people of the free States. It may be constitutional—it may be legal; but it is none the less an encroachment. What tends to increase the one tends also to diminish the other. Consequently the effect, if beneficial politically to you, is injurious politically to us. It is on this position, as stated by the Senator from Ohio, that we base ourselves in some degree.

Again, this is a political partnership, and the common burdens are to be borne in common. We have an interest that the Territory of this country shall be made into great strong States, powerful and rich States,

able to protect themselves, and aid us in protecting the country, to increase the revenues, and power of defense, and power of attack, of this great nation. Will the honorable Senators from the slave States pretend to say that slave institutions have the same effect and the same power in making great, and powerful, and strong States of the Union, members of the partnership, as free institutions have? Will they so contradict all history as to hazard any such assertion? I trust not. Look at the State of Virginia. It is a State that I look upon with great kindness; but will the honorable Senator from Virginia, (he is not now in his seat,) or will any other man, contemplate that State, and compare her with the State of Pennsylvania, which lies alongside of her, and look at her present and her past. If we refer to revolutionary times, we shall find that the State of Virginia, which has a territory almost equal to the territory of all New England in square miles at the present day, or but little short of it, had in those days a population about equal to that of all New England. She had a larger commerce and greater agricultural power. She was greater than all, stronger than all, though the institution of slavery then existed in New England in fact, but in a much less degree than in Virginia.

What is Virginia now, compared with those States, in wealth, strength, and power alone?—and I speak only of these. Her free white population, if I remember rightly, is less than a million; the population of New England is something like two million seven hundred thousand or two million eight hundred thousand. What is her commerce? I refer the Senator to the description given of her commerce by the present Governor of Virginia—it has taken to itself wings and flown away. What is her agriculture? Does it compare, rich as she is in native resources, with the agricultural productions of even New England, barren and sterile as she is described to be? What is she in any particular—I mean as a powerful State? What is she in anything, except in the patriotism, learning, and ability of her sons?—for there I do not pretend to question her equality; but in all else, in population, in commerce, and manufactures, even in agriculture—in everything that tends to make a great and strong State—how does she compare with New England? What has done this? I believe—we believe at the North—that Virginia, with her greater natural advantages, with her water power, which is unequalled, with her soil, which is unsurpassed, with the mines that are in her bosom—everything that could make a State great

and powerful—would not be what she is but for the institution which she has so loved and cherished.

In looking at a paper which came to me this morning, I met with an extract, which I will take the liberty to read, not with any invidious feeling. I do not know but that the Senator from Virginia can inform me whether it is correct or not. It professes to be an extract from a speech of a Mr. Marshall, who is described as a son of the late Chief Justice Marshall, delivered in the House of Delegates of the State of Virginia in the year 1832:

“Slavery is ruinous to the whites—retards improvement—roots out industrious population—banishes the yeomanry of the country—deprives the spinner, the weaver, the smith, the shoemaker, the carpenter, of employment and support. This evil admits of no remedy—it is increasing, and will continue to increase, until the whole country will be inundated with one black wave covering its whole extent, with a few white faces here and there floating on the surface. The master has no capital but what is vested in human flesh—the father, instead of being richer for his sons, is at a loss how to provide for them; there is no diversity of occupations, no incentives to enterprise. Labor of every species is disreputable, because performed mostly by slaves. Our towns are stationary, our villages almost everywhere declining, and the general aspect of the country marks the curse of a wasteful, idle, reckless population, who have no interest in the soil, and care not how much it is impoverished.

“Public improvements are neglected, and the entire continent does not present a region for which nature has done so much and art so little. If cultivated by free labor, the soil of Virginia is capable of sustaining a vast population, among whom labor would be honorable, and where ‘the busy hum of men’ would tell that all were happy and all were free.”

Mr. COLLAMER. I have the whole speech.

Mr. FESSENDEN. I should have finished what I had to say long ago, if honorable Senators had not put so many troublesome questions to me. I answer the Senator from Delaware thus: we are States, but we are a nation: we are a people, yet a united people. What is interesting to one ought to be interesting to all. What strengthens a part of this great country strengthens the whole. What weakens a part weakens the whole. What diminishes the power of one section diminishes the power of the whole country, directly, necessarily, inevitably. What strengthens a part has the same effect upon the whole country. I have been surprised to hear gentlemen from the South ask us, “Why do you have the impertinence to interfere with this question? What is it to you? Why not let us alone to manage this matter, which is a matter solely of our own concern?” So it is a matter of your concern in the States where this in-

stitution exists. We have agreed that it should be; and I say to you that for one I am opposed, and always have so expressed myself, to interfering with that question among you in the slave States at all, directly or indirectly; for what I have no right to do directly I have no right to do indirectly. But when it comes to the question, whether an institution which has produced such effects, which is so enfeebling, necessarily, to the great whole of which I am a part, and of which my State is a part, and which has produced such blighting effects, shall be extended over new territory vast as all that which goes to make up the States of this Union, and this black wave shall be left to sweep over it, carrying with it effects so disastrous, it becomes not only my right, but my solemn duty, to stand here and protest against it, and to go before my constituents, and before the world, wherever and whenever I can, and protest and act against a result which I believe will be attended with such enormous evils. That is my answer to the question which is put to me—how our rights and our institutions are to be interfered with by allowing this Government to permit the extension of slavery over Territory which is now free, and which ought to be left free?

Mr. President, one word more. I do not look upon this question as a question of States. The States, as political corporations, have no direct interest in the Territories. I do not recognize the State of Virginia, or the State of Texas, as a State, as having a particle of interest in them; nor the State of Maine, nor the State of Massachusetts, nor New York, nor any other free State. It is a question with the people of the United States. One has just as much interest and right as another has. When you come here and talk to us about the institution of slavery as connected with your States, and say it is a question between fifteen States and sixteen States, I ask is there no institution in the fifteen States composing the South except the institution of slavery? Is that all which goes to make up these great empires, as they are in the matter of extent to say the least, and should be in the matter of power. You talk to us here as if there were nothing else in the South but slavery. I cannot put out of sight the results of the census. Of all the slaveholders in the Union, properly such, there are less than five hundred thousand; and, including their wives and children, and all connected with them, they are certainly a decided minority of the white people of the slave States themselves. These free white people ever represent you. You say you represent them; but



remarking is, that slavery alone does not constitute all the South. There are other men than those who own slaves, or are interested in slaves; and for their benefit, as well as ours, I would open these Territories to freedom, and hold them consecrated to freedom forever.

But for the fact, that it might seem invidious and unkind, I would allude to and read extracts from southern writers themselves, showing the effect of slavery upon a very large portion of the white population of the slave States. You know the fact as well as I do, and better than I do, for you have been eye and ear witnesses. But what I wish to say to you is, that when you speak upon this subject, and of your rights in regard to it, do not talk of the rights of the States, for there is no State that has any right whatever, as such, in this connection. It is a question affecting all the people of the free States, and all the people of the slave States, and as much the people of slave States who do not own slaves as of the people of those States who do own slaves, although we never hear a voice raised within these walls from that section except in support of the institution, and almost universally in favor of its extension. Sir, I look upon our view of this question as one quite as interesting to the people of the slave States as to those of the free States of the Union. I know it is a question of political power; but it is not a question of political power between fifteen slave States and sixteen free States. It is a question of political power between the half million of people who own slaves, and all the rest of the free people of the Union, amounting perhaps to twenty-five millions at the present day. There is the question; and when Senators at-

tempt to and claim between a great class not so. The political power, if it comes, and if the Senate of the United States is to pass into the hands of those gentlemen, goes not into the hands of the great mass of free people inhabiting the slave States of this Union, but into the hands of a class, a small class—however respectable, however upright, however patriotic they may be—and I give them, in these particulars, all the credit that I arrogate or claim for my own section of the country. The fact stands out in bold relief, and cannot be denied, that when this political power—a power to control the legislation of this country by a veto, in one body at least—passes into the hands of the slave States, according to your definition, it passes into the hands of less than half a million of men, who can control the interests of all the rest of the free people of the Union together.

That is the simple truth. It is what we contend against. As I said to the Senate before, I have contended against it. I have struggled to prevent the extension of slavery over the free territory of this country. I have struggled to prevent it by endeavoring to prevail on the General Government to exercise its powers to keep the Territories free from slavery. I may fail; we may all fail, but our purpose is fixed and firm. I notify gentlemen that no threats of a dissolution of the Union in case we elect this man or that man—no threat of any kind which they can utter, will turn us, or at least will turn me, from that purpose which I have announced heretofore, and which I announce again.

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