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INCIDENTAL REMARKS

OF

WILLIAM H. SEWARD,

RELATIVE TO

GRANTS OF LANDS TO HUNGARIAN EXILES, &c.

2510
DELIVERED IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES, JANUARY 30, 1850.



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INCIDENTAL REMARKS

OF

WILLIAM H. SEWARD,

RELATIVE TO

Grants of Lands to emigrants, actual settlers, and to refugees, who took part in the struggles for Independence in Hungary and other European countries: also, relative to the distribution of the surplus revenue, and the individual and national advantages arising therefrom.

DELIVERED IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES, JANUARY 30, 1850.

[Prepared by the official Reporters for the Washington Union.]

Mr. HOUSTON submitted the following resolution, which he desired to have referred to the Committee on Public Lands:

Resolved, That the Committee on Public Lands be instructed to inquire into the expediency of granting to each family, (not landholders, or the owners of property worth the sum of \$1,500,) citizens of the United States, or emigrants who are now here, or may arrive previous to the 4th of March next, one hundred and sixty acres of land; and when said families shall have resided upon the said land so granted three years continuously, and shall erect buildings and clear ten acres of ground thereon, a patent shall be issued by the government of the United States, free from all cost, to the grantee.

The resolution having been read,

Mr. HOUSTON said: I would simply remark that that resolution was prepared as an amendment to the resolution offered by the Senator from New York, (Mr. SEWARD.) Expecting that that resolution would have been called up previous to this time, I detained it until now, with the intention of offering it as a substitute for that resolution. As that has not been called up, I will move that this be referred to the Committee on Public Lands, as an original resolution, in order that when the other proposition comes up, the committee may be prepared to act upon the substitute which I propose.

Mr. FOSTER. I see no necessity for referring it. I should think it would be better that it should simply lie over. While I am up, I will take occasion to say that I think that this is the best bid of the kind that has been offered, although we have had many of them. If the only effect of this contest is to be to strengthen the personal popularity of the various Senators bringing in these propositions, I should be wholly indifferent myself. I will conclude by repeating that I think this is the best bid we have had yet.

Mr. HOUSTON begged leave to assure the Senator from Mississippi, that if he supposed he (Mr. HOUSTON) had any idea of interfering with any other gentleman upon the subject of *bids*, he was entirely mistaken, for he would assure him that he had no aspirations which would conflict with those to which the Senator from Mississippi was so justly entitled. (Laughter.) Mr. HOUSTON then proceeded with some general remarks in support of his proposition.

Mr. SEWARD. Mr. President, the resolution which I had the honor to submit in relation to the subject now under consideration may as well be brought distinctly before the Senate, and I therefore will ask the Clerk to read the resolution.

The resolution was accordingly read as follows :

Resolved, That the conduct of Austria and of Russia, in the war in which those powers have subverted the nationality and the liberties of Hungary, has been marked by injustice, oppression, and barbarity, which justly deserve the condemnation of mankind, while they commend the Hungarian people to the sympathies of other nations, and especially of republican States ; and that the Committee on the Public Lands be directed to inquire and report on the propriety of setting apart a portion of the public domain to be granted, free of all charges, to the exiles of Hungary already arrived, and hereafter to arrive, in the United States, as well as to the exiles fleeing from oppression in other European countries.

Mr. SEWARD proceeded. Mr. President, it will be recollected that, at a very early day in the session, the distinguished Senator from Michigan (Mr. CASS) introduced a resolution, in which it was proposed to instruct the Committee on Foreign Relations, to consider and report upon the expediency of suspending diplomatic relations with Austria ; on which occasion that honorable Senator enforced the resolution by a speech of surpassing power and interest ; and that the grounds upon which he recommended the suspension of diplomatic intercourse with Austria were the oppression and barbarity of Austria in the recent war with Hungary. I listened with very great interest, and with deep attention, to the speech of the Senator, in which he portrayed his accusations against that power. But I was not prepared, and I am not yet prepared, to think the suspension of foreign relations with Austria is the proper form of giving expression to the sentiment which is expressed by the Senator, and in which I cordially sympathize, and in which, I doubt not, every member of the Senate sympathizes with him. It was under those circumstances that I submitted the resolution to the Senate, in which I have expressed this sentiment of the American people, of condemnation of the atrocious conduct of Austria, and of deep and profound sympathy with the Hungarian people in their struggles for nationality and independence.

I have never called up the resolution for these reasons, Mr. President. In the first place, I did not think it became me to press upon the Senate the consideration of the resolutions which I have offered upon that or any other subject. In the second place, I deemed it a matter of respect to the distinguished Senator

from Michigan, (Mr. Cass)—who, I hope, will allow me to say that I am his friend—to omit calling for this resolution of mine until he should have had an opportunity to test the sense of the Senate in regard to the proposition which he had submitted; and I think that it would have been indecorous toward him, if I had sought to supersede the action upon his resolution, especially when I have seen that, every day for the last week, he has striven to bring it forward. When he shall bring it forward, I shall not wish to embarrass it with mine as an amendment. If the Senate choose to adopt that, it does not conflict with mine; and if they disallow it, the proposition of the Senator from Michigan will not then stand in the way of the action which I propose. The proposition which I have made is one which I hope will commend itself to the Senate. When it shall be put upon consideration, I will endeavor to explain in the best manner of which I shall be capable the reasons for its passage. I hope, therefore, with this explanation, that the Senator from Texas (Mr. Houston) may have his resolution disposed of as is agreeable to him, either to lie upon the table or to come up as he shall see fit. As to the resolution I have submitted, I shall not submit it as an amendment of the proposition of the distinguished Senator from Massachusetts, (Mr. WEBSTER,) who is not now in his seat; but I shall ask for its consideration, as a distinct measure, standing upon its own merits. For my own part, after this explanation, I have no intention to occupy the attention of the Senate for one moment in sustaining my amendment. I wish to ask the question of the Senator from Michigan, whether he proposes to refer his resolution without debate? If the Senate think proper, mine may take the same course, and all these matters may at once go to the respective committees. I have no objection that my own resolution, with the bill I have proposed, should be referred with the other resolutions.

Mr. DOUGLAS, in submitting some observations relative to his bill granting land to actual settlers, and the proposition upon the same subject introduced by Mr. WEBSTER, expressed the belief that when the subject shall be investigated, it will be found to be a policy of wise and serious legislation, and not a mere mode of manufacturing political capital, in the way that the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. FOOTE) had very pleasantly spoken of it.

Mr. DOUGLAS, in alluding to the resolution introduced by Mr. SEWARD, said: But I regret, sir, that in his bill, the Senator from New York proposes only to provide for the foreigner, and leaves the native-born American unprovided for. He proposes to lift the foreigner above the native. He proposes to give a bounty to the foreigner over that of the native-born citizen. When the foreigner shall come to my State and settle upon the public lands of that State, he is to get the land free; but when the native American goes to the same State and settles by the side of him, he is to pay a bounty for his land into the public treasury. I re-

gretted to see this, sir. It was an unjust distinction drawn between the native-born American and the foreigner. I wish to see the foreigner who comes to make a home with us put upon an equality with our own citizens. I will receive him with open arms—with generous aid and hospitality—and welcome him into our midst, and put him upon an equality with the native-born of the country. This, sir, is what I proposed in my bill; it is what is proposed by the honorable Senator from Massachusetts; this is what is proposed by the Senator from Texas; and I was in hopes that this principle of placing emigrant and native-born upon an equal footing, and of encouraging the settlement of the new States by giving land to the settlers free, while those that are non-residents should pay the usual price, would become the policy of the country.

Mr. BADGER suggested that the public lands having been pledged for the payment of the debt accruing from the Mexican war, could not properly and honestly be appropriated as had been proposed.

Mr. SEWARD. Sir, I regret very much that the honorable Senator from Illinois (Mr. DOUGLAS) has thought it necessary, upon the present occasion, to raise a question of comparative merit between the native born and the foreign citizen. If the question, however, must be raised, I am free to say, that to the extent which is implied in the resolution which I have submitted, I give the preference to the foreigner, the emigrant; and that is to this extent: The man who is expelled by tyranny from his own land, in consequence of an effort to establish its nationality and independence, I give, in my sympathies, in my admiration, in my respect, a preference over one who has lost nothing, done nothing, suffered nothing, for his own freedom or for the freedom of mankind.

Further than this, Mr. President, I would not go; and if the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DOUGLAS) has inferred that I have sympathies for men of other lands, as men, in preference to my own countrymen, he does me an injustice, which, in due time, when his proposition comes before the Senate, he will have an opportunity to correct. I, sir, have never been—I am not now—I do not know what I may be—but I never have been in favor of making the profits arising from the sale of the public lands a source of ordinary revenue in the operations of the government. I have always maintained, and I think I always shall maintain, that it is a great fund, the common property of the whole people of the United States, properly to be applied to objects of great national improvement and beneficence. And in this particular instance, I believe that a proper opportunity is afforded for us to exercise our charity towards those who are entitled to our sympathies for their own struggles for liberty and independence in foreign lands. Sir, I have never intimated an objection, I do not now say, that I have the slightest objection to the bill insisted upon by my respecta-

ble friend from Illinois, (Mr. DOUGLAS,) which is, I believe, the same in principle with the proposition of the distinguished Senator from Massachusetts, (Mr. WEBSTER,) and with that introduced to-day by the distinguished Senator from Texas, (Mr. HOUSTON.) When their propositions come before the Senate, they shall have my cordial support. I only say this, that the duty of making an expression in regard to the struggles for liberty in Europe was the subject under consideration when my proposition was submitted, and nothing more. I intended to go that length; that expression, I shall humbly insist, ought to be made; and it is not wise, in my judgment, to connect it with other propositions, which will also receive my support. So that I would not have the bill of the distinguished Senator from Illinois, (Mr. DOUGLAS,) or whoever may be entitled to the paternity of it, to be allowed to embarrass the proposition which I have had the honor to submit; nor shall my proposition be allowed to embarrass that of the Senator from Illinois. I hope that I am now understood upon the subject, and that I have relieved myself from whatever censure may have arisen from a misunderstanding of my intentions.

I owe it to my friend, the honorable Senator from Michigan, (Mr. CASS,) to say that I had no design to embarrass his resolution by offering mine as an amendment of his; and I owe it to the honorable Senator from Illinois to say, that I had no knowledge, when I introduced my resolution, of the nature of the bill which he had introduced and submitted to the Senate.

Mr. DAWSON Mr. President, I have listened to this discussion, and tried to ascertain the principle upon which gentlemen have been proceeding in the various propositions which are before the Senate in relation to the distribution of the public domain. The Senator upon my right (Mr. SEWARD) says that he considers the public domain of this country is intended to create a great national charity fund, and that it should not go into the general revenue for the benefit of the country at large; that it must be disbursed for charitable purposes—the first great object presented to the American people for their attention.

Mr. SEWARD, (interposing.) If the honorable Senator from Georgia will allow me—I did not say a great charity fund; but a great national fund for great national purposes, and amongst them for purposes of national charity.

Mr. DAWSON. I did not misunderstand nor misrepresent the honorable Senator. He contends that the revenue derived from the sale of the public domain should not go into the general fund for general purposes, but should be reserved and held as a distinct fund for public charity, and other things of that kind; or, in other words, holding out a permanent premium, a permanent bid to the patriots of foreign lands to come to this land of the oppressed. Why, sir, does he not perceive at once, that if this policy be adopted and carried out, that great struggle which is now going on for liberty in Europe will cease, and cease by the buying off of

every patriot there, and settling him down here as one rewarded for the desertion of his own country? Why, sir, we shall empty all Europe of every man who is now laboring for the emancipation of his own country, and bring him here to reap the benefit which we thus offer as a reward, by this public and wholesale national charity. But, sir, there are principles deeper than these involved in this matter. Who are these gentlemen who are planning out these various modes of giving away the public lands? Are they those who are friendly to a strict and economical administration of the government, and to a limited and moderate tariff? or are they those, Mr. President, who desire to create a large national debt? who seek to raise the revenue of the country by taxation, and to bestow the public domain as a charity upon foreigners? Why, sir, I have asked myself this question. Whose blood was spilled in obtaining these public lands? Whose money went to compose the fifteen millions paid for the acquisition of the Territories of New Mexico and California? Who paid the soldiers who fought in that war, in consequence of which those Territories were acquired? Was it those foreigners who are invited to come to this land, and take the proceeds of our blood and our treasures, and apply them to their own use?

Sir, this is a movement and a policy which arises out of the nature of our institutions. It is a result of the doctrine of an election by popular vote. There is the principle upon which all this movement rests. And, sir, I have been struck by the fact that, in all these resolutions thus presented here, no mention is made of any other class of individuals but voters. The charitable and philanthropic feelings of gentlemen do not reach beyond the voter. Women and children are not mentioned. Where is the widow, made such by the death of a husband slain while fighting the battles of our country in Mexico—where is she to obtain these lands?

Mr. SEWARD, (interposing.) If the Senator will examine the provisions of my bill, he will find that provision is made for the widow.

Mr. DAWSON. I am speaking of your resolution—that which will go before the country and the people. Is there one word in relation to them in it? Not one! Who is there that does not feel for the widow and orphan, made so by the battles of our country, fought in Mexico? How can they go and settle on and remain and cultivate for four years one hundred and sixty or three hundred and twenty acres of land? Who are to transport them there, and how are they to be maintained and protected when there? A great national charity! National for foreigners, but not for natives, and for widows and children who need, and who are justly entitled to the first charities, or rather to the justice of the nation. There is no other character of persons in this country that gentlemen seem to have a deep and abiding sympathy and affection for but voters. Where are the free negroes in this coun-

try, another class of population in whom gentlemen profess the warmest interest? Have you made any provision for them?

Mr. SEWARD, (interposing.) The gentleman will find ——

Mr. DAWSON. And where are all those distressed natives who are condemned to the horrid fate—as the Senator from Texas deems it—of having to earn their daily bread by the sweat of their brows? I have asked myself, sir, what there is at the bottom of all this. There is no little truth, I think, in the idea alluded to by the distinguished Senator from Michigan, that there is demagogism in all these propositions. These, Mr. President, are my views upon that point.

But, sir, there seems to me to be one other thing at the bottom of this movement, to which I have already slightly adverted.

This disposition of the public lands is a piece of machinery in the administration of the affairs of this country of immense power, and exercises a tremendous influence over the public prosperity; and this manner of disposing of the domain by making it a great national charity fund has consequences which reach very far, and which seem to furnish a pretence for carrying out the views of the protectionists in the maintenance of a high-tariff system.

I have no doubt, sir, for one, that those who are entitled to and should receive the benefit of the disposition of the public lands, whatever it may be, are our own citizens—men who have lived under and helped to rear our institutions to their present pre-eminence. They are the first people to be considered. In my opinion, sir, the men whose treasure and whose blood have been expended in the acquisition of these Territories are better entitled to the enjoyment of them than those who arrive for the first time in the country, having never paid any portion of the taxes which have gone to make the purchase, and who bring nothing into the country.

Mr. BADGER, (interposing.) Having nothing to bring.

Mr. DAWSON. Yes, sir, having nothing to bring. And yet he is told on his arrival that they are not to be put to that terrible necessity, so much deprecated by the honorable Senator from Texas—the necessity of earning their daily bread by the sweat of their brows.

Mr. HOUSTON. I must interrupt the gentleman, to say that he misunderstood or misapprehended my remarks. I——

Mr. DAWSON. No, no. I thought it an excellent hit. [Laughter.] I mean what I say merely in a Pickwickian sense. [Renewed laughter.] Now, Mr. President, we will come down to Texas. We had to pay for her, and very dearly, too, when she came in. California and New Mexico we have to pay for also. Now, sir, who is to pay for these Territories? In any court of equity, the property purchased would stand security for the payment of the debt. But how is it now? The property purchased is to be made a charity fund, and given to those who never contributed a particle

of money, nor lost a drop of blood in its purchase. They must have it, and the man who brought about this state of things by his sufferings and his valor must be excluded from its benefits. The whole people of this country, inhabitants and citizens, must pay the debt. In other words, you tax your citizens to raise money to buy lands to distribute among foreigners, who are to become voters, and go the ballot-box on the first Tuesday of November every four years. That, sir, is the secret of this whole machinery; and a public opinion is to be started here, and to be influenced by the various combined movements of gentlemen, and brought to bear upon the public sentiment throughout the country. Thus public opinion sinks down in perfect quiescence. The public lands are given away, and it is all smooth and proper; but the next session, when you come to make your appropriations, the funds are deficient, and they must be raised from some other source. Hence the tariff must be augmented, and thus another object is attained at the same time. These frequent elections, and these enormous aspirations for high place, are calculated to sap the foundation of our system, and of our political existence as a Union of States. Do we see any section or any party in the country that is forming on any systematic plan to carry this country on in her career of glory? Sir, in my opinion, everything in the country is rapidly tending to disorder and disunion; and yet, we are spending our time and strength upon paltry struggles for individual ascendancy, and forgetting to go down to the case of injustice perpetrated by one section of the country upon the other. We overlook the dangers that lie hid in this tremendous issue, and trample upon it as we would trample upon the fire which is just beginning to burn, disregarding it, until the full blaze bursts upon us in its fury. I have looked at these things, sir, and I find in them abundant cause of alarm; and yet I profess to be one of the moderate men. Sir, no man is more conservative than I am; no man more desirous of the perpetuity of this Union, and of all its glorious reminiscences than I am. But, sir, I look upon the present state of affairs with deep, melancholy, and painful forebodings. I see no broad patriotism founded upon national grounds. I see instead sectional combinations and personal intrigues. Why is it, sir, that the great minds of the country are engaged in a struggle for personal ends, and seeming ready to take advantage of the excitement which now agitates the land, and of every minor question, to advance individual views at a crisis in the affairs of the Government like this?

Mr. President, I had no idea that anything could have induced me to enter so much at large upon this subject. But such, sir, are my feelings, and such my views upon the present condition of the country; such, too, are my apprehensions; and when I look around me, everything, in my humble judgment, is portentous; and I felt that the present occasion was a fitting time to express briefly views which I entertained in reference to our condition. It

results in this, that, in relation to the matter now under consideration, the great interests of our people are to be entirely disregarded, and the tax-payer and the payer for the lands purchased from the Indians and from foreign countries are to be taxed for the benefit of foreigners—the legislation here, as in most other cases, being for extremes—while the great central point is entirely disregarded. The native citizen—the respectable native inhabitant, who is the pillar of the State—is overlooked in the excessive zeal which Senators feel to provide for those to whom we owe nothing, however kindly may be our sentiments towards them; and it is proclaimed, that the millions which should be derived from the sale of the public lands shall not go into the public treasury, to relieve our own population from the burden of taxation, but is to be made a special fund for charitable and other purposes; in other words, to form just such a fund as Congress choose to make of it, and to be applied to just such purposes as Congress choose to apply it to. Now, I call upon Congress for their constitutional right to do any such thing. I demand to know by what authority Congress constitutes itself the public almoner of the nation, and proposes to dispose of the whole of the public domain for such and similar purposes. Our Government is a government of delegated powers, and no such power is delegated. We have no right to dispose of any part of the proceeds of the public property, at any time, or in any way, except according to the powers delegated to us in the instrument under which we act. And yet we are called upon here to vote that the proceeds of the public domain shall not go into your treasury, but that they shall be diverted to special objects, for which we have no such authority. I am—in the language of a gentleman who spoke yesterday—opposed to these things, and at the proper time I shall proclaim it. I look upon it as the beginning of a course which, like many other beginnings, will prove an evil which will at last become insufferable.

Mr. DOUGLAS, in the course of a reply to a portion of the remarks made by the Senator from Louisiana, (Mr. DAWSON,) said :

Sir, I am equally opposed to the doctrine of the Senator from Georgia, who would discriminate against foreigners, and that of the Senator from New York, who wishes to discriminate in certain instances against the native citizen in favor of foreigners. It has been a misfortune in this country that a discrimination has been too often made between foreigners and those who are American born. Sir, those who denounce foreigners are as much liable to the criticism of seeking votes by availing themselves of the American prejudice, as those who make a distinction in favor of foreigners are for seeking votes from the foreign population. In Philadelphia it has been common, I believe, for gentlemen to receive votes on that ground. And it is there found in certain cases advantageous to denounce the foreigner, just as elsewhere it may be so to laud him. The true policy is to receive the fo-

reigner kindly, and to make no discrimination for or against him. And I do not think myself that the Senator from New York even makes out a proper case for the distinction he speaks of. We have unfortunate men who have been wounded and maimed in the war with Mexico; and, sir, the man who has been unfortunate at home is just as much entitled as he who has been so abroad to the benefit of any policy we may adopt. It is a true, wise, and just policy to make no distinction between the foreigner and the native-born citizen.

Mr. Houston addressed the Senate in vindication of his resolution. In the course of his remarks he said: It seems to be understood, Mr. President, that no provision is made in these resolutions for families, and that the object is to catch the popular vote of the country—that it is in a spirit of demagogism that such things are brought forward here. Sir, were it not for the character of gentlemen who have previous to this time, and without my knowledge until this discussion occurred, taken part in this matter, I might have questioned my motives upon the subject. But, as it now is, I am led to conclude that it is a matter of grave deliberation and sound policy. I am satisfied that neither the Senator who first originated the bill, the Senator from Illinois, the Senator from New York, (Mr. SEWARD,) nor the distinguished Senator from Massachusetts, (Mr. WEBSTER,) would have given their attention to a subject that embraced principles of demagogism. Even if it had come from the honorable and distinguished Senator from Michigan (Mr. CASS) himself, I should not have attributed it to demagogism; but I should have thought it to have originated in a desire to give a more comfortable home and a competency to these people. I should have ascribed it to higher motives than demagogism. I would have thought the generous impulses of humanity had impressed upon his mind the conviction that it was useful, right, and just, not only to the individuals, but to the country.

Mr. SEWARD. I ask the indulgence of the Senate for one moment, in reply to some remarks of my friend from Georgia, (Mr. DAWSON.) He has alluded to the motives which he supposed to operate upon members of this body, in bringing before the Senate questions of this character. My reply to the Senator upon that point will be exceedingly brief. It is, that I am here for public measures, not for private ends—that no imputation which can be made, even by a friend whom I esteem and respect so highly as I do my friend from Georgia, shall ever put me before this body, or any other, on a defence of myself against suspicions or complaints of this kind. And now, sir, the point in the remarks which I made which elicited the most severe rebuke from my friend from Georgia was, that I had suggested that I had always been opposed to the applying of the current revenues arising from the public lands to the ordinary expenses of the federal government. And the Senator persisted in supposing that I intended that they should be applied for no other purpose than a charity fund. I

will illustrate, for the information of the Senator and others, what I mean by the application of those revenues to great national purposes and objects.

The distinguished Senator from Kentucky, (Mr. CLAY,) several years since, by his great influence in the councils of the nation, secured the distribution among the several States of this Union of a portion of these and other surplus revenues of this government. I was at a distance, an humble follower and approver of that policy. The result of it in other States I know not. But you, Mr. President, can testify with me the result, the beneficent result, in the State of New York, from which we come. The share which was allotted to us was \$6,000,000; the amount we received was \$4,500,000. Every dollar of that four-and-a-half millions, sir, more than ten years ago, went to the formation of public schools, academies, seminaries, and other higher institutions of learning, and of libraries for the common people. And, sir, I will now state to the Senate—and I am proud that, in behalf of the State of New York, I am here this day to state it to the praise and honor of the distinguished Senator from Kentucky—the condition of the State of New York, of the people, bond and free—I might say, if we had any of the former class—native and foreigner, to which they have been brought by this act of justice—I will not call it benevolence. Sir, the State of New York, having a population of three millions of people, has not in it one child of citizen or foreigner that is not educated, from the age of five years to the age of twenty years, at the public cost and expense. Again, sir: at the distance of every mile and a half on every main-road, rail-road, canal, and cross-road—separated by only a mile and a half—is the schoolhouse of New England. The school-master is at home everywhere in New York, and all the time; and New York has made a trial of the blessed example of Massachusetts and Connecticut. This is what has been done in my day, since my and your experience began; and more than that: in every one of these school-houses is a public library of two hundred and fifty volumes, containing all that is interesting in ancient or modern history or science, literature, geography, and every other branch of human knowledge, open and accessible to every citizen—man, woman, and child—in the State of New York. Yes, sir, these four millions and a half have supplied us with libraries which, taken collectively, contain more than one million of volumes.

More than that, sir: there has not been left in the State of New York, the blind person who has not been taught to read his bible—there has not been left in the State the deaf and dumb, the mute, who has not been brought to be able to give expression of his gratitude and praise to God, and to the State which has brought him from ignorance and degradation below his race. More than that, sir: we have not neglected that other unfortunate class. I have been asked why not consider the free negroes? Sir, the free negroes have been considered. This fund has been appropriated to

their their advancement, also; to raise their condition; to cultivate them to exercise the rights of self-government, and to carry on the great work of the emancipation of their race wherever they are found in bondage. Yes, sir, five thousand children of the African race are educated out of this great fund of national benevolence. What becomes of the reproach, then, that this is a charity? What would have been the disposition of this fund if it had been left here, sir? It would have been expected as the revenues of this country, always too large, too liberal, have been expended, in improvidence. It is therefore that I have always claimed that it should be distributed among the States, that they might apply it to works of advancement—progress—humanity.

Now, sir, there has been no diminution of it all this time. While we have been enjoying this four and a half millions, there is not one dollar of it gone. Every dollar is there yet. It is still in the treasury of the State of New York; and all that has been done has been done only by the *use* of the money. Tell me, sir, is it not wiser to make such a distribution of this fund than it would be to employ it in encouraging prodigality in the government; than to encourage that lust of conquest in which the Mexican war had its origin, by which was brought into this Union seven hundred and sixty-three millions of acres of public domain, to be added to the one thousand millions we had before? What has it wrought? It has proved, in the words of an honorable Senator here, but a Pandora's box of evils; and we are entertained here, day after day, with the intelligence that the Union must be dissolved—that it is really now dissolved—even to-day. We employed the revenues of the public domains in extending our dominions that were too large—unnecessarily large—already. Sir, I want no more Mexican wars, no more lust of conquest, no more of seizing the unripened fruit, which, if left alone, would of itself fall into our hands. I claim that the Federal Government shall be brought at once to its responsibility to the people, and that the people shall know what it costs them to indulge it in wars of conquest.

The Senator from Georgia and the Senator from Illinois are grieved that there is a peculiar character about my proposition, in considering the case of foreigners as distinguishable from the case of American citizens. My friend on my left, from Georgia, supposes that he has found a peculiarly objectionable feature in this proposition, not found in that of the honorable Senator from Massachusetts and of the honorable Senator from Texas, because it provides distinctly for foreigners, without providing for others. Sir, these remarks—and I am sorry to say, the reception which they received, ungracious to me, from the Senator from Illinois—oblige me to say what I would not have said—that the way to defeat any benevolent or charitable object is to bring into competition with it some other objects of charity which ought to be provided for first. Sir, the religion which inculcates the duty of

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charity gives us an admonition against such schemes for defeating the ends of charity.

Mr. DOUGLAS. Will the Senator from New York allow me to call his attention to the fact that my bill was brought in first, and, therefore, that it is his which is in competition with mine?

Mr. SEWARD. I do not allude to the Senator's bill. The first time that I have heard of it from a source to which I could acknowledge myself indebted for the information was this morning; and upon that occasion I rendered to him the deserved homage of my gratitude. I claim, however, that for the Senator to join with the Senator from Georgia (Mr. DAWSON) in censuring me because I discriminated between foreigners and native-born, was an unkind and an unnecessary return for that homage. I was going to say that the religion which inculcates charity at all events, and which will never exculpate him who neglects it, admonishes us also to pour oil upon and anoint with ointment—with precious ointment—the Savior while he is with us, though the Pharisee may cavil, and say that this precious ointment might have been sold, and the value of it given to the poor. Now, sir, I know of no other way of performing the duty of justice, and of accomplishing the object before me. It is no excuse to me for not paying this creditor, that there is another creditor there to whom I am equally indebted; because we have poor in our own country, I am not discharged from the claim of charity upon me in behalf of the exiles, whose liberties have been stricken down, and who have been driven amongst us from their own land. Let them all come on: let them present themselves in whatever order, and to the extent of my ability I will discharge and cancel my obligations to the whole. If my friend from Georgia (Mr. DAWSON) supposes that this is a measure I am going to require him to support, as a relief of aliens, or of the alien and the foreigner, I will tell him, and I will tell the Senator from Illinois, (Mr. DOUGLASS,) that they much mistake the nature and character of my sentiments and principles with regard to aliens and foreigners. I am in favor of the equality of men—of ALL men, whether they be born in one land or born in another. I am in favor of receiving the whole. I acknowledge them all to constitute one great family, for whom it is the business of statesmen and the business of man to labor and to live. And, sir, when I do have occasion to ask the votes of those distinguished Senators and friends in behalf of the alien and the foreigner, it will be not the exile merely, who is commended to our sympathies for the sufferings he has sustained in the cause of liberty in Europe; but it will be for the melioration of the laws of naturalization, which put a period of five years and an oath in the way of any man of any country in becoming a citizen, which raise a barrier between ourselves and those who cast their lot amongst us. There is where they will find me; and they will find that to the extent that humanity bears the semblance which is impressed upon us by the hand of our maker, it is my design

and my purpose to labor to bring about that equality in the land in which I live, and as far as may be in all other lands.

And, going upon this broad principle, I have no hesitation in saying that there is no distinction in my respect or affection between men of one land and of another; between men of one clime and another; between men of one race and another; or between men of one color and another; no distinction but what is based, *not upon institutions of government*, not upon the consent of society, but upon their *individual and personal merit*. If the Senator from Georgia (Mr. DAWSON) will test this, if he has this sympathy for free negroes which I am rejoiced to hear him proclaim, let him bring in his bill, and the first aye that shall respond to it will be mine—if none should so respond to it before my name should be alphabetically reached, shall be mine. More than that; if his sympathies embrace a class that deserve them still more—the slave—let him bring in his bill for the slave, and my voice for emancipating the slave in any district or territory shall go for it. Nay, more; let him show me a way in which I can give a vote, an effectual vote, for the emancipation of the slave, in his own State, or any State, and I shall feel honored to participate in the movement; and my vote shall be given to sustain it, with more gladness, more gratitude, and more joy, than it was ever given upon any occasion in my life.

Sir, neither here nor elsewhere will I admit, as a rule for the government of my own conduct, that there is a distinction between men. But, on the contrary, I will walk up to the mark, assigned in the declaration of independence, that "ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL." Sir, the first vote given by me to keep any man or any class of men in a condition below my own is yet to be given. It never will be given in this place.

Mr. President, I have submitted the remarks I thought necessary to vindicate my proposition from the censure it received when it has so indirectly made its appearance before the Senate. When that proposition shall be brought before the Senate in its proper order and manner, after the Senate shall have considered the resolution of the honorable Senator from Michigan, (Mr. CASS,) I shall be pleased to state the reasons why I have submitted that proposition in detail, and the grounds upon which I have given it its present form.







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