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SPEECH

OF

J. WILEY EDMANDS,

OF MASSACHUSETTS,

DELIVERED

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, MAY 20, 1854,

ON THE

NEBRASKA AND KANSAS TERRITORIAL BILL.

WASHINGTON, D. C.
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SPEECH OF MR. EDMANDS.

The House being in Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union—

Mr. EDMANDS said:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: When I took my seat in this Hall, nothing was further from my purpose than to address the House on the subject of Slavery—it being a Southern institution, and to be treated plainly, having to be, to some extent, treated sectionally. But in deference to a confiding constituency, who are greatly excited on this momentous question, and to those friends who have expressed their expectation that I should do more than give a silent vote on it, I have decided, since the commencement of the week, to occupy a portion of the time allotted to this debate. I am, Mr. Chairman, opposed to the Kansas-Nebraska bill, on principle and expediency. And yet, believing as I do, that the success of this measure will result in reaction; that this Slavery movement will stir up mighty elements of agitation and antagonism, if I gave my *support* to the bill, I should stand fully justified, I think, by those opponents of Slavery, who commenced a political career on agitation, have been sustained by agitation, and who expect to accomplish their purposes through agitation. I profess to stand on the conservatism of the party to which I belong. I am a moderatist in politics, and I feel it my duty to do all that properly lies in my power to defeat the bill before us. I do not intend to discuss the abstract question of Slavery, but to offer very briefly to the Committee such general views as the measure has suggested to my mind.

Let us consider the position of this country, in reference to the great subject of Slavery, when the Representatives left home to attend to their duties here. What were called the compromise acts of 1850 had been passed. Those measures were looked to, to settle the irritating questions that were estranging the North and the South. One of those measures was extremely repugnant to our people; but, sir, with all their sensitiveness to the requirements of Slavery, their aversion did not overcome their acquiescence. Our people are a law-abiding people, and they resolved to support the 1850 compromise for the sake of peace, harmony, and good brotherhood, under the hope that it would put an end to sectional strife. Both the great political parties, into which the country has long been divided, at once entered into an adherence to the compromises of 1850, and they both recorded their pledges of fidelity in the articles of political faith adopted by their respective National Conventions.

Hear what was declared as the policy of the Democratic party by the Baltimore Convention, June 1, 1852:

"*Resolved*, That the Democratic party will resist all attempts at renewing, in Congress or out of it, the agitation of the Slavery question, under whatever shape or color the attempt may be made."

And by the Whig party, at the National Convention at Baltimore, June 8, 1852. In their last resolve they say:

"We deprecate all further agitation of the questions thus settled, as dangerous to our peace, and will discountenance all efforts to continue or renew such agitation, *whenever*, *wherever*, or *however* made."

They were no longer to countenance sectional agitation. The result of the late Presidential election showed how ready the great mass of the people of the North were to respond to those pledges. So far did the compromise of 1850 become an active element in the campaign, that thousands of Whigs at the North, having been made to believe that the Democratic candidate for the Presidency was more favorable to them than General Scott was, withheld their votes from their party's candidate, or gave them for General Pierce. When they refrained from acting with their own party, they had the satisfaction of feeling that the success of their political opponents would secure peace and harmony to the country, if nothing else.

When we assembled together here last December, no sectional strife existed within the borders of the land. Southern men and Northern men met as brethren of one family; and, so far as regards sectional disturbance, all was harmonious. But, sir, how is it now? How happens it that the whole North, from the Atlantic to the Mississippi, is excited and agitated to a degree unprecedented? Is it because they are disloyal to the compromise of 1850, or unfaithful to the pledges given in 1852? No, sir. It is because they see a "ruthless hand, reckless enough to disturb that compromise which had become canonized in the hearts of the American people,"* stretched forth to destroy that which they have, for a third of a century, been taught, and accustomed themselves to consider, as sacred and inviolable. It is because they see a portion of the representatives of the American people ready to desecrate the "*canonized*" works of their forefathers, and to remove the ancient landmarks set up by those who have gone before us—men whose acts of patriotism and integrity we may be proud to imitate.

Sir, in the midst of a profound peace throughout the land, and while no one was dreaming of danger or disturbance, a measure was suddenly introduced into the other branch of Congress, which has produced all this turmoil and excitement. Conscious that it would stir up sectional strife and bitter opposition, the attempt was made to push it through, without giving the people time scarcely to express their sentiments, certainly before another Congress should be here, chosen by the people in reference to this issue. Uncalled for by any one over whom its action directly extends; unwelcomed by any body of the people; "brought into the world scarce half made up;" amended again and again, until it appears before us a different creature from that which sprung from

* See address of Senator DOUGLAS to his constituents, in 1848.

the committee's first incubation, it still retains the blind partiality of its originator.

In the Senate it was forced through in the night, all other measures being compelled to give way; and in this body the track has been cleared for its triumphant march. The fiat went forth last week—Monday—that debate must be closed, and the vote taken before Tuesday week, the day on which the Pacific railroad bill had been made the special order. Bills of the most pressing importance were laid aside. The Deficiency bill, for the passage of which we were told by the Committee of Ways and Means there was great urgency, its delay involving public waste and private losses; the important Army and Navy appropriation, and the Civil and Diplomatic appropriation bills, the French spoliation bill responding to the claims of injured citizens for simple justice, all were summarily set aside as of minor importance. Not being able to accomplish their purpose of closing debate, as the friends of the bill announced, they insisted upon overriding the Pacific railroad bill. A minority, to which I have the satisfaction of belonging, determined to use all proper parliamentary means to resist this proceeding, believing the consideration of the Pacific railroad bill should come up in its regular order. We were defeated, on a suspension of rules, by some votes that we supposed would not be found against us at the very point on which all previous efforts had been hinging.

The history of such proceedings would lead one to infer that the bill before us was a measure fraught with blessings and benefits for all; that it was a measure of peace, coming to a distracted country fraught with healing on its wings and the olive branch in its hand, instead of bearing in its arms a Pandora box, from which have already flown discord, dissension, and distrust.

The historical argument has been made so often in this discussion, that I shall not enter upon it here; but I would ask by whom is this Territorial bill demanded, and how great the necessity for the immediate organizing of the Territory? It is not by or for the people there, there being not more than fifteen hundred, all told, besides Indians, in the Territory. The Commissioner of Indian Affairs, in a report made by him November 9, 1853, says:

"On the 11th October, the day on which I left the frontier, there was no settlement made in any part of Nebraska. From all the information I could obtain, there were but *three* white men in the Territory, except such as were there by authority of law, and those adopted, by marriage and otherwise, into Indian families."

It ought to be an urgent necessity indeed, to justify us in organizing this Territory, and calling our people to settle there before making treaties with the Indians, fourteen tribes of whom were transplanted there by our own act and under our own guarantee of security. There surely is nothing in the *manifest tendency* argument to justify it, though dwelt upon with much emphasis during this debate. Ordinary considerations of justice and policy should have prevented any attempts to open the country for settlement, until we had treated with, and attempted to satisfy, the Indians there located. The Commissioner, in this connection, says in the report already referred to, "the enunciation of the opinion that the country was open to occupation and settlement at the time it was promulgated, was most unfortunate."

Is it wanted by the South? They profess that Slavery will not go there to any extent. This has been repeatedly stated by the Southern advocates of the bill. Senator BUTLER, of South Carolina, said, in his speech in the Senate, "It is certain that Nebraska and Kansas will never be slaveholding States." Senator BADGER, of North Carolina, said, "I have no more idea of seeing a slave population in either Kansas or Nebraska, than I have of seeing it in Massachusetts." Senator HUNTER, of Virginia, expressed the same views. This being true, this great Territory might remain unorganized for a half century, so far as the South is concerned. They are not a migratory people. They are fixed to their institutions, and, comparatively, have neither the disposition nor ability to pioneer in the wilderness. Not so with the North. Their people are moving westward, and, having reached the confines, are now ready to occupy the adjoining country. But they want it in an available condition, a condition fit for their occupancy and improvement. Where they plant themselves, the sunlight of *Freedom* must shine, knowing, as they do, that in the train of Slavery follow clouds and darkness, unpropitious to growth and prosperity. Here is a Territory eight times as large as the six States of New England; and the question is, Will you allow it to the North, and refuse it to the South? I speak of their respective institutions, whose elements are as different as oil and water, and without reference to binding agreement between the two sections. It will be admitted that the introduction of one is, to a certain extent, a bar to the other. It is well adapted to the occupancy of one, and professedly unfavorable to the other. But we find the South clamorous for this Territory. They are either demanding what they do not need, or they have aims and purposes not professed. This is manifest in the fact that a bill simply for the organization of this Territory they would utterly oppose. Such a bill would be acceptable to a very large majority of this House, uninfluenced by party appliances. But, to be sanctioned by them, it must be accompanied by another bill—a bill to repeal the eighth section of the act of 1820, prohibiting Slavery in the Louisiana Territory north of 36° 30′. This would ordinarily be the method of disposing of that portion of the act of 1820, and it would probably have been the mode adopted at this time, were it not thought too *inconvenient*. In doing this, another *compromise* would have to be made, and the proposition must bear an equivalent. To save this, they concluded to put the creation and the abrogation of law into one and the same bill, hitch it on to the old 1850 compromise acts, though by very long traces—and make *them* draw the load. That this was an after-thought, our people fully believe. In my own State, you could not find enough to make a jury who ever imagined the acts of 1850 had anything to do at the time with the abrogation of the old 36° 30′ line; in which they are sustained by their own Representatives, who were actors in that legislation. I should like to know how the consideration in offset for free California (free, too, when acquired) and the abolition of the slave trade in the District of Columbia, was marked out respectively in that compromise—what proportion for Utah, what for New Mexico, and what for the enactment of the Fugitive Slave Law? We were told by gentlemen from the

South, in 1850, that there was so little of New Mexico north of 36° 30′ that it was of no account; there was no possibility of Slavery in Utah; that the Fugitive Slave Law was called for by the Constitution; but as for repealing the Missouri restriction, *that* was not mentioned. Was it on account of its insignificance?

But, Mr. Chairman, hear Mr. DOUGLAS himself on this point. In a published letter of his, of 23d October, 1850, he writes, in reference to the compromises of 1850:

"Neither party has gained or lost anything, so far as the question of Slavery is concerned."

Or, in other words, there was no loss to the North of the Missouri compromise.

Mr. WEBSTER said, July 17, 1850, in the Senate Chamber:

"The next inquiry is, What do Massachusetts and the North, the Anti-Slavery States, lose by this adjustment? I put the question to every gentleman here, and to every man in the country. They lose the application of what is called the Wilmot Proviso to these Territories, and that is all. They wish to get California into the Union, and to quiet New Mexico. They wish to terminate the dispute about the Texas boundary, cost what it may. They make no sacrifice in all these. What they sacrifice is this: the application of the Wilmot Proviso to the Territories of New Mexico and Utah, *and that is all.*"

No abrogation of the Missouri compromise is hinted there.

Mr. CLAY said:

"Neither party makes any concessions of principle at all, though the concessions of forbearance are ample."

The abrogation of the Missouri compromise was *not* reached in these controversies, either in fact or by implication. The wish is father to the thought.

The fourteenth section of the bill before us provides: "That the Constitution, and all laws of the United States which are not locally inapplicable, shall have the same force and effect within the said Territory of Nebraska as elsewhere within the United States, except the eighth section of the act preparatory to the admission of Missouri into the Union, approved March 6, 1820, which, being inconsistent with the principle of non-intervention by Congress with Slavery in the States and Territories, as recognised by the legislation of 1850, commonly called the compromise measures, is hereby declared inoperative and void."

The thirty-second section makes the same provision for Kansas.

Thus consistency is made the plea in the bill for repealing the Missouri compromise, and its advocates rest on the principles of legislation established in 1850. That there really was nothing intended in those acts to operate in this way I have shown by the evidence of the chief actors in that legislation. I should like to know, Mr. Chairman, when this keen sense of consistency first came to the originators of this bill. Professing to be actuated by principle, would they not reveal their own views, at least on the first occasion of territorial legislation? Now, the first Territory which was organized after 1850 was Washington Territory, in 1853, and we heard not a word then of any principle of consistency existing to affect their legislation. If three long years were not sufficient time to open to their astute perceptions the discovery of

a new principle in the legislation of 1850, abolishing that of 1820, is it surprising that the people should be unable to discover it now? Again: If the act of 1850 is paramount, because the later, and supersedes that of 1820, why are not the principles of the legislation of 1850 superseded by those of 1853, for there is no inconsistency between the act of 1820 and the Territorial act of 1853, and upon the same reasoning the legislation of 1853 would confirm that of 1820.

Without the clause repealing the old Missouri compromise restriction, the South would not have attached any value to it as an act of legislation. It is this, which has "edged the appetite of action." But why should the South urge with such pertinacity the abrogation of this restriction on a Territory which they say Slavery will not enter to any extent? It is fair to conclude there is an object before them, somewhat proportionate to the ardent struggle which they are making for it. If it be not the extension of Slavery there, it must be some other object, outweighing, in their estimate, the tremendous evils which they must know that struggle is producing, in the disturbance of the whole country, in the alienation of good feelings, and the kindling of sectional animosities. Will they risk all this for an imaginary purpose? Is there any ulterior object outside of the Territory itself? And is this only a feeder to the great stream of Slavery aggression? Are there any nascent germs yet unexposed, to be forced hereafter in the hot-bed of Slavery?

So far as I have observed, our Southern friends seem more sensitive on the subject of rights of property than on any other in this connection, and they ask why a man from the North should be allowed to carry his property to the Territories, and the man from the South be refused the privilege of carrying there the property which *he* owns; and they seem not satisfied with the reply, that the slave is a chattel only by local law. One would suppose that the slaveholders imagined that they had a *natural* right to their slaves as property. There are ten slaves, on an average, to each slaveholder in the United States. Now, when the individual slaveholder rests his claim to his ten slaves on the ground of natural right solely, he rests it on a right to be tested by natural power, and he must trust to that issue. The only right by which he holds his slaves is a legal right; and in the absence of laws fixing the relations of each, the slave has the rights of a free man. The Constitution has not interfered to prevent the holding of slaves as property under State legislation, but it does not carry Slavery anywhere. In the absence of local legislation, there is no such thing as property in man by any other means than force; and the slaveholder takes the risks and conditions of this species of property when he invests in it. But practically he stands on the same footing as the man who emigrates from Massachusetts, who carries not with him, and does not there use, the property possessed at home. He leaves behind him his farm, his cattle, &c. *They* are still in Massachusetts, and if sold, their representative, *in money*, is taken to his new home. The proceeds of the property of the slaveholder can go in the same way, and any inequality in this respect, is more imaginary than real. But on the ground of *equity*, this property question will not bear discussion. In its political bearings, its

operation is all against the *North*. We acknowledge our constitutional obligations, and have no disposition to fall behind them, but we have no intention of yielding to requirements beyond them. Here let me say, the elements of this *peculiar* institution of our Southern brethren, serve their turn, as circumstances offer. The *property* element is presented when their interests are to be protected, and the *population* element serves them when political power is to be acquired.

The doctrine of non-intervention is put forth and relied on, by our Northern friends, to justify their support of this bill. An examination of the bill shows that it is non-intervention mainly on one point, and non-intervention on that is to be effected by actual intervention. The Territory is now restricted from the approach of Slavery by law, and it can *only* enter by the intervention of Congress. An act of intervention is now to be resorted to, to carry out the principles of non-intervention said to be established in 1850. Under the plea of consistency with the principles of that legislation, a law is proposed, involving the greatest inconsistency. The doctrine of non-intervention is to be maintained by a direct act of intervention, in the abrogation of the old Missouri compromise. Moreover, the principle of non-intervention in our own Territories is to be made to sanction intervention with foreign Governments, and anticipated success in the extension of Slavery at home, comes heralded with warlike demonstrations to suppress emancipation abroad. But they say it is the great principle of Democracy—*self-government*—which they are advocating. When we consider, that so far from the people of Nebraska Territory having the right to self-government, it is expressly provided in this bill that the general laws made by Congress shall apply over them, they having no representation in the body which makes them, and that their Governor is to be appointed by the President, with a veto power over two-thirds of the Legislature, as well as their judges, the whole system of non-intervention in Territories—so popularly phrased—becomes a farce. It is the acting of Hamlet without the prince.

We have been told that the principles involved in this Territorial system are those of the old contest of the British Colonies; that we are imposing unjust restrictions; that we deny to our fellow-citizens a capacity for republican government; that the policy which Lord North and his Tory confederates held towards the Colonies is the policy which we, the opposers of this bill, recommend towards the people of the Territories. This is said because we are resisting the attempt to open the gates of Slavery, now closed by law; and this charge is made by men, too, who have given us a Territorial bill which provides for taxation without representation, and, as I have said before, militates against many other principles of self-government? To make their case analogous to that of the Colonies, is assuming for them a position which they never had under any interpretation of Territorial relations since the Government was established. And this is not the most fortunate subject of legislation wherewith to prove the analogy of the case. Chief among the charges of complaint made by our Colonial fathers against George III, was this: "that he had prostituted his negative for suppressing every legislative attempt to prohibit or restrain this execrable com-

merce" of Slavery. If we were now forcing Slavery into the Territory, instead of "restraining its commerce" there, the argument of analogy would have some application.

The doctrine that the people, in forming a State Constitution, had the right to decide for themselves whether they would prohibit or tolerate Slavery, was first formally announced in February, 1847, by Mr. Calhoun, who offered the following resolution to the Senate:

"*Resolved*, That it is a fundamental principle in our political creed, that a people, in forming a Constitution, have the unconditional right to form and adopt the Government which they may think best calculated to secure their liberty, prosperity, and happiness; and that, in conformity thereto, no other condition is imposed by the Federal Constitution on a State, in order to be admitted into the Union, except that its Constitution shall be republican, and that the imposition of any other by Congress would not only be in violation of the Constitution, but in direct conflict with the principle on which our political system rests."

The argument now addressed by the South on Territorial organization is, that *non-intervention* being established by Congress, the *rights of Slavery* will be established, and that slaves can be carried into the Territory, by rights *secured by the Constitution*—by that instrument which, in reference to human bondage, declares "that no person shall be deprived of life or liberty without due course of law!" Listen to what was said by Mr. CLAY, in a speech before the Senate, July 22, 1850:

"You cannot put your finger on the part of the Constitution which conveys the right or the power to carry slaves from one of the States of the Union to any Territory of the United States. Nor can I admit for a single moment that there is any separate or several rights, upon the part of the States, or individual members of a State, or any portion of the people of the United States, to carry slaves into the Territories, under the idea that these Territories are held in common between the several States."

Were he now living, he would join us heart and hand in resisting Southern dogmas.

The grand idea of popular sovereignty, said to be contained in this Territorial bill before us, is but a tub to catch the whale. It is reduced down mainly to non-intervention by Congress on the subject of Slavery, for the benefit of the South, and it should be so considered. Legal gentlemen differ as to the effect of non-intervention even on this subject. Constitutional law is variously construed, and the extended discussion of the Senate on this point has done but little to enlighten us on its practical operation. It appears to me that the Southern institution rests on intervention; that when the principle is establishad of non-intervention by Congress, that Slavery will lose its main support. Whether the old Louisiana law would be revived, on the repeal of the 36° 30′ restriction, has become a question. And while there is a doubt on it, let us adhere to that proviso in the bill, which was introduced to prevent it, "*Provided*, That nothing herein contained shall be construed to revive, or put in force, any law or regulation which may have existed prior to the act of March 6, 1820, either protecting or establishing, prohibiting or abolishing Slavery." It was added by a Southern Whig Senator, [Mr. BADGER,] who should have the credit of this attempt to do something for Northern benefit, in extracting the claws of the monster, which, when full grown, might be used to our injury.

Let that proviso stand, for it marks a boundary, even though it be an outer one.

But the details of this bill all sink into insignificance, compared with that one feature, which provides that Slavery may be made lawful where it is now unlawful, and it has become a moral as well as political question. The extent of territory to which this is to apply, the length of time which has passed since the law of Freedom was there established, the law being more than half as old as the Constitution itself, the recklessness with which this pledge of public faith is proposed to be broken, must necessarily excite and alarm the people of the North.

Aggression of Slavery is the main feature of the movement now being made. Not content with the secured rights of the slaveholders in the States, not satisfied with those portions of acquired territory made slave territory by consent of parties, it now seeks an extension of limits. Moreover, it is not on a new region, just acquired, that the demands of Slavery are now made, based on common rights in undivided estate, but on a portion of the Western territories, held by the North, by mutual agreement with the South, under which they have secured and now hold so much slave territory on their part. From this great territory which, by arrangement, by legislation, and by common understanding, has been given to Freedom, they now attempt to remove that restriction which has, up to this time, effectually barred the progress of Slavery. Is not this an aggressive movement of Slavery? The line of 36° 30′, established in 1820, ordained by law, acquiesced in by the people, so far as the then existing territory is concerned, *is a fixed fact*, whether wisely or unwisely made. You may argue on it from now until doomsday; your expositions of law and the Constitution will be all in vain to satisfy the people that the Missouri Compromise is morally repealable. True, Congress can repeal technically the laws they have made; but they cannot annul the circumstances creating the original necessity of this law, nor the doings of the people under the law. The South cannot practically do it, if the North and South were willing to have all placed back as in 1820.

The argument of progress has been made in the course of the debate. It has been said that we are more enlightened for legislation now, and that we are not placed under the same necessities and circumstances as in 1820. The one will find illustration in our action on this bill—the other ignores all obligations under agreements. The lapse of time has but added to the strength of pledges, and the weight of obligation has been accumulating.

It is too late now to discuss the constitutionality of what is called the Missouri compromise act. I would as soon think of doubting the constitutionality of the Constitution itself, as to bring that of the Missouri compromise into question now. The work, as it was, of some of the most distinguished statesmen of that day, approved, as it has been, by the most learned jurists of our country, confirmed by universal acquiescence, and long considered as inviolable by the whole American people, sanctioned by such men as Pinckney, Adams, Crawford, Calhoun, Wirt, Clay, Webster, Lowndes, Barbour, and King, it requires some self-

esteem, as well as wisdom, to attempt to prove it unconstitutional now. But, for argument's sake, admitting the Southern view of its unconstitutionality, neither, sir, was the purchase of the country constitutional to which this compromise applies. The purchase of Louisiana was admitted by Mr. Jefferson, and all the distinguished men of the day, to be a violation of the Constitution, but no one on that account would undertake to undo Jefferson's acts. It has been approved and sanctioned by the people's acquiescence for fifty-one years, as the Missouri compromise has been for thirty-four years; and are they now to be overturned because they were originally illegal? Sir, suppose after a man had been married thirty-four years, with children and grandchildren settled about him, he should conclude that the clergyman who performed the marriage ceremony was unauthorized to do so, and that his marriage was illegal—would he repudiate the mother of his children? And so will not the American people repudiate the Missouri compromise. Mr. Chairman, is there any one who believes that the annexation of Louisiana, by purchase, was more constitutional than the establishment of the old Missouri compromise line? Is there a member from the South in this House who would act in that direction upon his scruples; and do not gentlemen lay themselves open to a charge of want of honest fairness, when they present this as a reason for pushing the measure now before us? I truly believe, sir, that the people of the North, South, and West, without the intervention of politicians, would stand by this old compromise with as much unanimity as they would give to any great question that is likely to come before them. I view this question practically; and let us not forget that the popular mind is never affected permanently by any wire-drawn theories of law or politics. Whether it was constitutional or not; whether those eminent men who concurred in its constitutionality really believed it to be so or not; whether the decisions of courts are sound or not, practically and morally the Missouri compromise is irrepealable.

It has been said here that the South must have more room; that diffusion of the slaves is asked for, not because it will increase their number, but because it is unsafe to have the slaves of the country so confined in space as they will be in a few years; and that, in this view, it is unreasonable to shut them out of common territory. The slave States have now nearly fifty per cent. more *territory* than the free States, and the free States have nearly fifty per cent. more *population* than the slave States. Now, if there is anything in the argument of expansion of the slave area to preserve Slavery, and that is to be the principle of future application, is it not time for the free States to come to a conclusion at once to resist all future Slavery aggression? What has given to the slave power the ascendency, the management of Government, the wielding of the political power of the nation, and the control over our legislation? It is not population, for they have now only nine millions, (including their three million slaves,) against the thirteen millions of the free States. Of the two, it must be territory; for there are in the slave States nine hundred thousand square miles, in the free States only six hundred thousand. We have the advantage in *population*, and lose; they the most *territory*, and gain the power. This should

be well considered, at a time when they are grasping at additional power through the removal of a Slavery barrier, time-honored, and heretofore sacred, the very attempt furnishing a striking illustration of the recklessness of Slavery aggression.*

Heretofore the South has complained of agitation in the North, but now the North has reason to complain not only of agitation but aggression from the South. The South may succeed in this encroachment on the rights of the North, but I ask gentlemen to consider what is to enure to the South by this bill to abrogate the restricting clause of the Missouri compromise. The North are not going to sit down supinely, and see this work of aggression go on. You will drive them to means which they well know how to use. They will form Nebraska associations, and furnish the pecuniary means for emigrating there. They will send out their people by thousands; and, sir, you may judge what disposition towards Slavery such settlers will possess. Yankee free schools will be established, "meeting houses" erected, and *Northern clergymen* will be on that field of duty. The *free press*, that busy and mighty agent, will be there too. After you have driven the North to secure by these artificial appliances what was theirs by law, when those who have been carried there under such circumstances shall have got this moral machinery at work, I ask, again, what will the South have gained? Sir, in my opinion, so far as regards their cherished object—the propagation of Slavery institutions—they have proceeded most unwittingly in pressing this measure, so obnoxious to the North.

I well recollect, Mr. Chairman, that in 1850 a Southern Senator, [Mr. BADGER,] strongly appealing to the North against applying the Wilmot proviso to the Territories of Utah and New Mexico, after showing that nothing could be gained by so doing, as Slavery would not become part and parcel of those Territories, asked why the North, having nothing to gain thereby, would insist upon doing an act which the South considered ungracious and unneighborly, and provocative of resentment and ill-feeling? How is it with the *South* now? Is it because the North refrained at that time from doing what was represented as so distateful to the South, that they are now pushing a measure so offensive to the North, not merely in reference to the future, but by the repeal of an act in which the legislation of the past thirty years has been involved?

I know, Mr. Chairman, that there are some here, and I would fain hope that there are many, to whom this measure has as few charms as it has to me, bnt who, nevertheless, are constrained to take a course different from that which my judgment and my conscience dictate to

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* The last census shows—

The area of the slave States to be	928,947	square miles.
That of the free States	643,326	"
Difference in favor of slave States	285,621	"
Population of slave States		9,663,997
Population of free States		13,434,849.
Difference in favor of free States		3,770,842

me. Considering it a sectional movement, and that, as such, the bill before us will not receive, in full measure, the opposition which the merits of the details of the bill would independently elicit, I am pained to see it supported by Northern men, without whose aid this fountain of the bitter waters of strife could never be opened. Well may the North exclaim, on reading the list of ayes on this measure, "and *you*, too, my sons!"

The passage of the abrogation of the Missouri compromise should be no cause for exultation to any lover of his country. He only who can enjoy the angry contentions of different sections, who can laugh at those convulsions which cause patriots to mourn, can see cause to rejoice in the passage of the bill before us. I am not of the school of political Abolitionists. Their motto, as given by the honorable gentleman from New York, [GERRIT SMITH,] is "unconditional, entire, and immediate abolition." To such a doctrine I cannot subscribe. Nothing seems to me more visionary, however sincere; nothing more impracticable, however earnestly sought. They may be the instruments of ultimate good; but oh! through what evil would that good come, if their system were tested by actual accomplishment! I would as soon undertake to extinguish the running fire of the prairie, by treading with naked feet the burning grass, as to abolish Slavery through the way proposed by the Abolitionist. It has grown with our growth, and strengthened with our strength. It must be treated in the light of political economy, as well as by a theory of morals. The problem, I know, is a difficult one to solve.

The present political power of Slavery is startling. The three hundred thousand slaveholders, scattered through one half the States of the Union, hold not the *balance* of power, but *constitute* the political power of the Government; and this they do through the three millions of slaves they hold. How long this is to continue, none can tell. I have faith in the progress and prosperity, moral and material, of my country. God, in his infinite wisdom, has ways past finding out. A few years ago, Ireland, with her famishing people, was a subject of deep anxiety to the leading men of Great Britain, and presented to the world a problem of humanity which neither philanthropy, philosophy, nor patriotism, could solve. But the whole was made plain when the Irish exodus to the land of liberty commenced. I believe that America is an instrument of christianizing, civilizing, and elevating the negro race, though the elements of civilization come to them through the bitter draught of Slavery. But this no more justifies the propagation of Slavery than the improved political and social condition of the Irish here justifies the hard policy of England, which drove them from their country. I do not consider this question in reference to the blacks merely. It is one affecting the moral interests of our own people.

Whatever good and whatever evil there is in agitation, is now to be shared between the Southern politician and the political Abolitionist. The conservatism of the North, so long attacked by the Abolition party, is now made the object of taunt by the South. The slaveholder and Abolitionist have become political agitators, and on this ground are political allies; allied, too, against those who have been disposed to

denounce radicalism, from whichever side. Too late now for the South to point the finger at the sectional agitator, for *they* are taking their turn at the same game. If they succeed in passing this bill, they will have served the purposes of their bitterest opponents on the Slavery question. Succeeding in this, you strike down not solely the Missouri compromise act, but the superstructure and foundation of every compromise go with it, and no ground left whereon to construct another—nothing left to interpose between the Southern institution and the sharp demands of the extremist of the North. If the South want this state of things, let me assure them they will certainly secure it through the passage of the bill before us. Moreover, aggression brings resistance, and restoration will follow abrogation.

NOTE.—The bill was adopted on Monday, May 22d, by the following vote:

	For.	*Against.*
Democrats from slave States	57	4
Democrats from free States	43	43
Whigs from slave States	13	5
Whigs from free States	—	41
Free-Soil	—	4
	113	100