

Annual
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articles of confederation to levy taxes for their respective proportions of
"all charges of war, and all other expenses incurred for the common defence
and general welfare". Whether these taxes were laid by Congress, or the
States, they were paid by the people of the States; and it was equally
important, in either case, to convert the public lands into a permanent
fund for paying the debts, and expenses of the Union, which must
otherwise have been provided for by oppressive taxes, and imposts.

They were ceded by the States, and accepted by the United
States, for that purpose: and it is difficult to conjecture, upon what
authority they can be applied to any other use, or purpose whatever.

It was, indeed apprehended, that a dissolution of the
Union, might revive the territorial question, and create other disputes,
on the same subject. In the 7th N^o of the Federalist, it is urged,
as a reason for adopting the Constitution, that if the Union were
at an end, "the States which have made Cessions on a principle
of Federal Compromise, would be apt when the motive of the
grant had ceased, to reclaim the Lands as a reversion. The other
States would, no doubt insist on a proportion by right of representa-
tion. Their argument would be, that a grant once made, could
not be revoked; and that the justice of their participating in terri-
tory acquired or secured by the joint efforts of the Confederacy
remained undiminished. If contrary to probability, it should
be admitted by all the States, that each had a right to a share
of this common stock, there would still be a difficulty as to a
proper rule of apportionment. Different principles would be set
up by different States, for this purpose; and as they would affect
the opposite interests of the parties, they might not easily be
susceptible of a pacific adjustment."

It is remarkable that the difficulties anticipated in relation
to this subject. From a dissolution of the Union, are likely to arise from the
agitation of the scheme to distribute the proceeds of the public lands. The old
States contend for a share, according to representation; the new States
insist upon more, and some of them are disposed to claim all the
unsold tracts within their limits. The Southern States might
claim an interest in proportion to their whole population: while
the ceding States might expect a retrocession, on the ground,
that the territory was no longer wanted for the purposes of the grant.

The Land Bill passed by Congress in 1833, and vetoed
by General Jackson, provided for a distribution of the proceeds of
the whole public domain, whether included in the original bounda-
ries of the United States, or in the Cessions of Louisiana and the