

Message

of the war, and the payment of interest on monies borrowed on the credit of the United States, or for any other joint benefit of the United States."

The position occupied by Maryland during the revolution cannot be misunderstood by any one who has examined the subject. She then contended, that the money arising from the sale of the public lands, ought to be deemed as part of the monies belonging to the United to the United States, and paying the interest of the National debt, or for any other joint benefit of the United States. She asked for no part of this fund for the payment of her own debts, — for no distribution of it among the States for their separate use, — but as a member of the Union, contended that it ought to be appropriated by Congress to those general purposes for which the Union was established. The men who then directed her Councils, did not perceive the advantage of drawing money from the National Treasury, and subjecting Congress to the necessity of replacing it by a tax on her own citizens; nor did it occur to them, that they were sacrificing the interest and honor of Maryland, by contending that the public territory was the property of the United States.

In the year 1821, the Legislature of this State, in examining the title to the Public Lands gave it their opinion, that by the Treaty of Peace in 1783 Great Britain relinquished to the United States all claim to the Government property and territorial rights of the same, and every part thereof; that the deed of session "at length completed the title of the United States, and placed it beyond controversy;" that the United States had, in this manner acquired an indisputable title to all the public lands east of the Mississippi; that the whole of the public lands "whether acquired by purchase, conquest or cession were emphatically the common property of the Union;" that, "so far as these lands have been sold, and the proceeds have been received into the National Treasury, all the States have derived a justly proportionate benefit from them; that so far as they have been appropriated for purposes of defence there is no ground of complaint; for the defence of every part of the Country is a common concern; and that, "so far as the proceeds have been applied to National and not State purposes, although the expenditures may have been local, the course of the general Government has been consonant to the principles and spirit of the Federal constitution."

The Legislature were then remonstrating against the partial appropriation of the public lands for purposes of education in the Western States; and were contending that the old States were entitled to a participation of the fund for similar purposes. There can be no doubt that all the States were entitled to a proportionate benefit from it, for any purpose to which it might be applied; but it is difficult to reconcile an appropriation of it for the support of State Schools, with the principles so clearly explained by the Legislature.

It was then distinctly stated, that so far as the proceeds of the public lands were paid into the National Treasury and applied to the defence of the Country, or to National, and not State purposes, there was no ground of complaint, because all the States received their just proportions of the benefit. These are precisely the opinions which were advanced in my message.

I endeavored to show, that the "claims which our forefathers asserted and maintained" had been established and confirmed by the Treaty of Peace, the deed of cession, and the constitution of the United States, and that all the States would continue to derive a proportionate benefit from the public lands, as long as the proceeds of sale were appropriated by Congress to the constitutional purposes of the