

Annual  
Message.

If the public lands had become a mine of wealth, as expected by Mr. Madison, and the revenue from that and other sources, had produced an unavoidable surplus beyond the expenditures of the General Government, there would be a strong inducement for amending the Constitution, so as to authorize the application of it to the relief of the States. But the expenses incurred on account of the public lands, including the cost of purchase, have been greater than the receipts; and the whole revenue of the United States is not more than equal to the annual expenditures. Therefore whatever portion is taken away, must be replaced by additional taxes on the people. The deficiency would be supplied by an increase of the tariff; and as the duties on imported articles form a part of their cost, they are increased, in proportion to the profits of the importers and retailers, till the tax finally paid, by the consumer, is twice as much as the revenue paid into the Treasury. Increased duties on wines, silks, and other luxuries, would not affect the great body of the people; but the policy of protection, enters into every adjustment of the tariff, and the American system as it is called, is best supported by taxes on the implements of trade and husbandry, on the materials for building and equipping ships, on clothing, blankets, sugar, salt, and other necessaries of life.

The people could derive no benefit from the distribution of any part of the public revenue, unless they were relieved at the same time from the necessity of paying back a much larger amount. But when the advocates of this scheme speak of returning money into the pockets of the people, they mean that it is to be transferred from their Representatives in Congress, to their Representatives in the different legislatures: that instead of being used for the common benefit of the Union, it ought to be applied to the separate use of twenty six States. Under such a plan of distribution, the proceeds of the public lands would be at as great a distance from the pockets of the people as they are now; and whether this portion of the public revenue be claimed for the people or the States, it is well for both to reflect that while they are appearing to be the advocates of State rights, they are really conveying powers to the General Government, which may be extended, to every object that requires the expenditure of money.

The assumption of State debts would probably follow, as a consequence of the distribution of the public revenue, and would only be an application of the same principle to a different object.