

posed on the latter. On this account therefore we have little reason to expect that the Patowmac is more unhealthy. If we consider their comparative situation with respect to the west, the Patowmac is almost as much farther west, as it is distant from the Susquehanna—and we well know that generally speaking as we retire towards the western and high country, we are generally removed from the causes of those diseases to which lower situations are exposed. As also the two places are nearly in the same latitude, the objection which holds with respect to southern climes cannot apply to one more than the other. It is only their western or eastern position, their remove from or proximity to the lower country, and to fresh or stagnant water which can properly be brought into view. It is not because we advance so much to the south that we advance to the centre, it is because we go more to the west. I do not know that there is a difference of more than a degree and five or six minutes between the latitude of New-York and the proposed place on the Patowmac. The advantage the Patowmac has from its centrality, is derived more from its western than its southern position.

I will not at present go farther in this argument, and flatter myself that the considerations which have been suggested will have their proper weight, and if they should be contradicted, that we shall be able further to support them.

Mr. Ames after some introductory observations, remarked that a central situation is to be taken. He offered many reasons to shew that the centre of a sea coast line is to be regarded.—In substance they were because, it is more conveniently accessible, has more wealth and more people than an equal area of inland country. Being more liable to invasion, government should be near to protect it. It is the interest of the back country to have the government near the sea, to inspect and encourage trade; by which their abundant produce will find an export.—And lastly, he said the contingency of the separation of the western country was a reason for preferring the sea coast.

He proceeded next to say—There will not be any contest where this centre of the sea coast line is to be found. It falls between the rivers Patowmac and Susquehanna. It will be found that there are good reasons why we should rather move east than south.

If the sea coast line is to be preferred, it will follow, that the back lands west of the Ohio, which the gentleman from Virginia has so often taken into his calculations, will be excluded. They are not peopled. They do not affect the sea coast line. And that line has already been voted to be the proper one by the committee. As it is true, that the sea coast has more wealth and people than the inland country in proportion to the extent, it is equally true that the eastern half of the sea coast has more of both than the southern. If we reckon Maryland, which will be as well accommodated by the Susquehanna as by the Patowmac, we shall find the population of the eastern part nearly two millions and that of the southern only one million. And the population of free inhabitants still less in favor of the latter.

But, Sir, instead of seeking a centre geographically, we should consider the centre of common convenience. That place is the proper one, where the greatest number of persons will be best accommodated. I will endeavor to shew, that that will be on the Susquehanna. Is the zeal of gentlemen who oppose this design influenced by their despair of removing the seat of government afterwards? I believe the people of America will not complain of it. If fixed there, I think it will be found convenient and will remain there.

The Susquehanna is the centre of common convenience. At this moment, there is more wealth and more inhabitants east than south of it. But the future population of America is calculated, and it is pretended that the balance of population is receding from the east. Surely, the present inhabitants may be allowed principally to consult their own convenience. West of the Ohio is an almost immeasurable wilderness. When it will be settled, or how it will be possible to govern it, is past calculation. Gentlemen will pardon me, if I think it perfectly romantic to make this decision depend upon that circumstance. Probably it will be near a century before those people will be considerable. If we fix the national seat in the proper place now, it would give me no inquietude to know that an hundred years hence it may be liable to be removed. But in fact, the principle which is assumed by the committee, and which I have attempted to justify, of taking the centre of the sea coast line, will even in the event of that vast tract being settled, furnish abundant reason for its remaining on the Susquehanna. I will not recapitulate those reasons. We must take some principle to guide us: And though some inequalities will appear, yet let gentlemen remember, that in so vast a country, great inconveniences will attend the communications of the people with the government, be the seat of it where it may: And by taking the centre of the sea coast line they will be less than upon any other principle. It will be found best to accommodate the greatest number: Or in other words to be the centre of common convenience. Indeed this is not denied to be true at this moment. But the case is said to be changing. On the one hand, I think it is utopian to calculate upon the population of the United States a century hence: And on the other, I admit that it is impolitic at least, perhaps unjust, to confine our attention to the present population: A quarter of a century may be a medium. Will gentlemen deny that trade and manufactures will accumulate people in the eastern States in the proportion of 5 to 3 compared with the southern? The disproportion will doubtless continue to be much greater than I have calculated. It is actually greater at present. For the climate and negro slavery are acknowledged to be unfavorable to population. So that husbandry as well as commerce and manufactures will give more people in the eastern than the southern States. The very circumstance that gentlemen found their reasonings upon is pretty strongly against their calculations. They tell us of the vast quantities of good land still unsettled in their States. That will produce a thin population. For the old lands will not be crowded so long as new lands are to be had.

So far, therefore, as we may be allowed to look forward, the eastern half from this central seat will be far more populous than the other. In New-England the settled parts are said to contain about 45 to a square mile.

Much is said of the separation of the western territory. At a remote period, the junction of the British colonies with the Union might be taken into view.

The seat of government on the Susquehanna will be nearly accessible by water to all the people near the sea coast. By Delaware river on one side and Chesapeake Bay on the other.

Let us next consider the inland navigation of this river. Pittsburgh on the Ohio may be considered as the key of those waters; at least to the northward. It is a kind of common centre. Let us see how we shall approach it by the Susquehanna.

From Havre de Grace, at the mouth of Susquehanna, }
and at the head of the Chesapeake to Wright's ferry is } 40 miles
(And here the federal town probably will be.)

To Harris' ferry, } 20
To the mouth of Juniata river, } 15
Up Juniata river to the Standing Stone, } 75
Portage to Conimac, Old town, } 30
Down the Kiskiminetas river to the Allegany river, } 60
Down that river to Pittsburgh, } 30

And from the supposed seat of government at Wright's }
ferry only } 230

Let us compare this route to Pittsburgh, with that by the Patowmac.

From the tide water on Patowmac to Fort }
Cumberland, } 200 miles
Portage to the three forks of Turkey Foot, } 30
Water carriage, and portage one mile, at the falls of } 9
Yohiogany, } 50
Down the Yohiogany to the Ohio, } 15
Up to Pittsburgh, } 15

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I have reason to confide in these calculations. The latter is said to be made by a distinguished person whose authority no man will dispute. If it is true, or any thing near true, it will destroy the whole argument in favor of the Patowmac. I have consulted the best informed persons out of the House, and believe the statement to be true, as it respects both rivers. If it is, the pondrous edifice which the gentleman from Virginia has erected with so much labor crumbles to powder. For it will appear, that it is more than 70 miles nearer by the Susquehanna and Juniata to Pittsburgh than by way of the Patowmac. Neither should we forget that from the tide water on the Patowmac to Chesapeake is near 200 miles. Of course, the access by water is less convenient and direct.

The eastern branch of the Susquehanna is navigable to the head, at lake Orlego. A detachment of Gen. Sullivan's troops came in boats from that lake quite down the river. This river stretches its long arms and embraces a vast country, comprehending not less than twenty millions of acres.

Let us next consider the connection through this water with the lakes. Its branches approach the Allegany river very near, and by a portage of only three miles communicate with the waters of Lake Erie.

Reckoning from Fort Pitt, Lake Erie and its waters, and the several branches of the Susquehanna, it will be found that more than fifty thousand square miles are accommodated with water carriage. Perhaps, out of America, there is not such another instance in the world. Yet this is not all. The water communication by the Patowmac is subservient to the argument for the Susquehanna. For if the western country is so wonderfully accommodated by its waters, that it is an high-way, then it is only 60 miles travel, a mere portage, to Wright's ferry. They will be on a footing with those who come by sea, and they will have still greater advantages over many of those who travel by land.

However, Mr. Jefferson's account of the Patowmac does not correspond with the praises now bestowed upon it. He says the falls are fifteen miles long, and speaks very unfavorably of the interior navigation. In the summer its waters are very subject to fail. My informants prefer the waters of the Susquehanna. Admitting, however, that the Patowmac is as commodious as the other, still there are weighty reasons in favor of its rival.

The advantage to the neighboring country in point of trade, resulting from the federal town, is very unessential in a national view. The people on the Patowmac will not be injured in the conveyance or sale of their produce by having it fixed on the Susquehanna. For the influence of the federal town in this respect will not extend far. And as to the convenient access to the government: It will make only sixty miles difference which surely is not an object. But the great national point is, to fix the seat of government in that place, where it will best secure the Union.

The Patowmac is in some degree exposed to two dangers: By sea, and from the mountains: Large vessels can go to Georgetown. The events of the late war have proved that there is a foundation for this apprehension. The western country is to be viewed under different circumstances. From Lake Erie, by Pittsburgh, to the head of the Chesapeake, the people are naturally connected with us. They must send their produce through the States. But lower down the Ohio, and on the Mississippi, the people have their export by the latter river. If the latter should separate from the Union, they will not be willing to leave the southern States in the Union. The separation will not take place by the mountains, which are far from being impassable. The capital, if imprudently placed so far southwest, will furnish a temptation to this division, and strength and resources to maintain it. I will not dilate on this idea, tho I think it an important one. The more it is weighed, the more hazardous and preposterous it will appear, to place the capital in a situation, where gentlemen's own arguments admit, when they speak of the contingency of losing the western country, that we may need all our strength, and yet, where we should be able to command but a small part of it.

Contrast this with the Susquehanna. The country is perfectly safe from both dangers of invasion by sea and from the mountains. If a division should happen, the seat of government will fall on the right side of the dividing line—and so much strength on the frontier of that line will prevent a division. For the country from Lake Erie to Fort Pitt, and from thence to Lake Champlain, vast in its extent, its soil fruitful, its climate favorable to the production of an hardy race of men, and to sustain a vast multitude of them—this vast country will be benefited in some degree, and in a greater attached to the Union by fixing the seat of government in this place. Besides, nature has united them by indissoluble ties to the States—unless a feeble government should engender the anarchy of many separate sovereignties. It is a pleasing reflection to trace the effect of the strength of this part of the western territory towards securing the remaining western region in the Union. In every event, the country, east of

a line drawn from Lake Erie to the Chesapeake, will be safe from the force of any other part of America—will that other part be safe from this eastern part? The national justice and the wisest policy should direct our counsels, yet ambitious men will find a motive and a pretext for fomenting a division. But those near the line of the eastern half will be unwilling to be a frontier. Those farther south will be equally so—and what barrier, in case of a separation, have they to oppose to their northern neighbors? The mountains furnish none, and both parties live beyond them. The great rivers will expose them to hostile inroads, as they will afford a convenient passage to troops. In fact, the western people will secure the western people. If the separation should notwithstanding take place, it would not be because nature directs it. We should have the consolation of reflecting that we have provided the best means of preventing its happening at all, and from it, after it has happened, the best security against the effects which will result.

I will not pretend to say that any one of these arguments is conclusive—nor do I flatter myself that they will immediately produce conviction. I place dependence on the moderation and good sense of gentlemen who possess public spirit and private honor. I rely upon the calm review which they will make of my observations a week hence, when the fervor of this debate has subsided.

I appeal to their candor at that time to decide whether in point of centrality, accessibility, protection to the Union, salubrity, and safety from insurrection and invasion, there is not solid reason for establishing the seat of government on the Susquehanna. I will not say that the Patowmac is infalubrious. But it is well known that northern constitutions are impaired by removing to a more southern latitude. The air may be healthful—but the change is found to be pernicious to them. Whether there is any foundation for it, or not, the eastern people would dread the experiment.

The preservation of the Union is the worthiest object of a patriot's wishes. The world has doubted our success. I feel a consolation in the opinion that the measure I am contending for will best contribute to that end. An American legislature may seek true glory by such measures as will tend to secure the Union, to preserve peace, and to diffuse the blessings of science, liberty, and good government over a greater extent of country, and in an higher degree, than the world ever enjoyed them. Surely this will interest the pride of every honest heart. It is the philosophy of ambition—it is the religion of politics.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12.

A message was received from the Senate by Mr. Secretary Otis with the bill for establishing the compensations of the Members of the two Houses and their respective officers, concurring in the amendment of the House, to the amendment of the Senate.

In committee of the whole on the bill for establishing judicial courts.

Mr. BOUDINOT in the chair.

The committee proceeded in the discussion as far as the 28th section, when they rose and reported progress; and the House adjourned.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14.

The committee appointed to examine the enrolled bills, reported that the bill for establishing the compensations of the Members of both Houses and their respective officers, having been examined was found correct: The Speaker then affixed his signature to the same.

A memorial from the BARON DE STUBEN was read and laid on the table.

The memorial of the weathers and gaugers of the city of New-York, praying that their fees may be enhanced, was read a second time.

A message was received from the Senate with the bill for suspending the operation of a clause in the collection law, in which they have concurred, with amendments. Also the bill for suspending the operation of a clause in the tonnage act, non-concurred.

The amendments proposed by the Senate to the resolution of the House providing for amendments to the Constitution, were read, and on motion it was voted that a number of copies be struck off for the use of the Members.

The amendments to the bill for suspending the clause in the collection law, were then read, and acceded to on the part of the House.

These amendments provide for the relief of Rhode-Island and North-Carolina, in lieu of the provision intended by the suspension of part of tonnage act.

The House then went into a committee of the whole on the judicial bill.

Mr. SMITH (S. C.) proposed the following amendment to the 29th section, which respected juries, viz. That all juries which shall be summoned to serve in the courts of the United States, shall be formed according to the laws of each State respectively. This amendment was adopted.

Mr. BURKE moved to insert the following clause in the same section, viz. In cases of felony and