Cumberland Road Debates (March, 1806)

This excerpt is from the proceedings of the United States Congress as they debated funding for the construction of the Cumberland Road. Although the produce and trade in the American hinterland held tremendous promise, poor transportation avenues sharply limited the types of goods that could be safely transported and raised the cost of those goods dramatically. As you read the debate, consider the difficulty faced by supporters of the road as they tried to convince their reluctant colleagues of its value. What arguments did they make in favor of the road? What arguments did their opponents make against it? What was the proper role for the federal government in a project that inevitably would benefit some but not all of the states?

Congressional Globe,

The Cumberland Road
DEBATE IN THE SENATE, February 26, 1836,
On the bill making an appropriation for the completion of the Cumberland Road in the States of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri.

Mr. CLAY, after a few preliminary remarks, said he felt then, as he always did, a great solicitude for this road; but he owned he felt also some difficulties on the subject. The great system of internal improvements which he had advocated for so many years had been suspended, and by the cooperation, too, of the very States most interested in the system, and for whose benefit this road was to be made. The States of Tennessee and Kentucky had received less money from the Government than any other two States in the Union. In the project to extend a great leading road from Nashville to the Gulf of Mexico, an appropriations a most important link from Maysville to Lexington, in forming a connection between that road and the Cumberland road, had been vetoed: and Kentucky had, by her own enterprise, to make the road herself. If he were to listen to a spirit of resentment, he might say he would withhold his support until all the States received equal benefits; but he was willing to go on to the Mississippi, and also to aid in those improvements east of the Wabash, to a reasonable extent. He hoped the gentlemen from Indiana (Mr. Hendricks and Mr. Tipton) would let them circumscribe the appropriation, until bridges were built over the Wabash and Ohio rivers. The country embraced in this part of the road was poor and thinly settled, and, he thought, did not require so much expenditure now.

Mr. C. then moved to amend the bill by striking out $920,000, the appropriation for the road in the State of Ohio, and inserting $200,000; and by striking out $350,000, appropriated for the road in the State of Indiana, and inserting $100,000.

Mr. TIPTON observed that he would not have troubled the Senate with a single remark on the subject now under consideration, had he not found opposition to this measure from a quarter quite unexpected and new to him; and he had no doubt that it will be news to his constituents that they were not prepared to expect.

The Senator from Kentucky, [Mr. CLAY,] who moved to reduce the appropriation to the amount applied on the road last year, was surely not seriously hostile to the continuation of it, after
having supported this work, with great ability, for thirty years; and he could not believe that he wanted it abandoned, but rather wished to reduce the sum required, that the road might be longer in progress. The gentleman wanted to be six years doing what he (Mr. T.) proposed to do in three. Something had been said with regard to the number of hands that could be employed economically. On this subject doubts had been expressed as to whether a sufficient number of hands could be found to perform the work. We are now (said Mr. T.) in progress of constructing but two public works in the State, the Wabash canal and the Cumberland road. Contractors have gone from public works already completed in New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio, and they have taken with them hands, generally Irish laborers, and tools sufficient to go on with these works. They were now, and would remain, on those works until they were finished, if the money to continue them was appropriated; but if you cut down and limit the appropriation, (said Mr. T.) you put off the time of finishing the road, and you double the expenses.

The State of Indiana has appropriated ten millions of dollars for internal improvements, had organized a board of public works to conduct them. Two canals, two railroads, and one turnpike road, were to be made, and the board would meet in a few days to determine on their plan of operations for this year. If you make a large appropriation (said Mr. T.) for the national road, it is probable that the State will not commence any of her new works this year; for the Wabash canal and national road may employ all the hands now there; but if you reduce the appropriation as proposed by the motion of the honorable Senator, there will not be sufficient funds to pay for the labor of all the hands now there, and they must seek employment elsewhere. Thus you will procrastinate the time, and double the expense of finishing the road. No good reason had been assigned for reducing the sum proposed in the bill. It was admitted on all hands that there was abundant money in the Treasury; and the Senator from Ohio had shown clearly, to his mind, that they might pass this bill, the fortification bill, and the favorite land bill of the Senator from Kentucky, and still they would have a large surplus at the beginning of the year 1837.

When this bill was before the Senate, some days ago, an honorable Senator from South Carolina [Mr. CALHOUN] moved to lay it on the table; and he understood him to say that he made the motion to prevent heavy drafts being made on the Treasury, until he was informed whether we were to have peace or war. The gentleman was kind enough to withdraw his motion - for which I thank him - to give the friends of the bill an opportunity to explain and defend it. I am happy now, Sir, (said Mr. T.) to say that a favorable change in our foreign relations justifies me in assuring the Senator that there is no reason to apprehend war from any quarter, unless it be those skirmishes that happen now and then with the Indians on our frontier; but should it ever become necessary for us, as a nation, to choose between war and a dishonorable peace, he had no doubt the Senator from South Carolina and himself, whether at that time citizens or Senators, would be found contending, side by side, for the honor of the country. He could not suppose that the Senator from South Carolina was actuated by other motives in making that motion than a strong sense of public duty. He had too long known him as a friend to internal improvement, to believe that any other motive could influence him to vote against an appropriation for the national road.

He confessed that he was surprised to see a newspaper friendly to the Senator, in noticing his motion to lay the bill on the table, attempt to give it a party coloring, the paper remarking that his motion caused a fluttering among the friends of the Administration. He would regret to see the question on the passage of this bill made a party question; indeed he did not see how it could be made so. It never had been considered a party measure; and of the political parties that had
existed in this country for the last thirty years, some members have supported, and others have opposed appropriations for the national road, without regard to political bearing. If proof were wanting at this late day to establish national character of this road, he could refer to an able report, made by the honorable Senator himself, while he was at the head of an important Department of the Government, to be found at page 61 of the Senate's Documents, second session of the Nineteenth Congress. It was there shown that the continuation of the Cumberland road to St. Louis was of national importance.

This had never been questioned.

The Cumberland road was commenced under a law of Congress of 29th March, 1806, while Mr. Jefferson was President of the United States; it was favored by him, and by every Administration since his day; by none less than by the present Administration. It was true that this road had many friends among the present party in power, and it was equally true that it had able and efficient supporters among those who did not support the present Administration. Others opposed this road on grounds satisfactory to themselves and their constituents; and we have no right (said Mr. T.) to object to their opposition; but I protest against a bill of so much importance to those whom I have the honor in part to represent, being condemned to die on your table, without giving to its friends a hearing.

Mr. T. begged honorable Senators to come up to a vote on this bill, not as a party question, but as a measure in which both national faith and national honor were pledged to the young States of the West, for the completion of this road to Missouri. The act of Congress of 1806, to which he alluded, and to which he begged leave to refer gentlemen who had doubts on the subject, authorized a survey of a road from Cumberland, in Maryland, or from a point on the Potomac river, near Cumberland, over the mountains, to the State of Ohio; and provides that the money, $30,000, appropriated for that object was to be refunded to the Treasury out of the fund set apart by the compact between the United States and the State of Ohio, for making roads leading to that State. By compacts between the United States and the new States, a portion of the proceeds of the sales of the public lands was set apart for the purpose of making roads leading to them; and the continuation of this road was in compliance with these compacts entered into, he might say, with the whole West, which would ere long be more than one half the Union. Under this compact, these States, on their admission into the Union, relinquished the right to tax lands owned by the United States, or lands sold by them within their limits for five years from their sale; and the United States agreed to give to these new States lands for education, salines, and this road fund as an equivalent for their right of taxation.

Mr. T. put the vote on the bill on the ground of complying with the compact between the United States and the new States of the Northwest. We have a right (said Mr. T.) to expect appropriations to continue this road to the far West, not as a gift or a grant to the new States, but in compliance with an agreement between the General Government and their people at the time of their admission into the Union. Were there no compact, the United States, being the great landholder in the new States, would find it both their interest and their duty to contribute' money for constructing a road leading to their own lands.

Those who opposed this road surely had not a hope of arresting its progress westward; for as population increased in the older States, the young and the enterprising naturally looked to the
West for a residence and future home, and they emigrated to the Mississippi valley. He was forcibly struck with a remark made by an honorable Senator from South Carolina, [Mr. PRESTON.] He told us yesterday (said Mr. T.) that the western people were not the purchasers of the public lands; that it was the people of the East and South who purchased them. This was true to a certain extent. As population increased, the young and the enterprising, quitting the land of their nativity and the homes of their fathers, emigrated to the West, and became the purchasers of the public lands. We are always (said Mr. T.) glad to receive them. They make valuable citizens; they contribute to fill your Treasury, and unite with us in adding to the wealth and power of the nation. Hence, the construction of the road was equally beneficial to the old and the new States; and its extension must keep pace with the extension of our settlements towards the far West.

A settlement had already commenced on the west fork of the Mississippi, above the State of Missouri; and it would not be ten years before these people would form a State government, and apply for admission into the Union. This country would make a fine State; extending up the Missouri river, far above the State of Missouri, toward the Rocky mountains; the inhabitants would be our neighbors, our friends; they would become purchasers of the public lands, and would they not have a right to expect the mail sent to them> and is it to be expected that they would not demand an extension of the national road? They surely would. And he could not doubt that this road would go on to the foot of the Rocky mountains, perhaps cross them, to the Pacific ocean. The sales of the public domain will afford the means, and we will apply it; and I cannot doubt that Congress will, as they have heretofore, apply them to that object.

In 1829 Congress made an appropriation to remove the timber from the road through the State of Indiana, and to grade the banks, preparatory to making it a turnpike road. The timber had been removed, and near half the road, was graded, half the bridges were constructed, and stone prepared to cover a small portion of the good graveled road. Putting the stone in the road, is the most expensive part of road making. This is the reason why a heavy appropriation is now asked for. If the graded road was not covered with stone, the travel on the road would destroy the grade, and the work would have to be done over again next year.

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. CLAY] told them that he rather thought that the country through which this road passed in Indiana and Illinois was thinly settled, and that it was a long distance between houses on some parts of the road. He would not undertake to say how the fact was as regards the road in Illinois; the Senators from that State would no doubt inform the Senate; but he assured the Senator from Kentucky that every acre of public lands along the road in Indiana had been purchased from the United States; that the country was densely populated; and farms, though not quite as extensive as they were in Kentucky, were much more numerous, and villages were growing up at short intervals along the road.

That Senator had also been pleased to allude to the support given to the present Administration by friends of the bill now before them; and he said that the States southwest of the Ohio wanted a branch of this road, which was denied them; and called upon the friends of the national road to do even-handed justice to the States south, as well as to those north, of the Ohio River.
Sir, (said Mr. T.,) if that gentleman will look at our Journals, I think he will find that several friends of this national road voted for the bill to which he alludes - the Maysville and Lexington road bill. If it did not become a law, it was no fault of theirs.

With regard to his feeble support (said Mr. T.) of this or any other Administration, he could only be influenced by the Executive as by other public men. He would go with them just so far, and no further than they pursued that course which he thought sustained the honor and interest of his country. He looked to the wishes of a majority of his constituents, and to his own judgment of what was right and wrong, for his rule of conduct here; not to the will of a Chief Magistrate, or of any other public or private individual. He cared not who was President of the United States, if he administered the Government agreeably to the Constitution and the laws. If he does this, (said Mr. T..) he has a right to expect my support, and upon no other terms.

We have been told (said Mr. T.) during the discussion of this bill, that the great system of internal improvement by the General Government had been suspended. Why, sir, this was no fault of the friends of the national road. It was owing, as he believed, to a change in public opinion; public sentiment on the subject of internal improvement by this Government was not now what it was in 1825. In that year an appropriation was made to prosecute surveys, with a view of constructing roads and canals in different parts of the Union. The United States engineer went to work; civil engineers were employed to assist them; and surveys were extensively made for the purpose of ascertaining the probability of making a number of roads and canals. In 1828, a great political conflict terminated, that brought a new party into power. The veto by the Chief Magistrate of the Maysville and Lexington road bill, and the message that accompanied the return of that bill, set the people to reflecting on the subject of internal improvement on their own resources by the States, or by chartered companies; before that time, but three States, New York, (stimulated and led on by her Clinton,) Pennsylvania, and Ohio had embarked extensively in internal improvement. What, he now asked, was the fact in 1836? Why, sir, many States were making large appropriations for constructing roads, railroads, and canals. The people looked this way now no longer for aid, unless for the improving of our rivers, though the improving of some rivers, the Wabash, for instance, had been denied them; to his utter astonishment, and to the serious injury of a large portion of the West.

The Senator objected to a new proposition, as he called it, in this bill for a bridge over the Wabash at Terre Haute, and said that the Ohio river was not bridged where this road crossed it, nor was the United States called on to bridge the Muskingum at Zanesville. Now, sir, (said Mr. T..) I do not remember that a proposition for a bridge across the Ohio at Wheeling was ever submitted to Congress; and I am confident that I have not opposed it, though I will not now give a pledge to support it, if the proposition is made hereafter. A bridge had been constructed over the Muskingum at Zanesville before the Cumberland road reached that place; and the Sciota and White rivers had bridges over them at the expense of the United States. This proposition to bridge the Wabash was not new to the Senate; a bill passed that body three years ago containing an appropriation for that object in an amendment made by the Senate to a bill from the House, and the House of Representatives, for reasons that he would not trouble the Senate with relating at this time, refused to concur in the amendment. This was near the close of the session; and fearing that the bill would be lost between the two Houses, in the hurry and bustle on the last day of the session, the Senate receded from its amendment, that the bill might become a law.
An opinion was entertained by some that a bridge could not be constructed over the Wabash at Terra Haute without interrupting the navigation of the river. This, if true, would have been a sufficient reason why a bridge should not be constructed, as one fourth of the people of Indiana and a large portion of Illinois are interested in the navigation of the river above that place, and to remove all doubt upon the subject, the Secretary of War was instructed by a resolution of this Senate to cause an examination to be made of the site for a bridge, and to report the facts, with a plan and estimate of the probable cost of the work, to be laid before Congress. This report had been received, printed, and laid on our tables, and gave satisfactory evidence that the bridge could be constructed on a plan that would not obstruct the navigation of the river; and one item of appropriation in the bill now on your table is for procuring materials, and for the commencement of the bridge over the Wabash at Terre Haute.

It was of much more importance to the States west of Indiana than to her, that a bridge should be constructed at the point where the national road crossed the Wabash, which was within nine miles of the western boundary of Indiana; and every western Senator surely knew that the United States mail could not pass that river without a bridge, when the ice was floating, and that the mail, at such periods, would be arrested in its progress to the States and Territories west of that river; all travel and communication would be cut off for a part of the winter, and this would produce a state of things exceedingly embarrassing to a very large portion of the western country.

The Senator objected to the amount intended to be appropriated by this bill, and said that it was too large, and that we were satisfied in bygone days with far less appropriations. He said further, that although he did it with great reluctance, yet he felt compelled by his sense of public duty to move to reduce the appropriation to what it was last year. It was true, (said Mr. T.,) that when the Treasury was drained to the last dollar, with the war debt unpaid, and a limited commerce, we were satisfied to take less from the Treasury; but it should be remembered that, at the time the honorable gentleman referred to, our population was far less than now. Our settlements were then confined to a region of country bordering on the Ohio and Mississippi rivers; but the last seven years had wrought a wonderful change in our population, condition, and business. The heaviest population at this time was in counties back from the Ohio river, in the center and north part of the State, through which this road was being constructed. He had reason to regret the loss of that able and efficient support that that honorable Senator had given this measure in bygone days. Separating from him on a vote for internal improvement was like parting with an old friend; but the best friend, it was said, must part; and we must continue the National road without his aid if he will not stick to us; though I can scarcely bring myself to believe that he will abandon his old favorite, the Cumberland road. I am (said Mr. T.) an advocate for an energetic prosecution of this work. In two or three years I hope to see this road finished through Indiana, when the States west of her will have an equal claim to to heard; and I cannot doubt that this national work will go on to the Rocky Mountains. The Senator had always been distinguished for marching boldly up to his object, and he was not prepared to find him advocating the propriety or the expediency of tardy operations. We now possess most ample means; and in my judgment we should prosecute the work vigorously to Missouri before we pause.

Something was said by the gentleman in reference to the population of the States southwest, and those northwest of the Ohio river. By the census of 1830, it appeared that there was a small fraction in favor of the southwestern States; but it would hardly be contended at this time that
there was not a greater population in four States northwest of the Ohio river, than in five southwest States, including Kentucky and Tennessee. Should the southwestern States desire to apply their road fund to construct a branch of the Cumberland road through Kentucky and Tennessee, to the new States bordering on the Gulf of Mexico, he should raise no objection; but if they declined applying their road fund in that way, it could be pleaded in bar of our right to apply our fund to the national road leading to, and through, the northwestern States; this being the legitimate object for which their fund was provided by the agreement between the General Government and the new States.

Mr. CLAY did not think there was much in the arguments based upon the compact in relation to the two per cent. on lands. It was well known that the whole amount of it had been a thousand times exhausted. The only justification for the appropriation, was to he found in the right of the General Government to make these roads. There might be something in the argument of its enhancing the value of these lands. There has been several thousand acres of land in Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, appropriated for roads. It could not be expected, that they should yearly expect to see these roads continued in these new States, while no appropriations were made to internal improvement in the old States; that they would not have some feeling on the, subject, while lavishing money on one side of the river they could not expect indifference on the other side. We have before as (said Mr. C.) a great project for the equitable disposition of the whole of the proceeds of the public domain by which, all would be equally benefited by its provisions, but an attempt was being made to defeat it, which, if successful, he should much regret. He had not come to the conclusion to vote against these improvements. He would vote a moderate sum for this road. When the House of Representatives balanced upon these improvements, it was not. for him to say who had stood by them. This was not a commercial road, except in the immediate neighborhood of some of the rivers, and was more far the benefit of neighborhood intercourse; the accommodation of persons traveling from the seat of justice of one county or State to another. The rivers were the great seats of commerce. There were no bridges erected over the Muskingum or Ohio rivers where this road crossed them. Had a southwestern branch of it been made by the Government through Tennessee, Alabama, &c, to the gulf, it would have accommodated the trading and traveling population ten to one over the present route; the prevention of which, he imputed to the policy of the present Administration; and on account of which, he indulged in some tart remarks upon the course of the Administration, which, he said were painful to make, but were wrong from him by this policy, which made them feel on one side of the river as though they were outlawed and aliens to the liberality of the Government, while it was lavish, of its munificence on the other side. The gentlemen should ask in moderation, as not to endanger the general proposition to distribute the surplus fund among: all the States. You cannot, said he, get the labor to consume this large appropriation, without disturbing agricultural pursuits.

It was natural that gentlemen should feel anxious and even zealous m behalf of their immediate constituents. It was said that stone was hauled to the bed of the road, and, ready to be put on. Stone, of all other materials, was the most imperishable, and ought not to be put on the road immediately. The ground ought to have time to settle before they were placed on it. The road from the Wabash to the Mississippi would cost from ten to fifteen thousand dollars per mile. The stone, in some instance, would have to be hauled ten or twelve miles to the bed of the road. Things in this world did not always go on as they wished, and they must bear with it as well as
they could. He did hope the gentlemen from Indiana [Mr. Hendricks and Mr. Tipton] would moderate the amount asked for.

Mr. ROBINSON said, as a member of the committee which had reported this bill, he felt it his duty to state some facts in relation to it, of which other Senators were, perhaps, not fully in possession. The system, so far as respects the mode of performing the work, had been wholly changed about a year since. Previously, the work was done by letting it out by the job to the lowest responsible bidder; now hands and citizens are employed by the day, by the superintendent, an officer of the engineer corps. This last and present mode admitted of large expenditures advantageously. The amounts, as now in the bill, are based upon estimates from the War Department. The committee have had two sets of estimates; one showing the smallest amount which ought to be appropriated for anything like a successful prosecution of the work; the other, the maximum amount which could be advantageously expended.

Passing over the admitted importance and usefulness of this road it is a national work - one which it was agreed upon on all hands ought to be and would be completed. It is now only to be determined, shall the work progress as speedily as circumstances fairly authorize? or shall it be a slower rate? and, if the latter, how slow? The fact is indisputable, that a certain number of officers are necessarily to be kept employed, whether the appropriation be the full or half the amount now in the bill. To his mind - and so he thought it must strike every one, there could be no hesitancy as to the proper course. If an individual was compelled to keep in his employ a certain number of overseers, until a given piece of work was completed, and by hiring as many hands as his overseers could advantageously find employment for, the work could be finished in one year, would he not be a very bad economist (having too, the means at hand to lure laborers so sparingly) to keep the overseers, ten years doing what could have been done in one? The same course which would be adopted by an individual in the case just put, should, by the Government, be observed in the present case.

The minimum estimates have been taken, not the maximum; and unless these amounts be appropriated, the work, instead of going on prosperously, will languish, and in many instances, in its unfinished state, suffer much injury. It has been said, the road passes through a sparsely populated country, particularly that part of it which is in Illinois, and where the road is not much called for. True, the population is not as dense as the country would admit and invites. [Here Mr. K. gave a statement of the average size of the several counties through which the road passed, from where it first entered Illinois, to Vandalia, the seat of government, and the respective population of each, which, he trusted, showed a population not so very sparse, and, as he thought, not very far short of the average population of a large portion of the western country, and, it is said, never would be one of very great commerce.) Admit it never will be one upon which wagons will pass a great distance upon it at a time for the purpose of taking produce to market, yet for that purpose it would be much used in the neighborhoods of towns and navigable rivers. The States of Missouri, Illinois, and Indiana must ever be agricultural and stock-raising States. East, they will find a market for a very large portion of their surplus stock. Already that trade had commenced; and upon this road much of it would be driven. As to traveling upon it, he had only to say it would be used as other roads generally are by the people of the country in passing, from one neighborhood to another, from one county to another, and from one State to another. It was certainly true as has been stated, that any one wishing to come here or east of the
mountains, from where this road will cross the Mississippi, would most probably make the trip by water, if steamboats were running; which, by-the-by, was not by any means always the case.

Mr. R. hoped the motion to reduce the sums now in the bill to the amounts appropriated last year would not be sustained by the Senate. If it was, that ninety miles of the road in Illinois, which is in a very handsome state of progress, would be left with out a single dollar for the prosecution of the work, because for that part there was no appropriation whatever last year; and the reason was this: there was an excess of previous appropriations upon hand, supposed to be enough, and was enough, for the year 1835. This excess was owing to the derangement of labor by the Indian war 1832, and the cholera and other sickness the two succeeding years. From these causes, it was wholly impossible to employ the necessary number of hands. The balances he believed were now exhausted, and perhaps more than exhausted. Should the latter be the case, and such was the case in Ohio, the amendment, if adopted, would leave your officers in a very awkward position. Be it as it may as to any arrears yet due hands under this amendment, all further labor upon the ninety miles in Illinois is absolutely stayed, which certainly could not be designed by any one, much less the mover of the amendment, [Mr. CLAY,] who tells us he is friendly to the road and its completion; a completion more slowly, to be sure, than I think is advisable and in keeping with good policy.

Something has been, said about the cost of this road per mile, and that stone has to be hauled ten miles, I have seen (said Mr. R.) no estimate of cent per mile for the entire completion of that part in Illinois, nor am I advised any has been made. That, though, I will venture to assert; that it can be made as cheap as any ninety miles, of the same kind of road in any part of the known world. The country is level, and abundant in material of every kind necessary for its construction. Stone, it is true, has at some places to be hauled considerable distances, and in one instance as far as thirteen miles. The bottom at Vandalia, it is admitted, will be costly; there the road has to be raised several feet for the distance of about two miles, and this is the only place of extraordinary cost. Many bridges, will have to be constructed, but not more, if so many, as are found necessary in every country; and none of them are of a very costly character, for the streams are narrow.

Mr. EWING, of Ohio, said, although , the grants of the two per cent. fund were properly chargeable to the section of country west of the Ohio, this road accommodated the people east of the Ohio, as well as those west of it. It was just as important to the people on the sea-coast passing westward, as to the people west traveling eastward. Their interests met at Wheeling. The greatest amount had been expended on the road east of the Ohio river, in which the constituents of the gentleman from Kentucky [Mr. CLAY] had participated, because from the Ohio eastward, it facilitated their intercourse with the east, as much as it did that of the western States, He would not oppose this law, for fear it was going to interfere with the proposition of the gentleman from Kentucky, [Mr. CLAY] to distribute the surplus funds among the States. That bill contained a provision of ten per cent. to be applied to the improvement of all the States. It was the duty of the United States, as a great land holder in those States, to make appropriations to improvements, which enhanced the value of those lands. The property of the people there was in lands; they had not yet, as in the older States accumulated wealth in personal property, stocks, &c. He alluded to a grant of lands to the State of Ohio, with certain conditions connected with it, in relation to the canal to connect with the lakes, and to the benefits the United States would derive from it, in the transportation of its arms and munitions of war. He mentioned the amount of appropriations to objects in the State of Ohio, and the amount brought into the Treasury from public lands in that
State. She had received at utmost $1,000,000, and the revenue derived from her lands amounted to about $19,000,000. Ohio received from her internal improvements fees less by $1,000,00 then the other States. Indiana received an appropriation of four hundred thousand acres of land for her canal, and had paid into the public Treasury nearly $10,000,000. At the minimum price the lands she had received amounted to $500,000; and putting the quota she would be entitled to at $1,000,000, the Government would be indebted to her in the sum of $500,000. He also adverted to the sales of the public lands in Illinois and the amount she would be entitled to from the ten per cent. The sales of all these lands were greatly increased by these works of internal improvements. In the old districts where these improvements were, the land sold much faster than in the new districts, except in cases of public sales.

The sales last year were greater than was anticipated. In the month of January last, which was considered as poor a month for sales as any month in the year, the sales in Ohio amounted to $118,000; in Illinois $223,000; and in Indiana to $540,000. And allowing January to be an average month, the sales this year would amount to $27,000,000. The sum asked here for a road leading through that section of the country yielding so much to the public Treasury was $800,000, an appropriation which could not be considered as improperly made. He said he would not support this if it interfered with the land bill. But all the appropriations to the fortifications, in the language of, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. Preston), cannot touch the surplus. He did not consider the land bill an antagonistical measure to the fortification bill; they could both travel along together without touching or jostling each other.

Mr. PRESTON said he had heard the legislature of Illinois had passed resolutions declaring that the road should not pass through their State unless it was carried to the point designated by them. He should be glad to learn from the Senators from Illinois if such was the fact.

Mr. ROBINSON replied that there was a contest between the States of Illinois and Missouri as to where this road should terminate. Missouri wished it to terminate at St. Louis, while Illinois wished it carried twenty miles above that place to the mouth of the Missouri river. The legislature of Illinois had also passed a resolution that the road should not pass through their State, if it took the other route.

Mr. LINN said that at an early stage of this bill, his attention was directed to its provisions, from the circumstance that the Legislature of Illinois had passed a joint resolution, requiring imperatively that this national road should strike the Mississippi river at Alton, or permission would be refused to allow the road to be carried through that State; in a word, to nullify an act of Congress, unless that act conformed to her wishes. But on examining the bill, no appropriation was found in it to make the road from Vandalia to the Mississippi. If such a provision had been in the bill, he would have felt himself bound, injustice to his constituents, to have opposed its passage, unless all pretension to dictation in this matter had been abandoned. He was well aware that powerful attempts were making to puff Alton into consequence at the expense of St. Louis, and that she was represented as very great, and growing; in a word, the "Tadmor" of the West for commercial advantage of situation. Now, a small matter of fact illustrated the relative importance of the two places at this time. Expecting this bill to come up, he (Mr. L.) walked to the Post Office Department, and inquired the amount of revenue from the post office at St. Louis, and found it to come to eight or nine thousand dollars; whilst at Alton it amounts to two or three hundred dollars. The truth was, St. Louis was, and must ever be, the great emporium of the
Upper Mississippi. She had advantage of position, of capital, population, enterprise, and trade, and bid defiance to all rivals. He had not now, nor ever had, a doubt where this great national work would terminate on the Mississippi. It must terminate at St. Louis, the center of commerce, and near to the arsenal and military post at Jefferson Barracks.

Mr. CLAY wished he could get a little aid in this work of economy he had undertaken. He would like to know of any estimate of the probable expense of the road from the Wabash to the Mississippi. He had been told since his former remarks, that in some places stone would have to be hauled twenty-five miles to cover this road, and would cost at least $7,000 per mile. The State he belonged to had resolved, notwithstanding all vetoes, to progress with her roads. The honorable gentleman from Illinois [Mr. Robinson] had said this was a road leading from one neighborhood to another, in the same county, same State, or adjoining States, which was very true, and coincided with what he had said, that it was not a great commercial road. He had touched on the subject of stock. He (Mr. C.) was at home on that subject. He could tell the gentleman that, in driving stock, he ought to avoid roads made of stone. He had some experience in this matter, and on a certain occasion he had to transport his bull, Orazimbo, in a wagon, in order to get him along on one of these stone turnpikes.

The Fourth Auditor and all the Auditors together, could not equal the calculations of the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. Ewing] respecting this ten per cent. on lands. He said the transportation of munitions of war for the Government would amount to as much as the whole cost of the construction of the canal. Among a number of contingencies upon which this calculation depended, was first that of having a war, and next the manner of prosecuting it. He knew the powers of that gentleman. Give him that if (said Mr. C.,) and he would accomplish what Archimedes did. He would advise the gentleman from Illinois, [Mr. Robinson,] that he had better drive his cattle and hog over the prairies than over these stone roads. The gentleman bad said that it was economy to appropriate large sums, as the same number of officers could superintend the work as would be required if the appropriation was less. He would ask whether it was intended to adapt the workmen to the officers, or the officers to the workmen?

His motion was to reduce the appropriation in Ohio and Indiana to the amount passed at the last session.

In consequence of the conformation of the road from Columbus to the Mississippi, stone was difficult to be got, and in some places almost impracticable. He would vote for a moderate sum to grade from the Wabash to the Mississippi, and if the gentleman were not content with that, he would himself, or hoped some one else would, move to postpone the bill until they had estimates.

Mr. ROBINSON would be very happy to get the gentleman's vote for grading the road, as it was not contemplated to put the metal on it this year. The present appropriation was asked only for grading. Many bridges, not of a very expensive character, were already in progress; and these were wanted that their stock might not be drowned, though they escaped injury from the road. As to the distance that the stone must be carried, he thought the gentleman from Kentucky was mistaken, at least as to its being transported as many as twenty-five miles. He had heard of stone being carried as far as thirteen miles, but this was to only one part of the road. There was no
serious contest yet with the State of Missouri, as to the termination of the road, whatever; there
might be after the surveys shall have been made.

Mr. HENDRICKS remarked, that it had so often been his duty, from the position he occupied in
relation to the business of the Senate, to present the claims of this road, and the claims of the
northwestern States in connection with it, that it had become irksome and unpleasant to him to
make any further remarks on the subject; but that duty, as well as the expectations of the Senate,
seemed to require him to make a statement on the present occasion, which should be as brief as
possible. He would endeavor to answer some of the objections of the Senator from Kentucky;
and, in the first place, that to the Wabash bridge contemplated by the bill. The Senator from
Kentucky supposes that it has never been the intention of the Government to construct bridges
over rivers of this magnitude, and mentions the fact that the Monongahela river, at Brownsville,
in Pennsylvania, and the Ohio river, at Wheeling, had not been bridged, although the necessity
for bridging these streams was much greater than that of bridging the Wabash. But a simple fact
seemed to have escaped his recollection, which would no doubt explain to him the reason why
those rivers, and especially the Monongahela, had not been bridged, and convince him of the fact
that it had always been the intention of the Government to bridge all other streams between
Cumberland and the Mississippi. The propriety of bridging the Ohio river at Wheeling has
always been questioned. In relation to the Monongahela and Ohio rivers, no law ever existed
authorizing them to be bridged. In all other cases on the road, bridging has been authorized by
law. He referred to the appropriation bills, which at one time directed the Cumberland road to be
constructed to the Monongahela river at Brownsville. The appropriation afterwards made for the
road from that river to Wheeling directed the construction to commence on the western bank of
the river; and its width, the bed of the river, was left unprovided for; so was it in Ohio. When
Congress authorized the construction of the road westwardly of Wheeling, the law directed the
work to commence on the western bank of the Ohio river, leaving out the width and bed of the
river. For bridging these rivers there was no provision made by law, no estimates of engineers.
Further west this was not the case. For bridging all the streams between the Ohio and the
Mississippi, on that road, there are estimates, and the streams are included in the admeasurement
of distances. It is no doubt true, as has been stated, that no bridge was built over the Muskingum
at Zanesville. Here the Government found a bridge in the hands of a company. It was adopted for
the road, and, for aught he knew, this might be the case elsewhere though he recollected no other
such case. At Indianapolis a bridge had been built over the White river. This (although the
engineer had, in the location of the road, made estimates for) the Department preferred an
expression in the appropriation law respecting it, similar to the expression contained in this bill
for the bridge over the Wabash. The law passed containing this direction, and the bridge has been
built. This proposition for a bridge across the Wabash had been called a new proposition; but this
was not the fact. It would be recollected that, on a previous occasion, this same proposition had
been inserted by the Committee on Roads and Canals of the Senate, in a Cumberland road
appropriation bill. Objections were then made elsewhere, not here, on the suggestion that this
bridge would, or might, injure the navigation of the river. This fear prevailed, and the clause was
stricken out of the bill. Since then the Senate have directed, by resolution, that the United States
engineer superintending the road should examine and report on that subject; and the report is,
that a bridge, such as is recommended, will not, in any degree, injure the navigation. The fact of
previous objection having existed to this bridge makes it the more necessary now that the bill
should direct the construction.
Other objections have been made to this bill. It is said that, while large sums of money have been, for the last ten years, expending on this road through the northwestern States, the other side of the river is left destitute. It is said that the southern side of the valley of the Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, and other portions of the great southwest, are in point of commerce and importance as ten to one, in comparison with the States north of the Ohio river, and that no appropriations for a similar work can be obtained from the Federal Government, on the south side of that noble river. Mr H. said, that he was unable to perceive by what premises the conclusion of ten to one in favor of the south side of the river had been arrived at. He had arrived at a conclusion very different. He undertook to say that, from the eastern line of the State of Ohio, to the Mississippi river, the States on the other side of the river would compare with the southern side, of equal geographical extent, much more favorably than ten to one. He believed that the population was at the present moment very nearly, if not quite equal, on the north side, to that on the south; and it was hazarding little to say, that in a short time it would be double. But is there (said Mr. H.) no consideration on the north side, inducing appropriations, which does not exist on the south? Are the $6,500,000 which, during the year 1835, have been paid into the Treasury of the United States, through the medium of the land officers in the four northwestern States, nothing? Is the consideration, that not one dollar has been paid into the Treasury by the southern section of the country referred to, nothing? The States south of the river to the western boundary of Tennessee, own the lands within their limits. North of the river the whole of the public domain is owned by the United States, unshackled by taxation. Is this nothing? Is there not equitable obligation on the owners of the soil to aid in the construction of the public roads in every country? And is there any other country in which this obligation is not enforced by law? None (said Mr. H.) that I know of, or ever heard of. The lands of this Government in the hands of the new States are not taxed for roads or any other purpose; and whilst these States are expending millions in roads and canals, and increasing the value of adjacent public lands as five to one, or ten to one, we, the representatives of those States, are continually hearing murmurs and regrets, that the fostering hand of this Government is, in the dispensing of its boons and favors, leading the new States in the paths of unparalleled prosperity, lavishing millions upon them, whilst many of the old States are wholly destitute of its benefits and favors. Is the prosperity of the new States so mysterious that it can be accounted for in no other way than in the sifts, and grants, and two per cents. of the Federal Government? They are blind, or poorly informed, who cannot see other causes for the prosperity of the new States of the northwest, than the benefits derived from this Government.

Sir, (said Mr. H.,) the great prosperity of the northwest may be traced to various causes. The population that has emigrated to these States are the bone and sinew of the old States. They possess more energy, enterprise, and industry than the men left behind them. They are generally men early in life, who go to the new States for the purpose of bettering their condition, and who, being well aware that in catering upon an untried scene, great exertions will be necessary, are prepared to make those exertions. For the prosperity of the West we are also indebted to the great fertility of our toil; the navigation of our majestic rivers; the salubrity of our climate; the susceptibility of our country for works of internal improvement, as well as the enterprise of our people in making them; the productiveness of the country in all the necessaries of life, being perhaps as fine a grain growing country as is on the face of the globe. These, sir, are the causes of the great prosperity of our country. Is it said that this Government has raised that country up? Rather might it be said that this Government could not have kept it down. It would have grown and prospered, to a much lesser extent indeed, under the most grinding despotism that ever a
people endured. Is it said that the campaigns of Harmon, St. Clair, and Wayne repressed the savages and opened the country for settlement? This is true, in a certain degree; but it might, with almost equal certainty, be affirmed, that the armies of Harmon, St. Clair, and Wayne, had they been combined with the savages for that purpose, could not wholly have prevented the settlement of that country. Such a country, on our borders, could not have been withheld from such a people as that of the United States, inured to war as they were, and just having emerged from the conflicts of a glorious revolution.

The importance of this road, Mr. President, it seems to me has been greatly undervalued. It is said not to be a commercial road, because it runs parallel with the river Ohio, which floats the whole commerce of the country. This not a commercial road! And what, Mr. President, is a commercial road? It is true that it is not a highway of foreign commerce; but for all the purposes of domestic commerce, it is certainly more emphatically a commercial road than any other, of like extent, west of the mountains. It is the principal thoroughfare of emigration from the eastern States to the central parts of the three northwestern States. Formerly the Ohio river was almost the only line of approach for the stream of population continually pouring in upon that country from the Atlantic States. The country bordering on the Ohio river was in this way first brought into market, sold and settled; but for the central region of those States, for a wide belt of country, extending from the eastern boundary of the State of Ohio to the Mississippi river, it is almost exclusively the channel of emigration and of commerce. It is the great stem, as the Senator from South Carolina has denominated the Charleston and Cincinnati railroad, with which almost every important road of the northwest is united. It has been the means of settling a country of greater extent and fertility than perhaps any other road of the United States. The emigration to the northern portion of those States has had facilities of water transportation, as well as that to the southern portion of them; but this central and by far the most fertile region of these States has been chiefly indebted to this road for its first settlement, as well as for its subsequent prosperity and improvement. And, sir, if an account had been, or could be opened between this road and the Federal Government, giving it credit, as it is fairly entitled, for a large share of the present prosperous condition of the country, as well as for the millions rolled into your Treasury by it, how far on the back-ground would be placed the small and inconsiderable turns which you have appropriated for its construction? But the sums which were at first injudiciously expended on this road upon the mountains, and east of Wheeling, as well as the sums which have more recently been expended on the same eastern road for repairs, made necessary by your refusal until lately to put toll gates upon it, or to transfer it to the States, have also been mentioned as fairly chargeable against this road, and the fund set apart for making it. Well, sir, take this all into the service against this road, and still the amount will be a pitiful sum, compared with its great advantages to the northwestern States, and to the Treasury of the Union. But is it fair to charge all the sums expended upon this road east of Ohio against the fund and against the States which ask that this road be made to the Mississippi? Surely not; for this road east of Wheeling has been more valuable to Kentucky, Tennessee, and western Virginia, than it has been to the States of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, because more people have been profited by it from the south side of the Ohio river than from the north side of it. And it is hazarding very little to say, that but for the accommodation of Kentucky, which has used the road, agreeably to the language of the Senator from that State, as ten is to one in comparison of the people of the other side of the river, the road would not have been commenced or finished to Wheeling as soon as it was. Is it fair, then, to charge all this upon the two per cent. fund, undertaken as it was chiefly for the benefit of others, who have to this day enjoyed most of its benefits? By the compact, however, yon were only
authorized to expend the fund of Ohio east of the river, and if you expended more, you cannot fairly charge it upon the road funds of the States further west. You are bound, with the fund accruing from the land sales in Indiana, to make a road or roads to that State; and you are bound in like manner, with the Illinois road fund, to make a road to that State. The Indiana fund is to be expended in Ohio, and the Illinois fund in Indiana.

Frequently has it been remarked, that the two per cent. fund is wholly expended. I admit, sir, (said Mr. H.,) that the sum accrued is more than exhausted; but the fund accruing is not. I have not entered into any minute calculation in this matter, but a paper has been put into my hands, based on a calculation of the whole two per cent. fund to arise from all the public lands, including a territory west of Missouri, about as large as it is proposed to make the Territory of Wisconsin, and the aggregate is about seven millions and a half. This, it will be admitted, would go far towards making a good road to the base of the Rocky mountains, should that ever be the pleasure of Congress.

Mr. H. continued to remark, that the Senator from Kentucky had complained of the largeness of the appropriation asked for, and proposed its reduction to the sums appropriated last year; but he would mention a fact, that the amounts appropriated last year were added to large balances of appropriations for the previous year remaining unexpended. This was occasioned by the late period of the session at which the appropriation of that year was made, and by the late commencement of the work in the summer of 1834. This unexpended balance in Indiana was upwards of $80,000, which, with the $100,000 granted last ear, was expended before the working season ad ended; and the stone which had been prepared for the bed of the road, and which would have, whenever put on, preserved it from dilapidation, could not be spread over it for want of funds. Should the motion prevail, it will go far to signify the intention of Congress not to finish the road. The largeness of the appropriation, Mr. President! If the Senate would permit him the time, he would turn to the appropriation of 1819 for this road east of Wheeling. Then, on a road of one hundred and thirty miles in extent, and much of it finished, $535,000 was appropriated, when we had a war debt upon us of about $150,000,000, and some of this bearing interest of seven per cent. Now, the line of this road under actual construction exceeds three hundred and fifty miles. We have a surplus of about $30,000,000 in the Treasury, and yet it is proposed to diminish the appropriation contained in this bill. He hoped it would not be done, and that the Senator from Kentucky would yet withdraw his opposition, and lend us, as heretofore, an efficient helping hand.

Mr. H. said that he placed this bill distinctly and emphatically on the ground of solemn compact with the Federal Government, and on the ground of its having long been recognized as a settled public work, began and to be finished by this Government. He said that this road was based on compacts of this Government with all the new States northwest of the Ohio, and west of the Mississippi rivers. These compacts had their origin in the policy of settling the western country, and of uniting that country in interest and affection with the eastern States. They were based on the consideration that the new States with whom they were made, should forever abandon their right of taxing, in the hands of purchasers, the lands sold by Congress, for five years next ensuing the date of sale; a right clear and indisputable, and acknowledged by Congress in asking for the compact, that it should be abandoned. These compacts appropriated a portion of the moneys received from the sales of the public lands, to be expended, under the direction of Congress, in making roads leading to the new States; and this road was commenced in 1806,
during the administration of Mr. Jefferson, in the fulfillment of the then existing compact with Ohio. Appropriations from year to year have been made to this object ever since. They have been sanctioned by every Administration, and it has long been considered a settled work of the country, for which estimates are continually made as for other public works. The present bill is based on one of these estimates, and he had supposed that no member of the Senate, not even those whose constitutional scruples prevented them from voting for it, wished the work now to be wholly abandoned.

This work has been finished (said Mr. H.) as far as Hebron, in the State of Ohio, and given up to the States through which it passes, for the purposes of preservation and repair, and much work is done on it beyond that point. It had been retarded in the western part of Ohio by continued efforts to change the route by Dayton; but the road is graded and bridged through the greater portion of Indiana, and is in a condition to be very much injured by neglect and delay in its completion. The continual and almost unparalleled travel on this graded road subjects it to much injury, and makes continual repairs necessary. To some extent, stone is prepared for covering the bed of the road, which, for want of funds, has not yet been put upon it.

Sir, (said Mr. H.,) this road is the favorite measure of the States northwest of the river Ohio. If no appropriations are to be made to this road, and no distribution of the surplus revenue among the States, the interests of these States in the present session will be small and trifling indeed. The beneficent hand of the Federal Government will not there be felt. Yes, sir, the great West, the new States that have borne the burden and heat of the day, that have paid you millions into the Treasury, ($14,000,000 last year,) and will probably pay twenty or thirty millions during the present year from the public lands, will be entirely unprovided for. I make these statements (said Mr. H.) on good and sufficient data. The sales in Indiana, during the month of January last, amounted to three hundred thousand dollars, or thereabouts; and in the State of Indiana alone it is a reasonable calculation that you will receive more than three millions of dollars the present year. And are these millions all to be withdrawn from the interior, and expended on the sea-board? I, too, am for the military and naval defenses of the country; but I shall give no vote here that will lose sight of my own section of the Union.

This road, Mr. President, was intended originally to subserve the interests of the Treasury of the United States, as well as those of the West. And has it disappointed the expectations of its friends in either respect? Compare the amounts expended on it with the millions it has aided in bringing into the Treasury, and it will be extremely difficult to strike the balance against the road.

Mr. President, it would be wrong to ascribe the prosperity of the northwestern States to any single cause, but it would be equally erroneous to deify that this road had largely contributed to that prosperity. The truth is, that every dollar heretofore appropriated to the improvement of the country northwest of the Ohio river, has returned into your Treasury, in amounts more than double. The grant of land to the Wabash and Erie canal looks large on paper, and is so in reality, and often do we hear of it on this floor. In every proposition for grants to the new States, this road, and that grant, with the grant to Illinois, and some others, are continually brought in review before us. And has not the Wabash and Erie canal grant been the means of selling millions of acres, which but for that grant would, to this day, have remained unsold? And has it not sold lands in its vicinity for ten dollars per acre, which would otherwise have remained unsold to this day; or, if sold at all, would have sold at $1.25 per acre? Sir, (said Mr. H.) I well remember
telling the Senate, when that proposition was before this body in 1827, that every acre granted to
the State for the construction of the Wabash and Erie canal would be an acre well sold, and
would swell the amounts thereafter received into the Treasury. I was then thought to be sanguine
and visionary. The bill struggled along, as this bill is how struggling along. It got through, as I
hope this bill will get through. My most sanguine expectations have been doubly realized; and I
verily believe that every acre contained in that grant has brought into the Treasury five times as
much as it would otherwise have sold for. Without that grant the canal would have been ten or
fifteen years later in being commenced and completed. The Upper Wabash lands would have
sold at minimum price, and millions of acres, now in the hands of purchasers, would still have
belonged to the Government.

A proposition is now before the Committee on Commerce to appropriate $25,000 for a harbor at
Michigan city. You have about one hundred townships of new lands in that portion of the State,
not yet brought into market. Now it is a calculation perfectly safe, that the making of this
appropriation of $25,000 for a harbor at Michigan city, the only place, as is believed, where a
arbor can be made within the State of Indiana - will make a difference of $100,000 at the land
sales in that vicinity, within the present year.

The bill before the Senate is based on estimates of the Department; and if it be intended to
complete this road, as it no doubt will be completed, then it is unquestionably economy to
appropriate the largest sum; for all the contingencies of the disbursements will be the same for
the lesser sums as for the larger sums; and the road, if rapidly completed, will cost much less in
repairs. As soon as completed, it will pass into the hands of the States, as other portions of it
further east have done, and it will be a most valuable public work, of lasting duration, without
further expense to the Government.

Mr. CRITTENDEN expressed the wish that the subject might be postponed for the present. He
remembered that sixteen or seventeen years ago, when he was a member of the other House, the
subject was before them. It was urged that this two per centum fund would be prolific enough to
repay any advances made for the young members of the Confederacy. The advances were made
to them; and after a lapse of sixteen or seventeen years he saw that this two per centum fund was
as prolific as ever. Why were these large appropriations asked? Why were claims made on a
bounty that had already been exhausted? He wished to see a feeling of gratitude for the bounties
of Government cherished; and the way to cherish that feeling was to acknowledge the bounties
conferred. Gentlemen seemed to think that this two per centum fund was not exhausted, and as
respected Ohio and Indiana, if they were not satisfied, they never would be. If gentlemen wanted
this appropriation, let them take it as the bounty of the Government, and strike out from the bill
the delusive clause which promises repayment out of the fund long ago exhausted. They talk,
too, of the compact between the Government and the new States. Let them stand by that bargain.
How would it be violated by stopping the road at the Ohio? Mr. C. entered into a lengthy
argument to show that the Government was not bound by the compact to carry the road beyond
the Ohio, and that the two per cent, fund being long ago exhausted, every appropriation for the
road in the new States proceeded from the bounty, and not from the obligations, of the
Government. He denied that these appropriations were given as an equivalent to the new States
for not taxing the public lands; contending that they had no right to tax them, and that Congress
had the power, when it admitted those States into the Union, to impose, as a condition, that they
should not tax the public lands within their limits. Mr. C. contended that the States southwest of
Ohio, which were not permitted to participate in the bounties of the Government, were, on every principle of justice, of good policy, and national interest, as much entitled to appropriations for their public roads as the States favored by the bill.

Mr. TIPTON said he was aware, that some gentlemen opposed appropriations for this road because they considered it a gratuity to the people of the new States. This was a mistaken idea of the facts of the case. The sums appropriated for the construction of this road would be replaced in your Treasury from safes of the public lands within the new States. Again; it should be borne in mind, that the Cumberland road was the great leading mail route to the far West, through the center of the States northwest of the Ohio river. On this road the United States mail to six States and Territories must be transmitted during the winter season, for the western rivers were locked up with ice, and communication between the East and the far West must be suspended for one fourth of the year, unless the National road was completed. Our ability to construct this road would keep pace with the increase of population, and the sales of the public lands extending westward. Money expended to improve the navigation of rivers, or to construct roads in that portion of the country where the United States were the owners of the soil, he trusted, would not be set down in account against the people who purchase and improve the public lands, when such works are executed, for he could demonstrate to the satisfaction of any one who would set down with him to make the calculation, that grants of lands and money to these objects have been beneficial to the Treasury of the United States.

Take, for example, a grant of land made eight years ago, of near half a million acres of land to aid the State of Indiana in constructing a canal, to connect at navigable points the waters of the Wabash with those of Lake Erie. This grant consisted of the one half of five sections on each side of the line of canal; the State accepted the grant with doubt and hesitation, and by a close vote, (I believe a majority of one,) after a lengthy discussion in her Legislature. Many leading members of the General Assembly doubted the propriety of accepting the grant, and obligating the State to commence in five, and finish within twenty years, a navigable canal two hundred miles long, apprehensive that the land would not sell, and that the State would incur a heavy debt to complete the canal. But, sir, the grant was accepted, and the State authorized a loan to begin the canal, and soon after we commenced in good earnest on this great work. The State's land sold at from one dollar and a half to three dollars and a half, and some at fifty dollars, and as high as seventy dollars per acre. The United States lands that have been offered within several miles of the canal have been sold, and even lands of an inferior quality, that would have remained the property of the Government for a generation to come, were sold; and more money had been brought into the United States Treasury in a shorter period of time, than if the General Government had offered the whole of these lands without the commencement of a canal by the State.

The construction of the canal and Cumberland road in that State, with the industry and enterprise of the people, had enhanced the value of every acre of public land a hundred per cent. Ten millions of dollars have been realized to the Government from the sales of public lands within the State of Indiana. The United States are still the owners of about eleven millions of acres within the limits of Indiana, and a large proportion of these were fresh lands, never in market. The recent sales of public lands at Fort Wayne and Laporte demonstrated, beyond contradiction, that fresh lands would here often sell at from two to twenty dollars per acre. The land office at Laporte took in $200,000 for lands sold at private sale during the last two months. As he was
informed by a letter from the receiver of public money in that office, these sales have not been equaled by sales in any other State or Territory since the existence of the Government.

Indiana was about to embark in a general system of internal improvement. She has appropriated $10,000,000 for the construction of roads, railroads, and canals, and this had given a fresh spring to the sales of the United States lands in that State. He had no doubt that all the lands fit for cultivation, that now were, or hereafter might be brought into market, would sell within two years. We are anxious (said Mr. T.) to complete the Cumberland road through our State within three years, and for this purpose ask a large appropriation to continue the road, and for bridges. The next year, one half the balance would be asked, and the remainder would be wanted in 1838. We consider (said Mr. T.) that we are entitled to heavy drafts on your Treasury, while the country enjoys unexampled prosperity, and our constituents contribute so largely to fill your coffers.

The Senator from Kentucky, [Mr. CRITTENDEN,] (said Mr. T.,) since we have long since exhausted our two per cent., and he denies the existence of a compact; we are at issue. I claim the money on a compact; and further, if he will examine the quantity of public land sold and to be sold in the States and Territories, from the eastern boundary of the State of Ohio to the Rocky mountains, he will find that the two per cent. is over $7,000,000, and we have not yet had half that sum appropriated to the Cumberland road. The gentleman wished, to lay the bill on the table, that he might try if he could get his own consent to vote for it. He expressed a kind feeling for this work, and would, if he could with propriety, vote with us. We would be gratified with his vote, (said Mr. T.,) but prefer taking the question at this time, even if we are so unfortunate as not to be favored with his support; and we expect a favorable decision of the Senate on this most important measure for the northwestern States and Territories. Much had been said about different plans of making roads, and of the science of road-making; he did not profess to be a competent judge; but the national road to Indiana was placed under the direction of an able and efficient officer of the corps of United States engineers, who was capable of judging of the best method of constructing this road, and was responsible for its faithful execution. The road was progressing well, under this valuable officer; he has his assistants, with hands and tools enough on the road to finish it through our State within three years, and a very large portion of the road was now ready to receive the stone. Every one acquainted with road-making, knew that this was the most expensive item of this work, and it would be economy of both money and time to give the full amount of his estimates for the present year's appropriations on the work.

Mr. T. hoped that the final action of the Senate would not be postponed. Should you, said he, make the appropriation at an early day, the officer in charge of the work will make his arrangements to prosecute it vigorously; but if we are put off until the close of a long session of Congress, before he is advised what amount will be at his disposal, the spring season for work, which will commence in three or four weeks, will have passed away, and the laborers now on the road must seek employ elsewhere. The engineer would not be as well prepared to prosecute the work at the beginning of the fall as he would be on the first of April, if the appropriation bill passed in March. Gentlemen would see that it was vastly important to decide this matter speedily. If the road was to drag on slowly, under limited appropriation, let the Senate say so; if it was to be abandoned, let us, said he, know it; we are now as well prepared as we expect to be at any future time to abide the disastrous consequences to our new and rising States.
The estimate to continue the work in Ohio, this year, was $320,000. His colleague [Mr. Hendricks] had withdrawn his proposition to increase it. The estimate to continue the road, and for bridges in Indiana, was $350,000, and for Illinois $191,000; making the round sum of $861,000, a little more than was paid into the Treasury for lands sold by the United States in the State of Indiana in last month, January. This small item he hoped would not frighten his friends; they could as easily appropriate thousands as hundreds, when they had money enough to spare.

East of the Ohio river the road is completed, and given up to the States within which it was located, who had placed toll-gates upon it, and collected tolls sufficient to keep it in good repair. Gentlemen from the southwest, who had business at the seat of the National Government, all ascended the river to Wheeling, and took the national road to the eastern cities. There was not a man in the nation, no matter how hostile he might have been, or now is, to internal improvement by the General Government, while comfortably seated in the stage, and viewing the fine bridges and magnificent scenery as he glided swiftly and smoothly over the majestic Alleghanies, that could feel otherwise than proud when he reflected that he was a citizen of our Union, and that this work would forever stand forth as an unfading monument of the liberality, enterprise, and munificence of his country.

Mr. BUCHANAN said he had often traveled upon the Cumberland road before it had been a standing subject before Congress, ever since he had been first a member of the other House. He was, therefore, always ready to act upon it. He would vote for the appropriation proposed by this bill. He did not think the friends of the bill should consent to lay it upon the table at the request of the Senator from Kentucky, [Mr. CRITTENDEN,] in the hope that further reflection might induce him to change his opinion. His remarks had induced Mr. B. to believe that the prospect of such a change was but faint.

In one respect (said Mr. B.), I am happy to concur in opinion with that gentleman. I admit that we are not bound by the compacts with the States of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois to appropriate this money. It cannot be demanded from us as a matter of contract. The two per cent. fund arising out of the sales of the public lands in these States has long since been expended. It is now millions in the arrear, more than it will ever pay. The Senator from, Indiana (Mr. Hendricks] estimates that this fund will eventually yield upwards of $1,000,000. This may possibly be so, though I very much doubt it. At all events, it is a prospective, contingent calculation; and the money to make the road is required immediately. I am disposed to grant it; but not because the compact imposes any such obligation upon me. I wish to be distinctly understood upon this point.

Why, then, shall I vote for this appropriation? Simply because it has long been the established policy of Congress to construct this road as far west as the Mississippi. We have acted upon this principle steadily for many years. Shall we now arrest the progress of this road, and abandon the policy which we have so often sanctioned? Is there a single Senator within the sound of my voice who believes seriously that this will be done. No, sir. The road must be completed; it will be completed; and the only question which can arise is, as to the amount which we ought to appropriate for the present year. On this branch of the subject I shall say a few words. We have been informed by the chairman of the Committee on Roads and Canals, [Mr. Hendricks,] that the sums appropriated by the bill have been asked for by our engineers in their estimates, and that
they believe this amount of money can be judiciously expended upon the road during the present year.

Mr. HENDRICKS observed that the sums in the bill were the minimum of what the engineers required.

Mr. BUCHANAN. Then, what can be the objection to this appropriation? If the road must be made, will be made, why not pass this bill? Is not the Treasury overflowing? Is there any necessity for limiting the expenditure, during the present year, below the sum which can be judiciously applied? Besides, if you grant the engineers what they required, and hold them to a strict responsibility for its expenditure, they can never excuse themselves hereafter by alleging that the expense has been increased by your refusal; to give them the sum necessary to prosecute the work is the best and most economical manner. You do not interfere with their plan of operations. For my own part, I do not profess to be a judge of the sum which can be properly expended; and as there is no want of money in the Treasury, I am disposed to complete the work as rapidly as it can be done consistently with the permanent and proper construction of the road.

The Senators from Kentucky complain that, whilst the new northwestern States have received large sums from the public Treasury for the construction of their roads, their State has been entirely neglected. Does it stand alone in this particular? Might I not, with equal justice, complain of the same neglect towards Pennsylvania? I am proud to say that she has almost, completed her vast system of internal improvements without having received one dollar from the National Treasury. It is true she is in debt more than $20,000,000; but the income which she will derive from these very improvements will ere long prevent this debt from being a burden upon her people. I would advise Kentucky to do likewise. We can now afford her important aid in such a great undertaking, if she will accept it. She can have the benefit of all our experience. The agents who have been employed upon our public works, men faithful, competent, and experienced, have been or will be swept away with the besom of reform. Not one will be left. Of this, however, I do not complain. I should be glad if Kentucky would be benefited by it. We can afford her men who will conduct the public improvements which she is about to undertake with integrity, economy, and skill.

In reference to the veto upon the Maysville road, which has been introduced into this debate. I shall make a few remarks. I voted for that bill, and whatever I may have thought, at the time, of the veto on that particular road, I am convinced that the principles which were asserted in it have been of great service to the country.

If we had pursued the system of appropriating money for the construction of roads and canals all over the Union, the attention of Congress would thus have been diverted from the great objects intrusted to our care by the Constitution. Our time would have been almost exclusively occupied in this business. Besides, although each member might have prescribed it as a rule for himself to grant no appropriations except to national objects, yet when a road or canal was proposed affecting nearly the interest of his own constituents, he would have been ingenious in satisfying himself that it was of general importance. Such is the nature of man. Each member would have had to decide this question for himself, and each decision would have been a precedent, upon the strength of which we might go a little further. The natural tendency of the system was to proceed to such an extent that, instead of legislating for the great interests of the Union, the chief objects
of our pursuit would have been to obtain money from the Treasury to be expended on roads and canals for the benefit of our constituents.

Notwithstanding all the knowledge and all the ability which are centered in Congress, in my humble opinion, we would constitute a very inefficient and injudicious board of internal improvements. I am glad this system has been checked. I think it the very worst mode which we could adopt of expending the surplus in the Treasury. I should greatly prefer any other which has been proposed.

Mr. B. said he had been in Kentucky when he was very young; and he yet retained and ever should retain a lively and grateful impression of that visit. He had then formed a most favorable opinion of the State and of its population, But he must also say that he never should forget their roads. He was glad to learn that the road between Lexington and Maysville had been turn-piked. It needed it much. He would venture to say, that, before this turnpike was made, all the horses which could have been attached to any vehicle of sufficient dimensions to accommodate Orazimbo, would not have drawn him, in the spring season of the year, from Maysville to Ashland.

Mr. NILES said he had made, several unsuccessful attempts to get the floor, but did not intend to detain the Senate, as it was not his purpose to enter into a general discussion of this bill, or of the particular motion before the Senate. This was a western interest, and, in his opinion, especially a local one; yet it was called a great national work, and perhaps in one view of the subject, it might be so considered. Coming from a different quarter, it could not be supposed that he felt any special interest in the bill; yet having never before had the honor of a seat in Congress, this was the first time he had been called on to act in relation to the Cumberland road; and, considering that it had been an old and constant claimant, having been for more than thirty years before Congress, he was perhaps called on to pay his respects to it. This road appears to have been a particular favorite of this Government, and like other favorites, to have been a large sharer in the public bounty. His object was to notice some of the suggestions of the honorable Senators from Kentucky, [Mr. Clay and Mr. Crittenden,] rather than either to oppose or advocate the bill, in the fate of which he felt no particular solicitude. He could not subscribe to the correctness of the positions which the Senator from Kentucky, who first spoke, [Mr. Clay,] had assumed, and in which he seemed disposed to place others. He did not understand the position which the gentlemen from Kentucky have assumed in relation to this bill. In saying this, he had no intention of charging them with the want of clearness or force in their remarks, far from it; but there appeared to be something in reserve; some object which lay beyond this bill, and which they seemed disposed to advance indirectly, by their course in relation to this subject. Are the gentlemen opposed to the bill, or in favor of it? In either case, he thought, he should understand them.

He understood perfectly well the position of the two honorable Senators from Indiana, [Mr. Hendricks and Mr. Tipton] their object is to get through this road, to have it made at the expense of the Government, and as soon as possible; and, consequently, they wish to obtain as large appropriations as they can. He did not complain of this; it was a course perfectly natural, and consistent with the relation in which they stood to the subject. But the Senators from Kentucky appear to occupy a more uncertain and equivocal relation to this bill. At one time, it would seem as if the only question was, whether this road was to be constructed on one side or the other side.
of the Ohio river? If this is the main question, it is one in which the members of this body generally will probably feel but little interest.

The Senator from Kentucky, who first spoke, [Mr. CLAY,] informed us of his early friendship for this great work – of the constant support he has afforded it. He might have said, powerful support; but he seems now to intimate reluctance to sustain it, because the system of internal improvement, of which he says this road was part, is suspended. Mark that word, sir: the gentleman says this system is suspended; but I will take the liberty to use a more definite term, and inform the gentleman that I think this favorite system of his is ended; that it is overthrown, not only by the act of the Executive, but by public opinion, and that it is ended now, henceforth and forever. He says the veto of the bill for the Maysville and Louisville road had destroyed the system, and that those who sustained the Administration which had put down the system, could hardly expect the support of those who are friendly to it. But whilst he still professes to be friendly to the object of this bill, he insists on placing it on a ground which, he must know, would be fatal to it, not only in another quarter, but in Congress. He says the Cumberland road cannot be distinguished from any other work of internal improvement, and that it can rest on no other foundation than the existence of a power in this Government to construct roads. Sir, if this bill can stand on no other foundation than this, it cannot stand at all - it cannot be sustained - it must fall to the ground.

I had supposed that the compacts with the new States, by which five per cent. on the amount of lands sold in such States was reserved, two per cent, for roads leading to those States, and three per cent. for making roads in such States, amounted to something, that it was entitled to some consideration, as distinguishing this from other roads, notwithstanding this fund and much more have already been expended. But this road owes its origin to those compacts. It was undertaken in pursuance of them; and having been begun, has been continued, and a sum expended greatly exceeding the five per cent. on the sales of the public lands. I do not say that these compacts were wise, but I regard them as unwise and unfortunate, by involving this Government in a business which did not belong to it, and in regard to which its constitutional power is very doubtful. I regard these compacts as still in force, because the five per cent. on all the lands to be sold within those States is to go into our Treasury. I regret that these compacts were entered into, but having been made, and the Government having undertaken this work, having persevered in it for more than thirty years, it having received the sanction of every Administration, from that of Mr. Jefferson to the present, and of every department of the Government, it becomes a grave question, whether we can stop short and now abandon it; whether, after all that has been done, after the long course of action on this subject for more than thirty years, the nation is not in some sense committed - is not in some way pledged to complete this road? If it is, if this Government has yet to build this road to the Mississippi, as the gentleman from Kentucky seems to admit, it is not perhaps very material whether the appropriations are made in one year or in many years, if we have the money to spare. This becomes only a question as to time and convenience, and a wise economy in the expenditure of the money. If we have yet to make this road, having now a large surplus, (which is so alarming to some gentlemen,) we may perhaps as well appropriate what can be profitably and advantageously expended. The sooner we are done with this road the better; it is time this Government was clear of it.

But the honorable Senator from Kentucky appears to have another object in view - to revive his favorite system in another form, by the distribution of the proceeds of the public lands. Sir, it is
not surprising that that gentleman should feel sensibly and deeply the loss of that system, a
system of which, and I presume correctly, he has been called the patron: no doubt it was a fond
child of his; one which he cherished with parental solicitude during its brief and troubled
existence; one on which lie relied, and from which he expected much. And since it has been
taken from him, it doubtless appears more interesting. It is a principle of our nature, that when
objects dear to us are lost, they appear more lovely than when we possessed them; and our
affections are revived with more vividness and force. I have myself had the melancholy
experience of the truth of this principle.

The regrets of the honorable Senator over his fallen system are perfectly natural. I am not
surprised at them; but I think they will be unavailing; I trust that system is something mere than
suspended; it is, I hope, ended, and never to be revived, either in its original shape or in any new
form or disguise. I hope never to see the day when there will be such an enlargement and
extension of the powers and patronage of this Government as that system is calculated to bring
with it. Sir, the accumulation of power here, in this central, this engrossing, engulfing
Government, is sufficiently rapid and alarming, without giving any new impetus to its natural
tendencies.

The honorable Senator has informed us that he wishes to see the blessings of this Government
reach the whole Union, and spread over the whole and every part with an even hand. But what
does he regard as the blessings of this Government? Is it the extension of its agency in the
construction of roads and canals within the States? Is it the distribution among them of large
sums of money for these objects? Sir, I hope never to see the day when the States of this Union
shall be encouraged and induced to look up to this central power for money, whether to make
their roads and canals, or any other object. I hope the day will never arrive, when the sovereign
States shall be reduced to a dependence on this Government, when they shall become its
pensioners, as are now the surviving remnants of the glorious army of the revolution. If these are
the blessings the gentleman alludes to, I hope we may be long saved from them. Sooner than
vote for such a system, I would see this arm fall from its socket. Would the gentleman have this
Government like that of France, where $40,000,000 are expended annually by the Executive on
the public roads, and an immense patronage attending it? If the States are taught to look to this
Government for means to construct roads, and to carry on their works of internal improvement,
they will soon look here for means for other objects, for the erection of their public buildings, for
education, and even for their ordinary current expenses.

Should such a system be established, a system of degradation and dependence on the part of the
States; of a vast accumulation of power, patronage, and influence on the part of this Government,
it would work a revolution in that system. I should despair of long preserving our liberties; they
would at once lose their freshness; a blight would come over them, and decay, rapid decay,
would follow. Sir, the disbursement of the public treasure is the essential element of Government
patronage; and the extent of the one depends on the amount of the other; neither is it very
material how this money is paid out, whether to public officers, to agents or contractors, or
distributed among the States.

The swelling flood which is now flowing into your Treasury, according to the gentleman from
South Carolina, [Mr. Preston.] and which he so eloquently described the other day, would all be
wanted to keep up a system like this, and would all go to extend the patronage of this Government.

Sir, the real blessings of this Government are diffused over the whole Union; they are diffused equally in every State, and among the whole people. All participate in them, and all share alike. These blessings are the moral power and influence of this Government; the protection and security which it affords to all; the consciousness of this security, and the peace and happiness which flow from it. This is the great and primary end of all civil institutions. It is the great moral agency of this Government, and its influence on public sentiment at home and abroad, which preserves peace among the States and security against foreign Powers. We have recently experienced the importance of this security, whilst the danger of a rupture with a great nation impended over us. Had it not been for this system, what would have been the situation of the States? Would they have been able to have afforded protection, and would the people have felt that security and composure which they did? These blessings are not the less to be prized because the power from whence they flow is in a great measure unseen and unfelt. If the action of this Government was confined to its proper limits, it would be scarcely seen or felt by the people. Your tax-gatherers do not go among them; they seldom see your marshals or executive officers. This Government acts on the great body of the people only by its moral power and influence, and the blessings which it confers may almost be compared to those dispensed by Divine Providence; we enjoy, we realize them; we feel their influence, but hardly know the source of the power whence they flow; it is far removed, invisible, and felt only in the blessings it diffuses over the Union. Mr. BENTON said the Government had been about thirty years, the life of a generation, engaged in this road, and still it had not reached the Mississippi. Some of the superintendents, by the smallness of the sums which they had applied for, had seemed to consider their occupation as a life estate, which it would be a pity to abridge. He had often, and years ago, spoken to the chairman of the Committee on Roads and Canals [Mr. Hendricks] to have these appropriations increased, and the work carried forward more rapidly, as the same superintendent could overlook large portions of the work; and now that large appropriations were actually asked for, a motion was made to reduce them, a motion which Mr. B. hoped would not prevail. He wished all the public works, which were overlooked by superintendents at salaries, to go forward more rapidly; the public interest would be benefited by it, though the private interests of some of the superintendents might not. Long and slow jobs might suit them, as a long and moderate war is supposed to have been the toast, and to have suited the interests of a certain army chaplain during the Revolution; a long war, that he might have his salary continued; and moderate, that too many men should not be killed for his remaining in office. But quick work does best for the country, and now that a good appropriation was asked for, he trusted it would be granted.

Mr. B. said, this road rested on compact, and had received the sanction of every President, from Mr. Jefferson to General Jackson; it had also been supported by every majority that had ever prevailed in either House of Congress; and, therefore, should not be opposed now. It needed bridges, especially over the Wabash, and he hoped they would not be denied. The same road, on this side of the Ohio, had many noble bridges erected on it, of which he would mention the one on the Youghiiogheny, in the State of Pennsylvania; and life should be in favor of treating both ends of the road alike.
It had been objected that the country between the Great Wabash and the Mississippi was destitute of stone, and would not furnish material for covering the road. On this point he had some information, as well as some personal knowledge. The general character of the Country was that of scarcity of stone quarries; but he had been informed by Colonel McRee, one of the commissioners for reconnoitering the country for its location, that gravel pits abounded, which would furnish a flint gravel, well adapted to the cover of the road; and he had seen these pits near Vincennes, in the famous swamp called Purgatory, through which General Clark's men marched to surprise the British post Vincennes, and the character of which was indicated by its name. The ground for many miles was a trembling morass, in which men and horses often sunk, and required help to get them out. Now a good road is there; boughs from the trees being cut and laid on the morass to form a bed for the gravel, which was got from pits in the same prairie which contained the swamp.

It was also objected to the continuation of the road, that the point of striking the Mississippi was not fixed, and that Missouri and Illinois were contending about it. That question (Mr. B. said) could not become material until the road passed Vandalia, and the present appropriations were to carry it to Vandalia. The Senators from those States, now on this floor, were not disposed to balk the bill by a premature difficulty, and he hoped nobody else would raise difficulties for them, while they were in harmony, and disposed to proceed amicably. Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof. At present, they would work together to get the road to Vandalia, and after that would settle the difficulty as commodiously as possible. All they asked, at present, were good appropriations for the road and the bridges, and a speedy passage to the bill, that the season for doing the work might not be passing by before the work could begin.

Mr. DAVIS said, that as the motion was put, he would vote for it; but he did not intend by that vote to express any hostile purpose towards the bill. No estimate was before them of the cost of this road; but he had been informed an estimate was made in a former year. A great deal had been said in this discussion that reflected much light on the subject, but he would like to see the estimate.