

the year, and my own season of life, both admonish me to abstain from the use of any such ornaments; but, above all, Mr. President, the awful subject upon which it is my duty to address the Senate and the country forbids my saying anything but what pertains strictly to that subject, and my sole desire is to make myself, in seriousness, soberness and plainness, understood by you and by those who think proper to listen to me.

When, yesterday, the adjournment of the Senate took place, at that stage of the discussion of the resolutions which I had submitted which related to Texas and her boundary, I thought I had concluded the whole subject, but I was reminded by a friend that perhaps I was not sufficiently explicit on a single point, and that is, the relation of Texas and the Government of the United States, and that portion of the debt of Texas for which I think a responsibility exists on the part of the Government of the United States.

Sir, it was said that perhaps it might be understood, in regard to the proposed grant of three millions, or whatever may be the sum when ascertained, to Texas, in consideration of the surrender of her title to New Mexico this side of the Rio Grande, that we granted nothing—that we merely discharged an obligation which existed upon the Government of the United States, in consequence of the appropriation of the imports receivable in the ports of Texas while she was an independent power. But that is not my understanding, Mr. President. As between Texas and the United States, the obligation on the part of Texas to pay her portion of the debt referred to, is complete and unqualified, and there is, as between these two parties, no obligation on the part of the United States to pay one dollar of the debt of Texas. On the contrary, by an express stipulation in the resolutions of admission, it is declared and provided that in no event do the United States become liable or charged with any portion of the debt or liabilities of Texas.

It is not, therefore, for any responsibility which exists to the state of Texas, on the part of the Government of the United States, that I think provision ought to be made for that debt. No such thing. As between those two parties, the responsibility on the part of Texas is complete to pay the debt, and there is no responsibility on the part of the United States to pay one cent. But there is a third party, who was no party to the annexation whatever—that is to say, the creditor of Texas, who advanced the money on the faith of solemn pledges made by Texas to him, to reimburse the loan by the appropriation of the duties received on foreign imports; and he, and he alone, is the party to whom we are bound, according to the view which I have presented of the subject. Nor can the other creditors of Texas complain that provision is made only for a particular portion of the debt, leaving the residue of the debt unprovided for, by the Government of the United States, because, in so far as we may extinguish any portion of the debt of Texas under which she is now bound, in so far will it contribute to diminish the residue of the debts of Texas, and leave the funds derived from the public lands held by Texas, and what other resources she may have, applicable to the payment of these debts, with more effect than if the entire debt, including the pledged portion as well as the unpledged portion, was obligatory upon her, and she stood bound by it. Nor can the creditors complain, for another reason.

Texas has all the resources which she had when an independent power, with the exception of the duties receivable in her ports upon foreign imports, and she is exempted from certain charges, expenditures and responsibilities which she would have had to encounter if she had remained a separate and independent power: for example, she would have had to provide for a certain amount of naval force and for a certain amount perhaps of military force, in order to protect herself against Mexico or against any foreign enemy whatever. But by her annexation to the United States she became liberated from all these charges, and, of course, her entire revenues may be applicable to the payment of her debts, those only excepted which are necessary to the support and maintenance of the Government of Texas.

With this explanation upon that part of the subject, I pass to the consideration of the next resolution in the series which I have had the honor to submit, and which relates, if I am not mistaken, to this District.

“*Resolved*, That it is inexpedient to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, while that institution continues to exist in the State of Maryland, without the consent of that state, without the consent of the people of the District, and without just compensation to the owners of slaves within the District.”

Mr. President, an objection at the moment was made to this resolution, by some honorable Senator on the other side of the body, that it did not contain an assertion of the unconstitutionality of the exercise of the power of abolition. I said then, as I have uniformly maintained in this body, as I contended for in 1838, and ever have done, that the power to abolish slavery within the District of Columbia has been vested in Congress by language too clear and explicit to admit, in my judgment, of any rational doubt whatever. What, sir, is the language of