

## **SECTIONAL POLITICS: SOUTHEAST**© by Ghere/Spreeman

### **SITUATION**

It is the 1830s. The country is confronted by a series of divisive issues. In town squares and village meeting halls lively debates have arisen around such topics as slavery, Indian removal, the national bank, the protective tariff, the sale and disposal of public lands and national subsidies for internal improvements. Emotions are running high among the population and the gravity of these issues is not lost on the senators from each section of the country.

### **YOUR ROLE**

You are a US senator from the Southeast. The land on which your plantation lies has been in the family for three generations. Large plantation owners are your most influential constituents and wealthy merchants on the coast would support the same attitudes towards slavery, protective tariffs, the US Bank and Internal Improvements as the plantation owners. Manufacturing is very limited and the small non-slaveholding farmers that make up the majority of your constituents are economically dependent on the plantations and many aspire to be plantation owners themselves. Moreover, you are aware that cotton is the primary U.S. export at this time and its sale generates an influx of capital from Europe. Therefore, the success of the southern economy is essential to the continued economic development of the United States. In order to strengthen the southern economy, you must protect the institution of slavery, oppose a high protective tariff and support the sale of large tracts of western land suitable for plantation agriculture. You must oppose the extended charter of the U.S. Bank and national subsidies for internal improvements because they do not benefit the Southeast.

### **POLITICAL GOALS AND SCORING INSTRUCTIONS FOR SOUTHEAST**

5 points for DEFEATING any law that restricts slavery.

4 point for PASSING a tariff of \$.01 to \$.10 on the dollar

2 points for PASSING a tariff of \$.11 to \$.30 on the dollar

0 points for PASSING a tariff of more than \$.30 on the dollar.

3 points for DEFEATING federal subsidies for canal building

2 points for DEFEATING the rechartering the United States Bank

2 points for PASSING a law selling Western land in 640 acre blocks

0 points for the removal of Native Americans further west

## **EXPLANATION OF ISSUES**

Slavery - You are diametrically opposed to any bills that would have a negative impact on the institution of slavery. Northern abolitionists have been flooding the Congress with petitions calling for the abolition or restriction of slavery. Southerners are insulted by these diatribes and the constant focus on slavery has prevented the consideration of other issues of significance.

Protective Tariff - You are opposed to a high protective tariff which adds a large tax to the price of imported goods. Since your principal trading partner is Europe, you import large amounts of manufactured products and end up paying higher prices as a result of the tariff. Two-thirds of the national revenue collected by the tariff is provided by Southerners. Furthermore, European countries invariably respond by imposing their own tariffs on the cotton that you are selling, thereby causing your profits to fall. You get hurt both ways!

Internal Improvements - You are opposed to national subsidies for internal improvements. Since your economy is export oriented, you only need transportation to the coast and the Southeast is already blessed with natural waterways that accomplish this with minimal improvements. The proposed internal improvements would link the Northeast with the Northwest, benefiting those two regions, but the national government gets its revenue primarily from the high tariff. Why pay two-thirds of the bill and get no benefit?

Bank of the United States - You are opposed to extending the charter of the Bank. Many of your constituents advocate "states rights" and the most obvious role of the US Bank is federal regulation of local banks. Furthermore, the US Bank would have little benefit for the Southeast where the need for investment capital is limited and money is tied up in slaves or land. Extending the charter of the Bank will only help the North develop faster and become more politically powerful. Who wants that?

Western Lands - You are in favor of low prices for western lands sold in large tracts (640+ acres). You support the availability of these lands because some Southeastern lands are wearing out. Since you believe that cotton is essential to the growth of the South and the economic health of the nation, the replacement of worn out lands with large tracts of western lands suitable for plantation agriculture is vital. The future growth of the southern economy depends on this issue.

Indian Removal - Most southeasterners are unconcerned about the plight of Native Americans although Georgia and North Carolina would definitely support removal. This is an issue that you can bargain with the West to get the things that you want.