

## **SECTIONAL POLITICS: WEST© 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, 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.

The social fabric of the West is a tapestry woven of many threads. People of diverse backgrounds have migrated into the area with one common goal - land ownership. Due to the relatively recent settlement of the West, the social-political-economic structure is relatively fluid and the region is represented by persons whose one unifying factor is the development of the area.

### **YOUR ROLE**

You are a US senator from the West. You moved into the area with your family when you were five years old. You have lived the hardships and joys of early settlement. You firmly believe that given land and a strong work ethic anyone can succeed. Affordable Western land is the future and the fulfillment of the promise of democracy for the entire nation. In order to promote the interests of the West you support the sale of cheap public lands, a reasonable tariff and an Indian removal bill while opposing the rechartering of the US Bank. Except for the Gulf states, most westerners want land sold in small tracts and federal subsidies for internal improvements. Slavery is a very divisive issue for both moral and economic reasons which will gradually force western states to become oriented towards the Northeast or the Southeast.

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

4 points for PASSING legislation granting cheap Western lands

4 points for PASSING the removal of Native Americans further west

4 points for PASSING federal subsidies for canal building

2 points for DEFEATING the rechartering the United States Bank

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

1 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

0 points for a law concerning slavery

## **EXPLANATION OF THE ISSUES**

Disposal of Western lands - You are in favor of cheap public land that is distributed to settlers, not Eastern speculators. Most westerners desire that this land should be sold in smaller parcels of 240 acres in order to encourage small farms but others in the southern portion of your region want the land to be sold in large parcels suitable to plantation agriculture. The future of this democratic nation lies in the disposition of the Western lands.

Native American Removal - Western settlers generally want more land available and almost all assume that the disappearance of Indian society is an inevitable part of the progress of civilization. For years, the federal government has promised to extinguish Indian title to lands within the boundaries of a states and you are demanding that the federal government negotiate treaties that will open new lands to white settlement.

Internal Improvements - You are in favor of federal subsidies for internal improvements. The building of roads and waterways that connect the agricultural West with the markets of the Northeast will stimulate the growth of both sections and contribute to the economic strength of the nation.

Bank of the United States - You are not in favor of extending the charter of the Second Bank of the United States. While some of your wealthy constituents might see the US Bank as a source of investment capital, the vast majority see it as the regulator that restricts local banks from making loans. Easy access to loans is essential to the development of the West, even if some of the loans are questionable. If the charter is extended the restrictions on local banks and high interest rates on borrowed money will continue thereby making it difficult for small farmers to secure loans. Small farmers must be protected from drought, locusts, Eastern banks and other natural disasters.

Protective Tariff - You are in favor of a "reasonable" tariff (see scoring instructions). It is to your benefit that manufacturing cities develop in the Northeast but you are not interested in higher prices on manufactured goods. The tariff issue is less important to you than it is to the Northeast or Southeast so you might bargain with them on this issue for something else you need.

Slavery - Slavery is a volatile issue. The Northwest Ordinance in 1785 forbade slavery while the Southwest was directly in its path. For this reason, the issue of slavery found both support and opposition in the old west. Westerners can bargain with either the Northeast or the Southeast on the issue of slavery to get what they want.