

UNITED STATES BANK.

The editors of the New York Courier and Enquirer have published a reply to that part of Mr. Clayton's Bank report which relates to their transactions, and also part of Mr. Webb's examination before the committee.

The money which Messrs. Webb & Co. first owed and paid to the Bank of the United States, was hired of Mr. Silas E. Burrows' father; but before the notes became due, Mr. S. E. B. wished for a sum of money, and procured their discount from the United States Bank. Of course neither the bank nor any of its officers had any thing to do with Messrs. Webb & Noah. These notes were paid. But subsequently other sums were required to meet the expense of enlarging, establishing boats, &c. and the New York city banks refused to accommodate the firm with a loan, although the name of Mr. Stewart, (a gentleman of great wealth) was given as endorser. As these refusals appeared to be made because the paper had advocated the rechartering of the United States Bank, the publishers finding themselves cut off from discounts upon what they deemed improper grounds, determined to make an application where such considerations should not weigh against them. But in order that the application which they were about to make to the United States Bank should have a business complexion, and be and appear only in that light, Webb & Co. made an *exhibit* of their affairs to

Walter Bowne, Esq. of New York, a gentleman well known for his mercantile knowledge and integrity, and a former director of the United States Bank.—The profits of the business are stated at \$25,000. We give from the C. and F. the statement of Mr. President Biddle to the committee, in reference to the transaction:—

Ques.—Did you consider the loans made to Jas. Watson Webb & Co. fair business transactions, such as you could not refuse without subjecting the bank to the imputation of indulging political partiality? State fully the views and considerations on which you voted in favor of those loans."

... considered them as fair bu-

Ans.—“I certainly considered them as fair business transactions, or I should not have consented to them. At the request of the Committee I will explain the reasons of that opinion.

“If in making loans every transaction was perfectly safe, and every borrower perfectly good, banking would be an easy office; but as men generally borrow to employ the funds, in some profitable pursuit subject of course to vicissitude, all that can be expected in making loans is a fair and reasonable caution as to the situation and prospects of the borrower. Tried by these, the only tests, I think the loans in question are unexceptionable. The first was done by a Board of Directors consisting, besides the presiding officer, of six gentlemen, Mr. Lippincott, Mr. Fisher, Mr. Bohlen, Mr. Neff, Mr. Platt, and Mr. Willing, merchants and men of business, with no partialities towards the applicants, with whom none of them had the least acquaintance. The grounds of their judgment may be thus stated. In making ordinary loans, the Board judge by

the general standing of parties without any examination of their affairs. But in this case the parties began by an exposition of their whole situation. This was forwarded by Walter Bowne, Esq. the Mayor of the City of New York, where the applicants resided, who in addition to his being personally known and respected by all the members, had been one of the oldest directors of the Bank of the United States and for many years set at the Board around which the Directors were then assembled.—

In this letter he says, "I cheerfully forward 'the papers' and I see no reason against this application being treated as a fair business transaction." He does not expressly say it ought to be granted, because he transmits at the same time some of the materials on which the Directors were to form their own judgment, to which others were added by Mr. Webb. But when an old Director of the bank, forwards "cheerfully" an application to his ancient colleagues, which he says should be treated as "a fair business transaction," it implies certainly no responsibility—but it may be well regarded as a declaration, that were he still a member of the Board, he would sanction it. Under these auspices the Board proceeded to consider it.

One of the parties had been appointed by the President and Senate of the United States, to a confidential and lucrative post under the Government; the other had already invested \$33,000 in the paper, and his father-in-law, Mr. Stewart, whose letter accompanied the application, was known to be a wealthy man. Both were considered men of talents and peculiar aptitude for the business in which they were engaged.

There is much in the statement that deserves notice—and we think it gives satisfactory evidence that views, aside from the Bank question, have influenced in the enquiry and report.