openly. The order of K[now] N[ething]s as at present constituted I consider unfortunate and their platform a political calamity. If the order in Ohio was governed or influenced by the order of other states no serious danger to freedom need be anticipated. There is sufficient anti slavery sentiment in Ohio perhaps to control it. But it has become a National organization and the same policy and creed in Virginia extends to Ohio. The order looks to the election of a president in 1856, and in anticipation of that event the leading men are shaping their program to suit it. The creed of the K. N's comprises a single idea—Nationalism. Turn it over as you may and that is all there is of it. Nationalism is not Republicanism. An order that degrades the Protestant citizen who happened to be born in Europe or Canada to the level of the negro is unworthy of a Freeman's support. But that perhaps is not the worst. The creed of the order ignores Freedom—there the slaveholder has the advantage. A National council will be unable to take grounds against the admission of more slave states, or the repeal of the Fugitive law or the repeal of the Douglas bill. A point of order would rule out any attempt to commit the "order" to anti slavery views. No better position can be assumed than that occupied by the locofocos in '52. The very purpose to run a joint Presidential ticket with the slave power is fatal to the position of the Republican party of Ohio. We know that the Oligarches will not agree to stand on our platform—shall we stoop down to theirs? We can elect without their aid if united. If we stick to the Republican platform laid down at Columbus, Indianapolis, and Saratoga.

Yours truly

XV.

SALMON PORTLAND CHASE TO ORAN FOLLETT.

Private

Washington, Feb. 14, 1855

My dear Sir,

I thank you for your frank and friendly letter. I shall be as frank as yourself in my reply, and, I trust, as friendly.

As to the Columbian, Mr. Hamlin\textsuperscript{32} is not my special organ

\textsuperscript{32}See Note 28.
nor my organ in any sense. He edits the papers, so far as he edits it at all, upon his own responsibility and according to his own judgment. I do not know that I have ever been consulted in respect to a single article which has appeared in it. I regretted the tone and tenor of his reply to the Sandusky Register in reference to the Gubernatorial nomination and of the several articles concerning the Know Nothings.

The People's movement of last fall had no more zealous or candid supporter in the State than myself. No one, I suppose, contributed more in time, labor and expense to its success. In the sickliest season of the year I spent weeks in the Northwestern counties, going from place to place addressing the people and preparing the great victory in that quarter of the State. In what degree my labor contributed to that preparation others are the best judge. I am still anxious that this movement should go forward, and knowing as I do that the K. N. organization contributed materially to the completeness of the triumph last fall, I have steadily disheartened any denunciation of men, who in Ohio secured the election of an unbroken anti-Nebraska delegation to Congress, and more recently, in Massachusetts, have sent so many true old anti-slavery men to the House, and Henry Wilson to the Senate, so long as the Kns are willing to go along with us in the People's movement, I shall not fall out with them by the way. Should they undertake to convert the People's movement into an exclusively Kn association, which I will not anticipate, and to proscribe all friends of that movement who are not in their Councils, which I hope they do not think of doing, then new circumstances would impose new duties.

As to the Governorship—I do not seek it. If the people's convention in July shall see fit to place me in nomination upon a platform which I can honorably and consistently stand upon, I shall not decline the canvass unless circumstances change beyond my expectations. I will not affect to deny that a nomination and election by the people, under existing circumstances, would be a gratification to me, while the manifest disadvantages which would arise from the loss of professional business & the neglect of private affairs, would easily reconcile me to the loss of either the nomination or election. That so large a number of intelligent friends of the great cause of Human Freedom
out of Ohio take so much interest in having my course and action endorsed in Ohio gratifies me, I am not ashamed to confess, very much. It is a great satisfaction to me also, to be assured, as I am, that the whole body of Independent Democrats, or Freesoilers, with very few exceptions, desire my nomination. I say "with very few exceptions"—I know of none, but I assume of course that there must be some. I am certain they must be few, for I have letters from several who would be most likely to oppose or dislike it, expressing their wishes for it.

I should here leave these matters perhaps, but as I value your good opinion I will add a few words on two points which may have attracted your attention—one recent—the other ancient.

You may have observed in the Sandusky Register and perhaps other papers allusions to a political conference at Toledo so made as to convey the impression that I was in some way connected with it.

I never knew anything of any such conference until after it had been held. It was in fact, I think, an accidental meeting of a few friends of the anti Nebraska movement at Toledo, who had supported Richard Mott at the recent Congressional election. The subject of a State Convention was talked over, and the general opinion was that one should be held on the 22nd of Feb. It happened that I arrived in Toledo from Illinois the day after the convention had been held and my opinion was asked as to the convention. I replied I thought the convention should not be held until the summer, and that it would be best to hold it the 13th of July, as last year. There was also some conversation with me as to the Governorship. I expressed very much the same feelings I have now expressed to you, but distinctly told Mr. Williams of the Blade that I thought it best to leave public opinion to form and develop itself on the question spontaneously, without any attempt to force it into any particular channel.

The other matter concerns the old story of the Legislature of 1848-9. I have no time to go into any full history of the cooperation between the Independent Democrats and the Old Liners at that time. There was nothing in my connexion with it of which I am ashamed any more than I am ashamed of the

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33Elected to 34th & 35th Cong.
cooperation with the Whigs and Liberal Democrats, of last year. But I have been accused of special hostility to the whigs. This is the point which I wish to draw your attention to and for the purpose of expressly denying the fact. So far as the Whigs differed from me in political views—so far also as circumstances made them, in my judgment for the time, the supporters for the Slave Power, I was against them. But I always endeavored to be fair and liberal, I exerted my influence to secure the adoption of the rule of popular choice in the appointment to office by the Legislature at that session. That is where the plurality of the people of a County or District were whigs I wanted to have whigs associate judges and other officers appointed by the Legislature. This fact, and others I might state, disperse the charge of illiberality.

But I am near the end of my sheet and have already said too much, because, as some one once said, I had not time to say less. Very truly & sincerely yours

S. P. Chase.

XVI.

SALMON PORTLAND CHASE TO ORAN FOLLETT.

Washington, Feb, 23, 1855.

My dear Sir,

I enclose my remarks on presenting some New York petitions, with corrected proceedings, which I hope you will find it convenient to put into the Journal. Let me thank you for your kind words in a recent number.

We are in the midst of a warm debate on slavery occasioned by circumstances, which the Telegraph will have informed you of, before you receive this. I was obliged to lead because nobody else would, but after the ice was broken Wade and Fessenden did their duty gloriously. I could hardly speak at all for a cold.

Yours truly

Reference to action in Senate, Feb. 16, 1855, proposing passage of bill treating human beings—slaves—as property within the meaning of the Indian intercourse law. Proposition was to pay two Indians of the Chickasaw nation the value of certain slaves—forcibly seized and carried away by some white persons from Texas. See Cong. Globe, XXX, p. 771-2.