

MESSAGE

PRESIDENT POLK.

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States:

It is to me a source of unalloyed satisfaction to meet the Representatives of the States and the people in Congress assembled, as it will be to receive the aid of their combined wisdom in the administration of public affairs. In performing, for the first time, the duty imposed on me by the Constitution, of giving to you information of the State of the Union, and recommending to your consideration such measures as in my judgment are necessary and expedient, I am happy that I can congratulate you on the continued prosperity of our country. Under the blessing of Divine Providence and the benign influence of our free institutions, it stands before the world a spectacle of national happiness.

With our unexampled advancement in all the elements of national greatness, the affection of the people is confirmed for the union of the States, and for the doctrines of popular liberty, which lie at the foundation of our government.

It becomes us, in humility, to make our devout acknowledgments to the Supreme Ruler of the Universe, for the inestimable civil and religious blessings with which we are favored.

In calling the attention of Congress to our relations with foreign Powers, I am gratified to be able to state, that, though with some of them there have existed since your last session serious causes of irritation and misunderstanding, yet no actual hostilities have taken place. Adopting the maxim in the conduct of our foreign affairs, to "ask nothing that is not right, and submit to nothing that is wrong," it has been my anxious desire to preserve peace with all nations; but, at the same time, to be prepared to resist aggression, and to maintain all our just rights.

In pursuance of the joint resolution of Congress, "for annexing Texas to the United States," my predecessor, on the third day of March, 1845, elected to submit the first and second sections of that resolution to the republic of Texas, as an overture, on the part of the United States, for her admission of a State into our Union. This election I approved, and accordingly the Charge d'Affaires of the United States in Texas, under the instructions of the treaty of March, 1845, presented these sections of the resolution for the acceptance of that republic. The Executive government, the Congress, and the people of Texas in Convention, have successively complied with all the terms and conditions of the joint resolution. A constitution for the government of the State of Texas, framed by a convention of deputies, is herewith laid before Congress. It is well known, also, that the people of Texas at the polls have accepted the terms of annexation, and ratified the constitution.

I communicate to Congress the correspondence between the Secretary of State and our Charge d'Affaires in Texas, and also the correspondence of the letter with the authorities of Texas, together with the official documents transmitted by him to his own government.

The terms of annexation which were offered by the United States having been accepted by Texas, the public faith of both parties is solemnly pledged to the compact of their union. Nothing remains to consummate the event, but the passage of an act by Congress to admit the State of Texas into the Union upon an equal footing with the original States. Strong reasons exist why this should be done at an early period of the session. It will be observed that, by the constitution of Texas, the existing government is only continued temporarily till Congress can act; and that the third Monday of the present month is the day appointed for holding the first general election. On that day a governor, a lieutenant governor, and both branches of the legislature will be chosen by the people.

The Presidents of Texas is required, immediately after the receipt of official information that the new State has been admitted into our Union by Congress to convene the Legislature; and, upon its meeting, the existing government will be superseded, and the State government organized. Questions deeply interesting to Texas, in common with the other States; the extension of our revenue laws and judicial system over her people and territory, as well as measures of a local character, will claim the early attention of Congress; and, therefore, upon every principle of republican government, she ought to be represented in that body without unnecessary delay. I cannot too earnestly recommend prompt action on this important subject.

As soon as the act to admit Texas as a State shall be passed, the union of the two republics will be consummated by their own voluntary consent. This accession to our territory has been a bloodless achievement. No arm of force has been raised to produce the result. The sword has not been drawn in the victory. We have not sought to extend our territory by conquest, or our republican institutions over a reluctant people. It was the deliberate homage of a free people to the great principle of our republican union.

If we consider the extent of territory involved in the annexation—its prospective influence on America—the means by which it has been accomplished, springing purely from the choice of the people themselves to share the blessings of our union,—the history of the world may be challenged to furnish a parallel.

The jurisdiction of the United States, which at the formation of the federal constitution was bounded by the St. Mary's, on the Atlantic, the Cape of Florida, and been peacefully extended to the Del Norte. In contemplating the grandeur of this event, it is not to be forgotten that the result was achieved in despite of the diplomatic interference of European monarchies. Even France—the country which had been our ancient ally—the country which has a common interest with us in maintaining the freedom of the seas—the country which, by the cession of Louisiana, first opened to us access to the Gulf of Mexico—the country with which we have been every year drawing more and more closely the bonds of successful commerce—most unexpectedly, and to our unfeigned regret, took part in an effort to prevent annexation, and to impose on Texas, as a condition of the recognition of her independence by Mexico, that she would never join herself to the United States.

We may rejoice that the tranquil and prevailing influence of the American principle of self-government was sufficient to defeat the purposes of British and French interference, and that the almost unanimous voice of the people of Texas has given to that interference a peaceful and effective rebuff. From their example, European governments may learn how vain dispute and intrigue must ever prove upon this continent, against that system of self-government which seems natural to our soil, and which will ever resist foreign interference.

and generous spirit will actuate Congress in all that concerns her interests and prosperity, and that she will never have cause to regret that she has united her "lone star" to our glorious constellation.

I regret to inform you that our relations with Mexico since your last session, have not been of the amicable character which it is our desire to cultivate with all foreign nations. On the sixth day of March last, the Mexican Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the United States made a formal protest, in the name of his government, against the joint resolution passed by Congress, "for the annexation of Texas to the United States," which he chose to regard as a violation of the rights of Mexico, and in consequence of it, he demanded his passports. He was informed that the government of the United States did not consider this joint resolution as a violation of any of the rights of Mexico, or that it afforded any just cause of offence to his government; that the republic of Texas was an independent power, owing no allegiance to Mexico, and constituting no part of her territory or rightful sovereignty and jurisdiction.

He was also assured that it was the sincere desire of this government to maintain with that of Mexico relations of peace and good understanding. That functionary, however, notwithstanding these representations and assurances, abruptly terminated his mission, and shortly afterwards left the country. Our Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Mexico was refused all official intercourse with that government, and, after remaining several months, by the permission of his own government, he returned to the United States. Thus, by the acts of Mexico, all diplomatic intercourse between the two countries was suspended.

Since that time Mexico has, until recently, occupied an attitude of hostility towards the United States—has been marshalling and organizing armies, issuing proclamations, and avowing the intention to make war on the United States, either by an open declaration, or by invading Texas. Both the Congress and the Convention of the people of Texas invited this Government to send an army into that territory, to protect and defend them against the incensed attack. The moment the terms of annexation, offered by the United States, were accepted by Texas, the latter became so far a part of our own country, as to make it our duty to afford such protection and defence.

I therefore deemed it proper, as a precautionary measure, to order a strong squadron to the coasts of Mexico, and to concentrate an efficient military force on the western frontier of Texas. Our army was ordered to take position in the country between the Nueces and the Del Norte, and to repel any invasion of the Texas territory which might be attempted by the Mexican forces. Our squadron in the Gulf was ordered to co-operate with the army. But though our army and navy were placed in a position to defend our own and the rights of Texas, they were ordered to commit no act of hostility against Mexico, unless she declared war, or was herself the aggressor by striking the first blow. The result has been, that Mexico has made no aggressive movement, and our military and naval commanders have executed their orders with such discretion, that the peace of the two republics has not been disturbed.

Texas had declared her independence, and maintained it by her arms for more than nine years. She has had an organized government in successful operation during that period. Her separate existence, as an independent State, had been recognized by the United States and the principal powers of Europe. Treaties of commerce and navigation had been concluded with her by different nations, and it had become manifest to the whole world that any further attempt on the part of Mexico to conquer her, or to overthrow her government, would be vain. Even Mexico herself had become satisfied of this fact; and while the question of annexation was pending before the people of Texas, during the past summer, the government of Mexico, by a formal act agreed to recognize the independence of Texas on condition that she would not annex herself to any other power. The agreement to acknowledge the independence of Texas, whether with or without this condition, is conclusive against Mexico. The independence of Texas is a fact established by Mexico herself, and she had no right or authority to prescribe restrictions as to the form of government which Texas might afterwards choose to assume.

But though Mexico cannot complain of the United States on account of the annexation of Texas, it is to be regretted that various causes of misunderstanding between the two countries continue to exist, growing out of unredressed injuries inflicted by the Mexican authorities on the persons and property of citizens of the United States, through a long series of years. Mexico has admitted these injuries, but has neglected and refused to remedy them. Such was the character of the wrongs, and such the results, repeatedly offered to American citizens and the American flag by Mexico, in palpable violation of the laws of nations and the treaty between the two countries of the 5th of April, 1831, that they have been repeatedly brought to the notice of Congress by my predecessors.

As early as the 8th of February, 1837, the President of the United States declared in a message to Congress, that "the length of time since some of the injuries have been committed the repeated and unavailing applications for redress, the wanton character of some of the outrages upon the persons and property of our citizens, upon the officers and flag of the United States, independent of recent results to the government and people by the late Extraordinary Mexican Minister, would justify in the eyes of all nations immediate war." He did not, however, recommend an immediate resort to this extreme measure, which he declared, "should not be used by just and generous nations, confiding in their strength for injuries committed, if it can be honorably avoided;" but, in a spirit of forbearance, proposed that another demand be made on Mexico for that redress which had been so long and unjustly withheld.

In these views, committees of the two Houses of Congress, in reports made to the respective bodies, concurred. Since these proceedings more than eight years have elapsed, during which, in addition to the wrongs then complained of, others of an aggravated character have been committed on the persons and property of our citizens. A special agent was sent to Mexico in the summer of 1838, with full authority to make another and final demand for redress. The demand was made; the Mexican government promised to repair the wrongs of which we complained; and after much delay, a treaty of indemnity with that view was concluded between the two Powers on the eleventh of April, 1839, and was duly ratified by both governments.

By this treaty a joint commission was created to adjudicate and decide on the claims of American citizens on the government of Mexico. The commission was organized at Washington on the twenty-fifth day of August, 1840. Their

time was limited to eighteen months, at the expiration of which they had adjudicated and decided claims amounting to two millions twenty-six thousand one hundred and thirty-nine dollars and sixty-eight cents in favor of citizens of the United States against the Mexican government, leaving a large amount of claims undecided. Of the latter, the American commissioners had decided in favor of our citizens, claims amounting to nine hundred and twenty-eight thousand six hundred and twenty-seven dollars and eighty-eight cents, which were left unacted on by the unpaid authorized by the treaty. Still further claims, amounting to between three and four millions of dollars, were submitted to the board late to be considered, and were left undecided.

The sum of two millions twenty-six thousand one hundred and thirty-nine dollars and sixty-eight cents, decided by the board, was a liquidated and ascertained debt due by Mexico to the claimants, and there was no justifiable reason for delaying its payment according to the terms of the treaty. It was not, however, paid, Mexico applied for further indulgence; and, in that spirit of liberality and forbearance which has ever marked the policy of the United States towards that republic, the request was granted; and, on the 30th of January, 1843, a new treaty was concluded.

By this treaty it was provided, that the interest due on the awards in favor of claimants under the convention of the 11th of April, 1839, should be paid on the 20th of April, 1843; and that "the principal of the said awards, and the interest arising thereon, shall be paid in five years, in equal instalments every three months; the said term of five years to commence on the 30th day of April, 1843, as aforesaid." The interest due on the 30th day of April, 1843, and the three first of the twenty instalments, have been paid. Seventeen of the instalments remain unpaid, seven of which are now due.

The claims which were left undecided by the joint commission, amounting to more than three millions of dollars, together with other claims for spoliation on the property of our citizens, were subsequently presented to the Mexican government for payment, and were not recognized; that a treaty, providing for their examination and settlement by a joint commission, was concluded and signed at Mexico on the 20th day of November, 1843. This treaty was ratified by the United States, with certain amendments, to which no just exception could have been taken; but it has not yet received the ratification of the Mexican government.

In the mean time our citizens, who suffered great losses, and some of whom have been reduced from affluence to bankruptcy, are without remedy, unless their rights be enforced by their government. Such a continued and unprovoked series of wrongs could never have been tolerated by the United States, had they been committed by one of the principal nations of Europe. Mexico was, however, a neighboring sister republic, which, following our example, had achieved her independence, and for whose success and prosperity all our sympathies were early enlisted. The United States were the first to recognize her independence, and to receive her into the family of nations, and have ever been desirous of cultivating with her a good understanding. We have, therefore, borne the repeated wrongs she has committed, with great patience, in the hope that a turning point of justice would ultimately guide her councils, and that we might, if possible, generously avoid any hostile collision with her.

Without the previous authority of Congress, the Executive possessed no power to adopt or enforce adequate remedies for the injuries we had suffered, or to do more than to be prepared to repel the threatened aggression on the part of Mexico. After our army and navy had remained on the frontier and coasts of Mexico for many weeks, without any hostile movement on her part, though her menaces were continued, I deemed it important to put an end, if possible, to this state of things. With this view, I caused steps to be taken, in the month of September last, to ascertain distinctly, and in an authentic form, what the degree of the Mexican government were; whether it was their intention to declare war, or invade Texas; or whether they were disposed to adjust and settle, in an amicable manner, the pending difference between the two countries.

On the 9th of November an official answer was received, that the Mexican government consented to renew the diplomatic relations which had been suspended in March last, and for that purpose were willing to accredit a minister from the United States. With a sincere desire to preserve peace, and to restore relations of good understanding between the two republics, I waived all ceremony as to the manner of renewing diplomatic intercourse between them; and, assuming the initiative, on the tenth of November a distinguished citizen of Louisiana was appointed Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Mexico, clothed with full powers to adjust, and definitively settle, all pending differences between the two countries, including those of boundary between Mexico and the State of Texas.

The minister appointed has set out on his mission, and is probably by this time near the Mexican capital. He has been instructed to bring the negotiation with which he is charged to a conclusion at the earliest practicable period, which, it is expected, will be in time to enable me to communicate the result to Congress during the present session. Until that result is known, I forbear to recommend to Congress such other measures of redress for the wrongs and injuries we have so long borne, as it would be proper to make had no such negotiation.

Congress appropriated, at the last session, the sum of two hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars for the payment of the April and July instalments of the Mexican indemnities for the year 1844. "Provided it shall be ascertained to the satisfaction of the American government that said instalments have been paid by the Mexican government to the agent appointed by the United States to receive the same, in such manner as to discharge all claim on the Mexican government, and said agent to be delinquent in returning the money to the United States."

The unsettled state of our relations with Mexico has involved this subject in much mystery. The first information, in an authentic form, from the agent of the United States, appointed under the administration of my predecessor, was received at the State Department on the 9th of November last. This is contained in a letter, dated the 17th of October, addressed by him to one of our citizens then in Mexico, with the view of having it communicated to that department. From this it appears that the agent, on the 20th of September, 1844, gave a receipt to the treasury of Mexico for the amount of the April and July instalments of the indemnity.

In the same communication, however, he asserts that he had not received a single dollar in cash; but that he holds such securities as warranted him at the time of giving the receipt, and entertains no doubt but that he will eventually obtain the money. As these instalments appear

to have been actually paid by the government of Mexico to the agent, and as that government has not therefore been released so as to discharge the claim, I do not feel myself warranted in directing payment to be made the claimants out of the treasury, without further legislation. Their case is, undoubtedly, one of much hardship; and it remains for Congress to decide whether any, and what relief ought to be granted to them. Our minister to Mexico has been instructed to ascertain the facts of the case from the Mexican government, in an authentic and official form, and report the result with as little delay as possible.

My attention was early directed to the negotiation, which, on the fourth of March last, I found pending at Washington between the United States and Great Britain, on the subject of the Oregon Territory. Three several attempts had been previously made to settle the questions in dispute between the two countries, by negotiation, upon the principle of compromise; but each had proved unsuccessful.

These negotiations took place at London, in the years 1818, 1824, and 1826; the two first under the administration of Mr. Monroe, and the last under that of Mr. Adams. The negotiation of 1818 having failed to accomplish its object, resulted in the convention of the twelfth of October of that year. By third article of that convention, it was agreed, that any country that might be claimed by either party, on the north-west coast of America, westward of the Stony mountains, shall, together with its harbors, bays, and creeks, and the navigation of all rivers within the same, be free and open for the term of ten years from the date of the signature of the present convention, to the vessels, citizens, and subjects of the two Powers; it being well understood that this agreement is not to be construed to the prejudice of any claim which either of the two high contracting parties may have to any part of the said country, nor shall it be taken to affect the claims of any other Power or State to any part of the said country; the only object of the high contracting parties in that respect being, to prevent disputes and differences among themselves.

The negotiation of 1824 was productive of no result, and the convention of 1818 was left unchanged.

The negotiation of 1826, having also failed to effect an adjustment by compromise, resulted in the convention of August the sixth, 1827, by which it was agreed to continue the third article of the convention of the 20th of October, 1818; and it was further provided, that "it shall be competent, however, to either of the contracting parties, in case either should think fit, at any time after the 20th of October, 1828, on giving due notice of 12 months to the other contracting party, to annul and abrogate this convention; and it shall, in such case, be accordingly entirely annulled and abrogated after the expiration of the said term of notice."

In an attempt to adjust the controversy, the parallel of the 49th degree of north latitude had been offered by the United States, Great Britain, and in those of 1818 and 1826, with a further concession of the free navigation of the Columbia river north of that latitude. The parallel of the 49th degree, from the Rocky mountains to its intersection with the northern terminus of the Columbia, and thence down the channel of the river to the sea, had been offered by Great Britain, with an addition of a small detached territory north of the Columbia. Each of these propositions had been rejected by the parties respectively.

In October, 1843, the Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States in London was authorized to make a similar offer to those made in 1818 and 1826. Thus stood the question, when the negotiation was shortly afterwards transferred to Washington; and, on the 23d of August, 1844, was formally opened, under the direction of my immediate predecessor. Like all the previous negotiations, it was based upon the principle of "compromise," and the avowed purpose of the parties was, to treat of the respective claims of these countries to the Oregon territory, with the view to establish a permanent boundary between them westward of the Rocky mountains to the Pacific ocean.

Accordingly, on the 26th of August, 1844, the British plenipotentiary offered to divide the Oregon territory by the 49th parallel of north latitude, from the Rocky mountains to the point of intersection with the northern terminus of the Columbia river, and thence down that river to the sea; leaving the free navigation of the river to be enjoyed in common by both parties—a country south of this line to belong to the United States, and that north of it to Great Britain. At the same time he proposed, in addition, to yield to the United States a detached territory, north of the Columbia, extending along the Pacific and the Straits of Fuca, from Eulalia's harbor, inclusive, to Hood's canal, and to make free to the United States any port or ports south of latitude 49 degrees, which they might desire, either on the main land, or on Quadra or Vancouver's island.

With the exception of the free ports, this was the same offer which had been made by the British, and rejected by the American government in the negotiation of 1826. This proposition was properly rejected by the American plenipotentiary on the day it was submitted. This was the only proposition of compromise offered by British plenipotentiaries. The proposition on the part of Great Britain having been rejected, the British plenipotentiary requested that a proposal should be made by the United States for an equitable adjustment of the question.

When I came into office, I found this to be the state of the negotiation. Though entertaining the belief or conviction that the British propositions of title could not be maintained to any part of the Oregon territory upon any principle of public law recognized by nations, yet in deference to what had been done by my predecessors, and especially in consideration that propositions of compromise had been made by two preceding administrations, to adjust the question on the parallel of 49 degrees, and in view of them yielding to Great Britain the free navigation of the Columbia, and of the pending negotiation had been commenced on the basis of compromise, I deemed it to be my duty not abruptly to break it off.

In consideration, then, that under the conventions of 1818 and 1827, the citizens and subjects of the two Powers held a joint occupancy of the country, it was induced to make another effort to settle this long pending controversy in the spirit of moderation which had given birth to the renewed discussion. A proposition was accordingly made, which was rejected by the British plenipotentiary, who, without submitting any other proposition, suffered the negotiation on his part to drop, expressing his trust that the United States would offer what he saw fit to call some question, more consistent with fairness and equity, and with the reasonable expectations of the British government.

The proposition thus offered and rejected repeated the offer of the parallel of forty-nine degrees of north latitude, which had been made by two preceding administrations, but without proposing to surrender to Great Britain, as they had done, the free navigation of the Columbia river. The right of any foreign power to the free navigation of any of our rivers, through the heart of our country, was one which I was unwilling to

concede. It also embraced a provision to make free to Great Britain any port or ports on Cape Quadra and Vancouver's Island, south of this parallel. Had this been a new question, coming under discussion for the first time, this proposition would not have been made.

The extraordinary and wholly inadmissible demands of the British Government, and the rejection of the proposition made in deference alone to what had been done by my predecessors, and the implied obligation which their acts seemed to impose, afforded satisfactory evidence that no compromise which the United States ought to accept, can be effected. With this conviction, the proposition of compromise which had been made and rejected, was, by my direction, subsequently withdrawn, and our title to the whole Oregon Territory asserted, and, as is believed, maintained by irrefragable facts and arguments.

The civilized world will see in these proceedings a spirit of liberal concession on the part of the United States; and this government will be relieved from all responsibility which may follow the failure to settle the controversy.

All attempts at compromise having failed, it becomes the duty of Congress to consider what measures it may be proper to adopt for the security and protection of our citizens now inhabiting, or who may hereafter inhabit Oregon, and for the maintenance of our just title to that territory. In adopting measures for this purpose, care should be taken that nothing be done to violate the stipulations of the convention of 1827, which is still in force.

The faith of treaties, in their letter and spirit, has ever been, and I trust, will ever be, scrupulously observed by the United States. Under that convention, a year's notice is required to be given by either party to the other, before the joint occupancy shall terminate, and before either can rightfully assert or exercise exclusive jurisdiction over any portion of the territory. This notice it would, in my judgment, be proper to give; and I recommend that provision be made by law for giving it accordingly, and terminating, in this manner, the convention of the 6th of August, 1827.

It will become proper for Congress to determine what legislation they can, in the mean time, adopt without violating this convention. Beyond all question, the protection of our laws and our jurisdiction, civil and criminal, ought to be immediately extended over our citizens in Oregon. They have had just cause to complain of our neglect in this particular, and have, in consequence, been compelled for their own security and protection, to establish a provisional government for themselves. Strong in their allegiance and assent in their attachment to the United States, they have been thus cast upon their own resources. They are anxious that our laws should be extended over them, and I recommend that this be done by Congress with as little delay as possible, in the full extent to which the British Parliament have proceeded in regard to British subjects in that territory, by their act of July the 2d, 1834, "for regulating the fur-trade, and establishing a criminal and civil jurisdiction within certain parts of North America."

By this act Great Britain extended her laws and jurisdiction, civil and criminal, over her subjects, engaged in the fur-trade in that territory. By it, the courts of the province of Upper Canada were empowered to take cognizance of causes civil and criminal. Justices of the peace and other judicial officers were authorized to be appointed in that territory, to exercise all powers arising from the courts of that province, and to sit and hold courts of record for the trial of criminal offences and misdemeanors; not made the subject of capital punishment, and also of civil cases, where the cause of action shall not exceed in value the amount or sum of two hundred pounds.

Subsequent to the date of this act of Parliament, a grant was made from the "British crown" to the Hudson's Bay Company, of the exclusive trade with the Indian tribes on the Oregon Territory, subject to the restriction that it shall not operate to the exclusion of the subjects of any foreign States who, under or by force of any convention for the time being, between us and such foreign States, respectively, may be entitled to and shall be engaged in, the said trade.

It is much to be regretted that, while under this act British subjects have enjoyed the protection of British laws and British judicial tribunals throughout the whole Oregon, American citizens, in the same territory, have enjoyed no such protection from their government. At the same time, the result illustrates the character of our people and their institutions. In spite of this neglect, they have multiplied, and their number is rapidly increasing in that territory. They have made no appeal to arms, but have peacefully fortified themselves in their new homes, by the adoption of republican institutions for themselves, furnishing another example of that truth that self-government is inherent in the American breast, and must prevail. It is due to them that they should be embraced and protected by our laws.

It is deemed important that our laws regulating trade and intercourse with the Indian tribes east of the Rocky Mountains, should be extended to such tribes as dwell beyond them.

The increasing emigration to Oregon, and the care and protection which is due from the government to its citizens in that distant region, make it our duty, as it is our interest, to cultivate amicable relations with the Indian tribes of that territory. For this purpose, I recommend that provision be made for establishing an Indian agency, and such sub-agencies as may be deemed necessary, beyond the Rocky Mountains.

For the protection of emigrants whilst on their way to Oregon, against the attacks of the Indian tribes occupying the country through which they pass, I recommend that a suitable number of stockades and blockhouse forts be erected along the usual route between any frontier settlements on the Missouri and the Rocky mountains, and that an adequate force of mounted riflemen be raised to guard and protect them on their journey. The immediate adoption of these recommendations by Congress will not violate the provisions of the existing treaty. It will be doing nothing more for American citizens than British laws have long since done for British subjects in the same territory.

It requires several months to perform the voyage by sea from the Atlantic States to Oregon, and although we have a large number of whale ships in the Pacific, but few of them afford an opportunity of exchanging intelligence, without great delay, between our settlements in that distant region and the United States. An overland mail is believed to be entirely practicable; and the importance of establishing such a mail, at least once a month, is submitted to the favorable consideration of Congress.

It is submitted to the wisdom of Congress to determine whether, at their present session, and until after the expiration of the year's notice, any other measures may be adopted, consistently with the convention of 1827, for the security of our rights, and the government and protection of our citizens in Oregon. That it will ultimately be wise and proper to make liberal grants of land to the patriotic pioneers, who, amidst privations and dangers, lead the way through savage tribes inhabiting the vast wilderness intervening between our frontier settlements and Oregon, and who cultivate, and are ever ready to defend the soil, I am fully satisfied. To doubt whether they will obtain such grants as soon as the convention between the United States and Great Britain shall have ceased to exist, would be to doubt the justice of the Congress, but, pending the year's notice, it is worthy of consideration

whether a stipulation to this effect may be made, consistently with the spirit of that convention. The recommendations which have made, as to the best manner of securing our rights in Oregon, are submitted to Congress with great deference. Should they in their wisdom, devise any other mode better calculated to accomplish the same object, it shall meet with my hearty concurrence.

At the end of the year's notice, should Congress think it proper to make provision for giving that notice, we shall have reached a period when the national rights in Oregon must either be abandoned or firmly maintained. That they cannot be abandoned without a sacrifice of both national honor and interest, is too clear to admit of doubt.

Oregon is a part of the North American continent, to which, it is confidently affirmed, the title of the United States is the best now in existence. For the grounds on which that title rests, I refer you to the correspondence of the late and present Secretary of State, with the British plenipotentiary during the negotiation. The British proposition of compromise, which would make the Columbia the line south of forty-nine degrees, with a trailing addition of detached territory to the United States north of that river, and would leave on the British side two thirds of the whole Oregon territory, including the free navigation of the Columbia and all the valuable harbors on the Pacific coast, for a moment, be entertained by the United States, without an abandonment of their just and clear territorial rights, their own self-respect, and the national honor. For the information of Congress, I communicate herewith the correspondence which took place between the two governments during the late negotiation.

In regard to the doctrine of "a balance of power" on this continent, lately broached by some of the powers of Europe, the President speaks in strong and emphatic language. He says any European interference on the North American continent, will be resisted at all hazards.

He also recommends to Congress some action in relation to the duty on Port wine from Portugal, Coffee from Java, and the tonnage duty of Spanish vessels in our ports. He recommends the payment of a small claim to Texas, on account of a seizure of some goods by our troops. The Commissioner to China, who returned when on his passage, on account of ill health, will again proceed on his voyage.

In the quarrel of our South American neighbors, he says, we cannot meddle, though they have our sympathies. The President says, excepting Great Britain and Mexico, we are on good terms with all civilized nations.

The imports for the fiscal year ending on the 30th June last, were of the value of \$17,351,554, of which the amount exported was \$15,740,850, leaving a balance of \$1,610,704 for domestic consumption. The exports the same year were of the value of \$11,610,906. The receipts into the Treasury, the same year, were \$9,769,133, of which there were derived from the sales of public lands, \$2,977,022. The expenditures for the same period were \$29,268,296, of which \$8,565,157 were applied to the payment of the public debt. The balance in the Treasury, on the 1st of July last, was \$7,058,309.

The amount of the public debt remaining on 1st of Oct. last, was \$17,076,416. Further payments would have been made but for our unsettled relations with Mexico. The hope is cherished that the country will soon again be without a debt.

In regard to the Tariff, the President is in favor of discriminating duties, within the revenue standard, which he explains as follows:

If Congress levy a duty for revenue of one per cent, on a given article, it will produce a given amount of money to the treasury, and will incidentally and necessarily afford protection, or advantage, to the amount of one per cent to the home manufacturer of a similar or like article over the importer. If the duty be raised to ten per cent, it will produce a greater amount of money, and afford greater protection. If it be still raised to twenty, twenty-five, or thirty per cent, and if, as it is raised, the revenue derived from it is found to be increased, the protection or advantage will also be increased; but if it be raised to thirty per cent, and it is found that the revenue produced at that rate is less than at thirty per cent, it ceases to be a revenue duty.

The precise point in the ascending scale of duties at which it is ascertained from experience that the revenue is greatest, is the maximum rate of duty which can be laid for the bona fide purpose of collecting money for the support of government. To raise the duties higher than that point, and thereby diminish the amount collected, is to levy them for protection merely, and not for revenue. As long, then, as duties may gradually increase the rate of duty on a given article, and the revenue is increased by such increase of duty, they are within the revenue standard. When they go beyond that point, and as they increase the duties, the revenue is diminished or destroyed, the act ceases to have for its object the raising of money to support government, but is for protection merely.

He does not favor the highest rate of duties an article can bear. Nor is he in favor of the horizontal duties. He thinks Congress should select the objects of taxation, while some should be admitted duty free. He proceeds to say:

In recommending to Congress a reduction of the present rates of duty, and a revision and modification of the act of 1842, I can far from entertaining opinions unfriendly to the manufacturers. I recommend to Congress the abolition of the minimum principle, or assumed, arbitrary, and false values, and of specific duties, and the substitution in their place of *ad valorem* duties, as the fairest and most equitable indirect tax which can be imposed. By the *ad valorem* principle, all articles are taxed according to their cost or value, and those which are of inferior quality, or of small cost, bear only the just proportion of the tax with those which are of superior quality or greater cost. The articles consumed by all are taxed at the same rate.

He next recommends the Sub Treasury, giving strong reasons, showing that Bank stockholders should not hold the public funds without interest, to loan out to their customers, and thus converting the public revenue into a banking capital.

A reduction of the price of the public lands is recommended, and a pre-emption granted to settlers. A change in the management of the mineral lands is also recommended, the expenses of which are now greater than the income.

The army and navy is next alluded to, and highly complimented for their promptness and efficiency.