

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.

Fellow citizens of the Senate and of the House of Representatives:

I congratulate you and our common constituency upon the favorable auspices under which you meet for your first session. Our country is at peace with all the world. The agitation which, for a time threatened to disturb the fraternal relations which make us one people, is fast subsiding; and a year of general prosperity and health has crowned the nation with unusual blessings.

Before the expedition set out, and probably before it was organized, a slight insurrectionary movement, which appears to have been soon suppressed, had taken place in the eastern quarter of Cuba. The importance of this movement was unfortunately so much exaggerated in the accounts of it published in this country, that these adventurers seem to have been led to believe that the Creole population of the island not only desired to throw off the authority of the mother country, but had resolved upon that step, and had begun a well-concerted enterprise for effecting it.

On receiving information of what had occurred, Commodore Foxhall A. Parker was instructed to proceed in the steam-frigate Saranac to Havana, and inquire into the charges against the persons executed, the circumstances under which they were taken, and whatsoever referred to their trial and sentence.

According to the record of the examination, the prisoners admitted the offences charged against them, of being hostile invaders of the island. At the time of their trial and execution the main body of the invaders was still in the field, making war upon the Spanish authorities and Spanish subjects.

Such is the melancholy result of this illegal and ill-fated expedition. Thus, thoughtless young men have been induced, by false and fraudulent representations, to violate the law of their country, through rash and unfounded expectations of assisting to accomplish political revolutions in other States, and have lost their lives in the undertaking.

Although these offenders against the laws have forfeited the protection of their country, yet the Government may, so far as is consistent with its obligations to other countries, and its fixed purpose to maintain and enforce the laws, entertain sympathy for their unoffending families and friends, as well as a feeling of compassion for themselves.

ered as affording any ground of expectation that the Government of the United States will, hereafter, feel itself under any obligation of duty to interfere for the liberation or pardon of such persons as are flagrant offenders against the law of nations and the laws of the United States. These laws must be executed. If we desire to maintain our respectability among the nations of the earth, it behoves us to enforce steadily and sternly the neutrality acts passed by Congress, and to follow, as far as may be, the violation of those acts with condign punishment.

United States are founded on a firm, secure, and well-defined basis; they stand upon the ground of National Independence and public law, and will be maintained in all their full and just extent.

The principle which this Government has heretofore solemnly announced it still adheres to, and will maintain under all circumstances and at all hazards. That principle is, that in every regularly documented merchant vessel, the crew who navigate it, and those on board of it, will find their protection in the flag which is over them. No American ship can be allowed to be visited or searched for the purpose of ascertaining the character of individuals on board, nor can there be allowed any watch by the vessels of any foreign nation over American vessels on the coasts of the United States or the seas adjacent thereto.

In addition to the correspondence on this subject, herewith submitted, official information has been received at the Department of State, of assurances by the French government, that in the orders given to the French naval forces, they were expressly instructed, in any operations they might engage in, to respect the flag of the United States wherever it might appear, and to commit no act of hostility upon any vessel or armament under its protection.

The occurrence at New Orleans has led me to give my attention to the state of our laws in regard to foreign ambassadors, ministers, and consuls. I think the legislation of our country is deficient in not providing sufficiently either for the protection or the punishment of consuls.

From the accompanying copy of a note from the British Legation at Washington, and the reply of the Department of State thereto, it will appear that her Britannic Majesty's government is desirous that a part of the boundary line between Oregon and the British Possessions should be authoritatively marked out, and that an intention was expressed to apply to Congress for an appropriation to defray the expense thereof on this subject accordingly invited, and a proper appropriation recommended.

The Turkish government has expressed its thanks for the kind reception given to the Sultan's agent, Amin Bey, on the occasion of his recent visit to the United States. On the 28th of February last a despatch was addressed by the Secretary of State to Mr. Mar, the American Minister at Constantinople, instructing him to ask of the Turkish government permission for the Hongkong and Shanghai Steamship Company to remove to this country, on the 3d of March last both Houses of Congress passed a resolution requesting the President to authorize the employment of a public vessel to convey to this country Louis Kosuth and his associates in captivity.

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Ministers and consuls of foreign nations are the means and agents of communication between us and those nations, and it is of the utmost importance that, while residing in our country, they should feel a perfect security so long as they faithfully discharge their respective duties and are guilty of no violation of our laws. This is the admitted law of nations, and no country has a deeper interest in maintaining it than the United States.

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Your attention is again invited to the question of reciprocal trade between the United States and Canada and other British possessions near our frontier. Overtures for a convention upon this subject have been received from her Britannic Majesty's Minister Plenipotentiary, but it seems to be in many respects preferable that the matter should be regarded by reciprocal legislation.

The President of the French Republic, according to the provisions of the convention, has been selected as arbitrator in the case of the General Armstrong; and has signified that he accepts the trust and the high satisfaction he feels in acting as the common friend of two nations, with which France is united by sentiments of sincere and lasting affinity.

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panions from prison, on the 10th of September last they embarked on board of the United States steam-frigate Mississippi, which was selected to carry into effect the resolution of Congress. Governor Kosuth left the Mississippi at Gibraltar, for the purpose of making a visit to England, and may shortly be expected in New York. By communications to the Department of State he has expressed his grateful acknowledgements for the interposition of this Government in behalf of himself and his associates.

It is earnestly to be hoped that the differences which have for some time past been pending between the government of the French Republic and that of the Sandwich Islands, may be peaceably and durably adjusted, so as to secure the independence of those islands. Long before the events which have of late imparted so much importance to the possessions of the United States on the Pacific, we acknowledge the independence of the Hawaiian government. This government was first in taking that step, and several of the leading powers of Europe immediately followed.

It is gratifying not only to those who consider the commercial interests of nations, but also to all who favor the progress of knowledge by the diffusion of religion, to see a community emerge from a savage state and attain such a degree of civilization in those distant seas.

It is much to be deplored that the internal tranquility of the Mexican Republic should again be seriously disturbed; for, since the peace between that Republic and the United States it had enjoyed such comparative repose that the most favorable anticipations for the future might, with a degree of confidence, have been indulged. These, however, have been thwarted by the recent outbreak in the State of Tamaulipas, on the right bank of the Rio Bravo.

Some unexpected difficulties and delays have arisen in the ratification of that convention by Mexico, but it is to be presumed that her decision will be governed by just and enlightened views, as well of the general importance of the object, as of her own interests and obligations.

In negotiating upon this important subject, this Government has had in view one, and only one, object. That object has been, and is, the construction or attainment of a passage from ocean to ocean, the shortest and the best for travellers and merchandise, and equally open to all the world.

For some months past the Republic of Nicaragua has been the theatre of one of those civil convulsions, from which the cause of free institutions, and the general prosperity and social progress of the States of Central America, have so often and so severely suffered.

It is understood that a considerable part of the railroad across the Isthmus of Panama has been completed, and that the mail and passengers will in the future be conveyed thereon.

Peace has been concluded between the contending parties in the Island of St. Domingo, and it is hoped upon a durable basis. Such

is the extent of our commercial relations with that island, that the United States cannot fail to feel a strong interest in its tranquillity. The office of Commissioner to China remains unfilled; several persons have been appointed, and the place has been offered to others, all of whom have declined its acceptance, on the ground of the inadequacy of the compensation. The annual allowance by law is six thousand dollars, and there is no provision for any outfit. I earnestly recommend the consideration of this subject to Congress.

Our commerce with China is highly important, and is becoming more and more so, in consequence of the increasing intercourse between our ports on the Pacific coast and Eastern Asia.

By reference to the Report of the Secretary of the Treasury, it will be seen that the aggregate receipts for the last fiscal year amounted to \$52,312,979 87; which, with the balance in the Treasury on the 1st July, 1850, gave, as the available means for the year, the sum of \$58,917,524 36.

The public debt on the 30th ultimo, exclusive of the stock authorized to be issued to Texas by the act of 9th September, 1850, was \$62,560,995 26.

The receipts for the next fiscal year are estimated at \$51,800,000, which, with the probable unappropriated balance in the Treasury, on the 30th June next, will give, as the probable available means for that year, the sum of \$63,258,743 09.

It has been deemed proper, in view of the large expenditures consequent upon the acquisition of territory from Mexico, that the estimates for the next fiscal year should be laid before Congress in such manner as to distinguish the expenditures so required from the otherwise ordinary demands upon the Treasury.

The total expenditures for the next fiscal year are estimated at \$42,892,299 19, of which there is required for the ordinary purposes of the Government, other than those consequent upon the acquisition of our new Territories, and deducting the payments on account of the public debt, the sum of \$33,343,198 08; and for the purposes connected directly or indirectly with those Territories, and in the fulfilment of the obligations of the Government, contracted in consequence of their acquisition, the sum of \$9,549,101 11.

If the views of the Secretary of the Treasury in reference to the expenditures required for these Territories shall be met by corresponding action on the part of Congress, and appropriations made in accordance therewith, there will be an estimated unappropriated balance in the Treasury on the 30th June, 1851, of \$20,366,443 90, wherewith to meet that portion of the public debt due on the first July following, amounting to \$6,237,931 35, as well as an appropriations which may be made beyond the estimates.

In thus referring to the estimated expenditures on account of our newly-acquired Territories, I may express the hope that Congress will concur with me in the desire that a liberal course of policy may be pursued to ward them, and that every obligation, express or implied, entered into in consequence of their acquisition, shall be fulfilled by the most liberal appropriations for that purpose.

The value of our domestic exports for the last fiscal year, as compared with those of the previous year, exhibit an increase of \$43,646,322. At first view this condition of our trade with foreign nations would seem to present the most flattering hopes of its future prosperity.

The aggregate value of rice exported during the last fiscal year, as compared with the previous year, also exhibit a decrease amounting to \$460,917, which, with a decline in the value of the exports of tobacco for the same period, make an aggregate decrease in these two articles of \$1,156,751.

The policy which dictated a low rate of duties on foreign merchandise, it was thought by those who promoted and established it, would tend to benefit the farming population of this country, by increasing the demand and raising the price of agricultural products in foreign markets.

The foregoing facts, however, seem to show incontestably that no such result has followed the adoption of this policy. On the contrary, notwithstanding the repeal of the restrictive corn laws in England, the foreign demand for the products of the American farmer has steadily declined, since the short crops and consequent famine in a portion of Europe have been happily replaced by full crops and comparative abundance of food.

our exports for the present fiscal year of at least \$40,000,000, compared with the amount exported for the year ending 30th June, 1851.

The production of gold in California for the past year seems to promise a large supply of that metal from that quarter for some time to come. This large annual increase of the currency of the world must be attended with its usual results.

The exports of specie to liquidate our foreign debt during the past fiscal year have been \$24,263,979 over the amount of specie imported. The exports of specie during the first quarter of the present fiscal year have been \$14,651,827.

In the present prosperous condition of the national finances, it will become the duty of Congress to consider the best mode of paying off the public debt.

By reference to the act of Congress approved 9th September, 1850, it will be seen that, in consideration of certain concessions by the State of Texas, it is provided that the "United States shall pay to the State of Texas the sum of ten millions of dollars, in a stock bearing five per cent. interest, and redeemable at the end of fourteen years, the interest payable half yearly, at the Treasury of the United States."

The form of release thus provided for has been prescribed by the Secretary of the Treasury, and approved. It has been published in all the leading newspapers in the commercial cities of the United States, and all persons holding claims of the kind specified in the foregoing proviso were required to file their releases (in the form thus prescribed) in the Treasury of the United States, on or before the 1st day of October, 1851.

The authorities of the State of Texas, at the request of the Secretary of the Treasury, have furnished a schedule of the public debt of that State created prior to her admission into the Union, with a copy of the laws under which each class was contracted.

I have, from the documents furnished by the State of Texas, determined the classes of claims which in my judgment fall within the provisions of the act of Congress of the 9th of September, 1850.

On being officially informed of the acceptance by Texas of the propositions contained in the act referred to, I caused the stock to be prepared, and the five millions which are to be issued unconditionally, bearing an interest of five per cent. from the 1st day of January, 1851, have been for some time ready to be delivered to the State of Texas.

The releases, required by law to be deposited in the Treasury, no having been filed there, the remaining five millions of the stock will be withheld from Texas until the conditions upon which it is to be delivered shall be complied with by the creditors of that State, unless Congress shall otherwise direct by a modification of the law.

In my last annual message, to which I respectfully refer, I stated briefly the reasons which induced me to recommend a modification of the present tariff, by converting the ad valorem into a specific duty, wherever the article imported was of such a character as to permit it, and that such a discrimination should be made, in favor of the industrial pursuits of our own country, as to encourage home production without excluding foreign competition.

The numerous frauds which continue to be practised upon the revenue, by false invoices and undervaluations, constitute an unanswerable reason for adopting specific instead of ad valorem duties in all cases where the nature of the commodity does not forbid it. A striking illustration of these frauds will be exhibited in the Report of the Secretary of the Treasury, showing the custom-house valuation of articles imported under a former law subject to specific duties, when there was no inducement to undervaluation, and the custom-house valuations of the same articles, under the present system of ad valorem duties, so greatly reduced as to leave no doubt of the existence of the most flagrant abuses under the existing laws.