

MESSAGE Of President Jefferson Davis.

Gentlemen of the Congress:

It is my pleasing duty to announce to you that the Constitution framed for the establishment of a permanent government for the Confederate States has been ratified by Conventions in each of those States to which it was referred.

There is reason to believe that at no distant day other States identified in political principles and community of interests with those which you represent, will join this Confederacy.

It was not, however, for the purpose of making this announcement that I have deemed it my duty to convoke you at an earlier day than that fixed by yourselves for your meeting.

During the war waged against Great Britain by the colonies on this continent, a common danger impelled them to a close alliance, and to the formation of a Confederation.

The articles of Confederation contained a clause whereby alterations were prohibited, unless confirmed by the legislature of every State after being agreed to by Congress.

It was by the delegates chosen by the several States, under the resolution just quoted, that the Constitution of the United States was framed in 1787, and submitted to the several States for ratification.

I have italicized certain words in the quotations just made, for the purpose of attracting attention to the singular and marked caution with which the States endeavored, in every possible form to exclude the idea that the separate and independent sovereignty of each State was merged into one common government and nation.

Strange indeed must it appear to the impartial observer, but it is none the less true, that all these carefully worded clauses proved unavailing to prevent the rise and growth in the Northern States of a political school which has persistently claimed that the Government thus formed was not a compact between States.

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which exists between a county and a State in which it is situated and by which it was erected. This is the lamental and fundamental error on which rests the policy that has culminated in his declaration of war against these Confederate States.

In addition to the long continued and deep seated resentment felt by the Southern States at the persistent abuse of the powers they had delegated to Congress, for the purpose of enriching the manufacturing and shipping classes of the North at the expense of the South, there has existed for nearly half a century another subject of discord, involving interest of such transcendent magnitude as at all times to create the apprehension in the minds of many devoted lovers of the Union, that its permanence was impossible.

When the several States delegated certain powers to the United States Congress, a large portion of the laboring population consisted of African slaves imported into the colonies by the mother country.

The South were willing purchasers of a property suitable to their wants; and paid the price of the acquisition without harboring a suspicion that their quiet possession was to be disturbed by those who were inhibited, not only by want of constitutional authority, but by good faith as vendors, from disquieting a title emanating from themselves.

As soon, however, as the Northern States that prohibited African slavery within their limits had reached a number sufficient to give their representatives a controlling voice in the Congress, a persistent and organized system of hostile measures against the rights of the owners of slaves in the Southern States was inaugurated, and gradually extended.

The articles of Confederation contained a clause whereby alterations were prohibited, unless confirmed by the legislature of every State after being agreed to by Congress, and in obedience to this provision under the resolution of Congress of the 21st February 1787, the several States appointed delegates, who attended a Convention "for the sole and express purpose of revising the articles of confederation, and reporting to Congress and the several Legislatures such alterations and provisions therein as shall, when agreed to in Congress, and confirmed by the States, render the Federal Constitution adequate to the exigencies of government and the preservation of the Union."

The Constitution of 1787 having, however, omitted the clause already recited in the articles of confederation, which provided in explicit terms that each State retained its sovereignty and independence, some alarm was felt in the States when invited to ratify the Constitution, lest this omission should be construed into an abandonment of their cherished principle, and they refused to be satisfied until amendments were added to the Constitution, placing beyond any pretence of doubt the reservation, by the States, of all their sovereign rights and powers—not expressly delegated to the United States by the Constitution.

Under the supervision of a superior race, their labor had been directed as not only to allow a gradual and marked amelioration of their own condition, but to convert hundreds of thousands of square miles of the wilderness into cultivated lands, covered with a prosperous people; towns and cities had sprung into existence, and had rapidly increased in wealth and population under the social system of the South; the white population of the Southern slaveholding States had augmented from about 600,000, at the date of the adoption of the constitutional compact, to upwards of 4,000,000.

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that each State was, in the last resort, the sole judge as well of its wrongs, as of the mode and measure of redress. Indeed, it is obvious, that under the law of nations, this principle is an axiom as applied to the relations of independent sovereign States, such as those which had united themselves under the constitutional compact.

The principles thus emphatically announced embrace those to which I have already adverted, the right of each State to judge of and redress the wrongs of which it complains. These principles were maintained by overwhelming majorities of the people of all the States of the Union at different elections, especially in the elections of Mr Jefferson in 1825, Mr Madison in 1809 & Mr Pierce in 1852.

In the exercise of a right so ancient, so well established, and so necessary for self-preservation, the people of the Confederate States in their Conventions determined that the wrongs which they had suffered, and the evils with which they were menaced, required that they should revoke the delegation of powers to the Federal Government which they had ratified in their several Conventions.

Having done this, they proceeded to form a new compact amongst themselves by new articles of confederation, which have also been ratified by the Conventions of the several States, with an approach to unanimity far exceeding that of the Conventions which adopted the Constitution of 1787.

This peace is ardently desired by this government and people, has been manifested in every possible form. Scarce had you assembled in February last, when, prior even to the inauguration of the Chief Magistrate you had elected, you passed a resolution expressive of your desire for the appointment of commissioners to be sent to the Government of the United States "for the purpose of negotiating friendly relations between that Government and the Confederate States of America, and for the settlement of all questions of disagreement between the two Governments upon principles of right, justice, equity and good faith."

It was my pleasure as well as my duty to cooperate with you in this work of peace. Indeed, in my address to you on taking the oath of office, and before receiving from you the communication of this resolution, I had said, "as a necessity, not a choice, we have resorted to the remedy of separation, and henceforth our energies must be directed to the conduct of our own affairs, and the perpetuity of the Confederacy which we have formed. If a just perception of mutual interest shall permit us peaceably to pursue our separate political careers, my most earnest desire will have been fulfilled."

On the arrival of our commissioners in Washington on the 5th of March, they postponed, at the instigation of a friendly intermediary, doing more than giving informal notice of their arrival. This was done with a view to afford time to the President, who had just been inaugurated, for the discharge of other pressing official duties in the organization of his Administration, before engaging his attention in the object of their mission. It was not until the 12th of the month that they officially addressed the Secretary of State, informing him of the purpose of their arrival, and stating in the language of their instructions their wish "to make to the Government of the United States overtures for the opening of negotiations, assuring the Government of the U. States that the President, Congress and people of the Confederate States earnestly desire a peaceful solution of the great questions; that it is neither their interest nor their wish to make any demand which is not founded on strict justice, nor do any act to injure their late confederates."

To this communication no formal reply was received until the 8th of April. During the interval the commissioners had consented to waive all questions of form. With the firm resolve to avoid war if possible, they went so far, even, as to hold, during that long period, unofficial intercourse, through an intermediary, whose high position and character inspired the hope of success, and through whom constant assurances were received from the Government of the U. S. of peaceful intentions; of the determination to evacuate Fort Sumter; and further, that no measures changing the existing status prejudicially to the Confederate States, especially at Fort Pickens, was in contemplation, but that in the event of any change of intention on the subject, notice would be given to the commissioners.

The crooked paths of diplomacy can scarcely furnish an example so wanting in courtesy, in candor, and directness, as was the course of the U. S. Government towards our commissioners in Washington. For I now proceed to relate: Early in April the attention of the whole country, as well as that of our commissioners, was attracted to extraordinary preparations for an extensive military and naval expedition in New York and other northern ports. These preparations commenced in secrecy, for an expedition whose destination was concealed, only became known when early completed, and on the 5th, 6th and 7th of April, transports and vessels of war, with troops, munitions and military supplies, sailed from northern ports bound southward. Alarmed by so extraordinary a demonstration, the commissioners requested the delivery of an answer to their official communication of the 12th of March, and thereupon received, on the 8th of April, a reply dated on the 25th of the previous month, from which it appears that, during the whole interval, whilst the commissioners were receiving assurances calculated to inspire hope of the success of their mission, the Secretary of State and the President of the United States had determined to hold no intercourse with them whatever; to refuse even to listen to any proposals they had to make, and had profited by the delay created by their own assurances, in order to prepare secretly for effective hostilities.

That these assurances were given, has been virtually confessed by the Government of the United States sending a messenger to Charleston to give notice of its purpose to use force if opposed in any way by the Confederate States. No more striking proof of the absence of good faith in the conduct of the Government of the U. States towards the Confederacy can be required than is contained in the circumstances which accompanied the notice. According to the usual course of navigation, the vessels composing the expedition destined for the relief of Fort Sumter might be expected to reach Charleston harbor on the 9th of April, yet with our commissioners actually in Washington, they were not given any notice of their arrival until after the 10th of April, and a messenger was sent to Charleston to give notice to the Governor of South Carolina, and the notice was so given at a late hour on the 8th of April, the eve of the very day on which the fleet might be expected to arrive.

The fact that the maneuver failed in its purpose was not the fault of those who contrived it. A heavy tempest delayed the arrival of the expedition, and gave time to receive the instructions of the Government. Even then, under all the provocation incident to the contemptuous refusal to listen to our Commissioners, and the tortuous course of the United States, I was sincerely anxious to avoid the effusion of blood, and to direct the attention of the commander of the expedition to the necessities, which we should abstain from directing our fire on Fort Sumter if he would promise not to open fire on our forces unless first attacked.

Having been officiously notified by the public authorities of the State of Virginia that she had withdrawn from the Union, and desired to maintain the closest political relations with us which it was possible at this time to establish, I commissioned the Hon. Alexander Stevens, Governor of the State of Virginia, to represent this Government at Richmond. I am happy to inform you that he has concluded a convention with the State of Virginia, by which that honored Commonwealth, so long and justly distinguished among her sister States, and so dear to the hearts of thousands of our citizens in the Confederate States, has united her power and her fortune with ours, and become one of us.

This convention, together with the ordinance of Virginia adopting the provisional constitution of the Confederacy, will be laid before you for your constitutional action at the meeting of the Convention, on the 20th of our late Confederates that they are on the point of adopting similar measures, and I cannot doubt that ere you shall have been many weeks in session, the whole of the slaveholding States of the late Union will have united with us in the same course of action, and by uniting their fortunes with ours, become our common interests and secure our common safety.

In the Treasury Department, regulations have been devised and put into execution, for carrying out the policy indicated in your legislation on the subject of the collection of revenue on the frontier. Free transit has been secured for vessels and merchandise passing through the Confederate States; and delay and inconvenience have been avoided as far as possible in organizing the revenue service for the various railroads crossing our territory. It is to be expected that the possibility of improvement in these regulations, no effort will be spared to free commerce from all unnecessary embarrassments and obstructions.

Under your act authorizing a loan, proposals were issued inviting subscriptions for the purchase of dollars, and the call was answered by the prompt subscription of more than eight millions by our own citizens, and not a single bid was made under par. The rapid development of the purpose of the President of the United States to invade our soil, capture our forts, blockade our ports, and deprive us of our commerce, led me to direct that the entire subscription should be accepted. It will now become necessary to raise means to a much larger amount to defray the expenses of maintaining our independence and repelling invasion.

The Department of Justice you have confided not only to the organization and supervision of all matters connected with the courts of justice, but also those connected with patents and with the bureau of public printing.

Since our adjournment all the courts, with the exception of those of Mississippi and Texas, have been organized by the appointment of Marshals and District Attorneys, and are now prepared for the exercise of their functions.

I have just named, the gentlemen confirmed as Judges declined to accept the appointment, and no nominations have yet been made to fill the vacancies. I refer you to the report of the Attorney General, and concur in his recommendation for immediate legislation, especially on the subject of patent rights. Early provision should be made to secure to the subjects of foreign nations the full enjoyment of their own valuable inventions, and to extend to our own citizens protection, not only for their own inventions, but for such as may hereafter be assigned by persons not aliens or citizens of the United States.

me that it is hard to believe that it could have emanated from a President of the United States. Its announcement of a mere paper blockade is so manifestly a violation of the law of nations, that it would seem incredible that it could have been issued by any authority—but conceding this to be the case so far as the executive is concerned, it will be difficult to satisfy the people of these States that their late confederates will sanction its declarations, will determine to ignore the usages of civilized nations, and will ignore the horrors of the conflict it seems to invite. The details of the administration of the different departments, I refer to the reports of the secretaries which accompany this message.

The State Department has furnished the necessary instructions for three Commissioners, who have been sent to England, France, Russia and Belgium, since your adjournment, to ask our recognition as a member of the family of nations, and to make with each of those powers treaties of amity and commerce. Further steps will be taken to enter into negotiations with all other independent American powers, with a view to the ratification of the late session. Sufficient time has not yet elapsed since the departure of these Commissioners for the receipt of any intelligence from them.

As I deem it desirable that Commissioners, or other diplomatic agents, should also be sent to early periods of the late session, I have directed that you should maintain the most cordial and friendly relations, I suggest the expediency of making the necessary appropriations for that purpose.

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and dispersed in modes peculiar to itself, and without the aid of a general and proper accountability. I call your attention to the additional legislation required for this department, to the recommendations of newspapers, periodicals, and sealed packages of printed matter, and especially to the recommendation of the Secretary, in which I concur, that you provide at once the necessary means for the control of our postal service.

In the military organizations of the States, provision is made for brigadier and major-generals, but the army of the Confederate States, the highest grade of that of brigadier-general. Hence it will no doubt sometimes occur that were troops of the confederacy to be sent to the front, the general selection of the command, and posted in the views and purposes of the government, will be superseded by an officer of the militia not having the same advantages. To avoid this contingency in the least objectionable manner, I commend that additional rank be given to the officers of the Confederate army, and concurring in the proposal of having but one grade of generals in the army of the Confederacy, I recommend that the law of this regard be amended, so that the grade be called on some of our military education, and that the officers of the militia have attained the age and acquired the knowledge to fit them for the duties of lieutenants.

I also call your attention to an omission in the organizing the army, in relation to military chaplains and recommend that provision be made for their appointment.

In conclusion I congratulate you on the fact, that every portion of our country there has been exhibiting the most patriotic devotion to our common cause. Transportation companies have freely tendered the use of their facilities to the benefit of the Confederacy, in company with others who control lines of communication with the States that we are soon to greet as sisters, assembled in Convention in this city, and not only redoubled largely the rates heretofore demanded for mail service, but voluntarily professed to receive their compensation at these reduced rates, and the bonds of the Confederacy, for the purpose of defraying all the resources of the Government at its disposal for the common defence.

Requisitions for troops have been met with such alacrity that numbers, tending to the completion of the ranks, have been called on to receive their compensation at these reduced rates, and the bonds of the Confederacy, for the purpose of defraying all the resources of the Government at its disposal for the common defence. Requisitions for troops have been met with such alacrity that numbers, tending to the completion of the ranks, have been called on to receive their compensation at these reduced rates, and the bonds of the Confederacy, for the purpose of defraying all the resources of the Government at its disposal for the common defence.

A people thus united and resolved cannot shrink from any sacrifice, and our country may be called on to make, we can have a reasonable doubt of the success of our arms. However long and severe may be the course of our arms, however long and severe may be the course of our arms, however long and severe may be the course of our arms.

JEFFERSON DAVIS. Montgomery, April 29, 1861.

SOUTHERN ARMY REGULATION. For the benefit of many persons who have made inquiry as to the regulation of the Confederate States army we publish the following items: Under the bill for the public defence 100,000 volunteers can be accepted, who will be subject to the rules governing the regular army.

B. R. SMITH & CO., (SUCCESSORS TO J. B. F. BOONE.) WHOLESALE AND RETAIL DEALERS IN BOOTS AND SHOES, Leather, Calf-Skins and Shoe-Findings. CHARLOTTE, N. C. March 26, 1861.