

Congressional

Thirty-Fourth Congress—First Session.

WASHINGTON, March 31, 1856.

SENATE. After petitions and reports from Committees, Mr. Clayton made an explanation, saying that instead of the publication of the narrative of Gen. Wilson's Expedition costing a million and a quarter of dollars, as stated by him the other day, on the authority of the Superintendent of Public Printing, the fact was that such publication when completed would cost about one hundred and fifty thousand dollars. The whole cost of the Expedition during the four years it was away, together with printing, &c., would amount to about a million and a quarter of dollars. He stated these facts on the authority of Com. Wilson himself.

The Senate resumed the consideration of the resolution submitted by Mr. Iverson several weeks since, providing that a committee be appointed, who shall be authorized to summon before them the members of the late Naval Board, for the purpose of ascertaining upon what reasons the action of the Board in the various cases was predicated. Mr. Iverson proceeded to speak in relation to the general subject, reviewing the action of the Board, and sympathizing with "the unfortunate victims of that extraordinary tribunal." He could find no letter parallel for the summary manner in which they disposed of the cases of naval officers, but the explanation of the hunchbacked tyrant—"Off with his head! so much for Buckingham!"

Mr. Iverson stated that upon the meeting of the Naval Board one of the officers offered a resolution that their proceedings should be laid open; but it was voted down by a large majority—thus showing that the board acted like a band of secret conspirators. They were in some respects more than the Spanish Inquisition; for that struck the accused in his own defence; but this struck without hearing. He wanted the resolutions adopted, so that all the facts might be brought to light.

Mr. Sillwell opposed the resolutions, and defended the Naval Board at some length from the attacks of Mr. Iverson and others, who had spoken previously.

Mr. Butler objected to the legal character of the board, and stated his conviction that they had not conformed to the law, under which they were organized.

Mr. Clayton denied that any injustice was done to officers by removing them without notice as they had their officers during the pleasure of the Executive.

Mr. Crittenden made a few remarks, when the Senate adjourned.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. Mr. Haven introduced a bill providing for the enlargement of the custom house, post office and court house building in Buffalo, New York. It was passed.

On motion of Mr. Phelps a resolution was adopted, instructing the Committee on Military Affairs to inquire into the expediency of accepting the services of volunteers, to aid in the suppression of Indian hostilities on the Pacific.

Mr. Campbell, of Ohio, introduced a resolution which was agreed to, making the general appropriation bills the special order of the day on and after the fifth day of April, with the exception of Monday, Friday and Saturday.

The House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union, and proceeded to the consideration of the bill appropriating \$200,000, to be expended under the direction of the President, for restoring and maintaining the peaceful disposition of the Indian tribes on the Pacific coast, and \$120,000 for the purchase of gunpowder to be used in that part of the Union.

Mr. Campbell, of Ohio, said that the Committee of Ways and Means had changed the character of the original bill, which looked to war like purposes, while the substitute looked to peace.

Messrs. Allison, Campbell, of Pa., and Ready introduced a bill, and

Mr. Lane, the delegate from Oregon, proceeded to show that the war was commenced by the Indians and not by the whites, as has been falsely charged.

WASHINGTON, April 1. SENATE. Mr. Mason from the Committee on Foreign Relations, to whom was referred the joint resolution to amend the Act of March 1st, 1855, entitled "An Act to remodel the Diplomatic and Consular system of the U. States," reported it without amendment, and asked its immediate consideration. He proceeded to explain that it proposed to amend that feature of the Act of 1855 which seemed to make it mandatory on the President to elevate all our foreign ministers resident to ministers plenipotentiary and to affix a salary to each minister. Congress had no power to amend, but could only recommend this to the President. The bill originated in the last House, and it was passed without amendment in the Senate because it was so near the close of the session, that to amend it would have jeopardized the whole measure.

The joint resolution was read a third time and passed.

Mr. Houston submitted a resolution calling on the Secretary of the Navy for a copy of the proceedings of the Naval Court Martial, recently held in Philadelphia, for the trial of Capt. Biddle, and all the correspondence relating thereto in his department.

Mr. Felt, Let him over.

Mr. Clayton resumed his remarks on the subject of the naval board. He stated, in order to prove that it was no disgrace to officers to be placed on the retired list, the fact that in England the heroes of the Nile and Trafalgar were referred from active service and receive less pay than the officers of the same grade on the retired list. He replied to Senator Houston's attacks on Pendrago, Depon, and other naval officers.

Mr. Bell, of Tennessee, followed, stating, in the main, the proceedings and action of the naval board.

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The President's annual message was taken up in Committee of the whole on the state of the Union, when

Mr. Warner, of Georgia, made a speech in vindication of Southern slavery, and the right of the Southern people to remove to the common Territories of the United States with slave property.

Mr. Allison addressed the committee in opposition to the extension of slavery.

WASHINGTON, April 2. SENATE.—Mr. Seward reported without amendment the House joint resolution for enlarging the Custom House, Post Office and Court House at Buffalo, New York; which was read a third time and passed.

Mr. Mason, from the Committee on Foreign Relations, reported a joint resolution allowing Dueter E. K. Kane and the officers associated with him in his late expedition to the Arctic seas in search of Sir John Franklin, to accept such token of acknowledgement therefor as the Government of Great Britain may please to present.

Mr. Cass hoped it would be immediately considered and passed.

Mr. Crittenden was quite willing that all proper acknowledgments should be given to Dr. Kane by this Government, but he thought it had precedent to depart from the ancient usage of our Government.

Mr. Seward asked whether under the joint resolution a title of nobility could be conferred on Dr. Kane.

Mr. Mason had no idea that the British Government would think of offering an acknowledgment of that kind, which they might well suppose would be unwelcome to a citizen of the United States.

Mr. Seward desired to express, in behalf of Mr. Henry Grinnell, of New York, who furnished the funds with which the expedition was prosecuted with so much energy, so many sacrifices and such great results, his hope that the resolution would be adopted.

Mr. Bayard opposed the resolution.

Mr. Mason admitted the wisdom of the provision of the Constitution in regard to the reception of presents from foreign Governments; but as the Constitution had reserved to Congress discretionary power in the matter, they could determine whether this was not a proper occasion to make an exception to the general rule. He cited the instance of Luis Maudry, who had been permitted to receive a gold medal from the King of Sweden.

Mr. Butler could not vote for the resolution, unless he knew what the British Government was going to give Dr. Kane.

The further consideration of the subject was postponed.

Mr. Fessenden addressed the Senate on the subject of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty; and in the course of his remarks expressed the opinion that Mr. Cranston ought to be dismissed as the British Minister.

Mr. Cass expressed his views on the subject, when the consideration of the bill was postponed, and the matter connected with the proceedings of the late Naval Board discussed till the hour of adjournment.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. The House was engaged on the Senate's amendments to the West Point Academy, the Pension, and the Deficiency Appropriation bills, but came to no conclusion on those subjects.

WASHINGTON, April 3. SENATE. The Senate took up the bill for the relief of the widows and orphans of the officers, seamen and marines of the United States ship of war Albany, and for other purposes, and passed it.

Mr. Clay, from the Committee on Pensions, reported back the joint resolution declaring in what manner the pension law for the benefit of the Cherokee Indians shall be executed; and it was passed.

Mr. Collamer made a speech defending the views of the minority of the Committee on Territories on the subject of Kansas affairs. He argued that Congress had never submitted the question of freedom or slavery to the people of the territories, as such, and that it has, from time to time, been prohibited therein.

Without concluding he gave way for a motion to adjourn, which prevailed.

the distance between the Post Office in Alexandria to Washington, by way of the long bridge and by way of the site of the proposed bridge at Georgetown.

The House, in Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union, took up the Senate's amendments to the Deficiency Appropriation bill, in favor of the admission of slave States into the Union, believing that this would have the effect of preserving the Confederation; the slave States being more conservative than the free in their interpretation of and review under the Constitution. He likewise reviewed the condition of political parties, assailing the Republican and American organizations, and speaking in praise of the Democracy.

Mr. Granger, of New York, made a speech, in order to show that slavery is incompatible with the Constitution of the United States, and therefore illegal.

The Committee rose and The House then adjourned to Monday next.

MILLARD FILLMORE on Americanism: The New York Tribune having called for the letter written by Mr. Fillmore to Isaac Newton, in the fact, we have prepared the same, and now present it to our readers.

The letter, through private communications which every American would desire to see published far and wide.—P. H. News.

BUFFALO, N. Y., Jan. 3, 1855. ISAAC NEWTON. Respected Friend: It would give me great pleasure to accept your kind invitation to visit Philadelphia, if it were possible to make my visit private, and limit it to a few personal friends whom I should be most happy to see; but I know that this would be out of my power, and I am therefore reluctantly compelled to accept of your invitation, as I have done others to New York and Boston, for the same reason.

I return you many thanks for your information on the subject of politics. I am always happy to hear what is going forward; but, independent of the fact that I feel myself withdrawn from public life, I have been to much depressed in spirit, I have been to much depressed in spirit to take an active part in the late elections. I contented myself with giving a silent vote for Mr. Utman for Governor.

While, however, I am an inactive observer of public events, I am by no means an indifferent one. I may not be able to do more than to give private friendship, but I have for a long time looked with dread and apprehension at the corrupting influence which the contest for the foreign vote is exerting upon our elections. This seems to result from its being handled together, and subject to the control of a few interested and selfish leaders. Hence, it has been a subject of great concern to me, and I have been endeavoring to bring about a change in the general policy of the country, and each of the great political parties of the country have been bidding to obtain it, and as equal in all such contests, the party which is most corrupt is most successful. The consequence is, that it is fast demoralizing the whole country; and converting the ballot-box, that great palladium of our liberties—into an unmeaning mockery, where the rights of native-born citizens are voted away by those who blindly follow their mercenary and selfish leaders.

The evidence of this is found not merely in the shameful chaffering for the foreign vote at every election, but in the large dispersion of offices which are now held by foreigners at home and abroad, as compared with our native citizens. Where is the truest American whose cheek does not tingle with shame and mortification to see our highest offices, and the most honorable and profitable, filled by men of foreign birth to the exclusion of native-born? Such appointments are a humiliating confession to the crowned heads of Europe, that a republican will does not produce sufficient talent to represent a republican nation as monarchial nations. I confess that it seems to me that all due regard to the interests of a general rule, our country should be governed by American-born citizens. 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