

MESSAGE

OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

DECEMBER, 1846.

Fellow Citizens of the Senate and House of Representatives:

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.

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 doctrine 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 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.

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 as a State into our Union.

This election I approved, and accordingly the charge d'affaires of the United States in Texas, under instructions of the tenth 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, formed 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 latter 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.

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 had no part in the victory. We have not sought to extend our territorial possessions by conquest, or our republican institutions over a reluctant people.

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, has passed the Capes 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.

Towards Texas, I do not doubt that a liberal 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.

The Mexican government promised to repair the wrongs of which we complain; 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.

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 Convention of the people of Texas invited this Government to send an army into that territory, to protect and defend them against the menacing attack.

My attention was early directed to the negotiation, which, on the 4th 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 principles 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 20th of October of that year.

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 in force, for an indefinite period, the provisions of the third article of the convention of the twentieth 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 twentieth of

October, 1828, on giving due notice of twelve 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."

With 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 be prepared to repel the threatened aggression on the part of Mexico. After our army and navy had remained on the frontier and cast 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.

On the ninth 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 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.

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 ninth of November last. This is contained in a letter, dated the seventeenth of October, addressed by him to one of our citizens living in Mexico, with the view of having it communicated to that department.

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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.

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.

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 in the Oregon territory, subject to a reservation that 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 of Oregon, American citizens, in the same territory, have enjoyed no such protection from their government.

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 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 block-houses be erected along the usual routes between our frontier settlements on the Missouri and the Rocky mountains; and that a adequate force of mounted riflemen be raised to guard and protect them on their journey.

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 interchanging intelligence, without great delay, between our settlements in that distant region and the United States.