

THE MESSAGE.

Fellow-citizens of the Senate
and House of Representatives:

It is a source of unaffected 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 you 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 blessings 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 to 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 3d 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 U. 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 10th 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 U. 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 3d 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 president 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.

Oregon Spectator.

"Westward the Star of Empire takes its way."

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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. It was the deliberate homage of each people to the great principle of our federative 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 U. 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. We may rejoice that the tranquil and pervading 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 rebuke. From this example European governments may learn how vain diplomatic arts and intrigues 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.

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 6th 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 of 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 U. 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 menaced attack. The moment the terms of annexation, offered by the U. 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 Texian 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 acts 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.

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 be prepared to repel the threatened invasion on the part of Mexico. After our army and navy had remained on the frontier and coasts of Mexico 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 designs 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 differences 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 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 10th of November a distinguished citizen of Louisiana was appointed envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary to Mexico, clothed with full powers to adjust, and definitely 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 ulterior measures of redress for the wrongs and injuries we have so long borne, as it would have been proper to make had no such negotiation been instituted.

The attention of congress is invited to the importance of making suitable modifications and reductions of the rates of duty imposed by our present tariff laws. The object of imposing duties on imports should be to raise revenue to pay the necessary expenses of government. Congress may, undoubtedly, in the exercise of a sound discretion, discriminate in arranging the rates of duties on different articles; but the discrimination should be within the revenue standard, and be made with the view to raise money for the support of government.

It becomes important to understand distinctly what is meant by a revenue standard, the maximum of which should not be exceeded in the rates of duty imposed. It is conceded, and experience proves that duties may be laid so high as to diminish, or prohibit altogether, the importation of any given article, and thereby lessen or destroy the revenue which, at lower rates, would be derived from its importation. Such duties exceed the revenue rates, and are not imposed to raise money for the support of government. 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 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-one 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 congress 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.

It does not follow that congress should levy the highest duty on all articles of import which they will bear within the revenue standard; for such rates would probably produce a much larger amount than the economical administration of the government would require. Nor does it follow that the duties on all articles should be at the same, or a horizontal rate. Some articles will bear a much higher revenue duty than others. Below the maximum of revenue standard, congress may, and ought to discriminate in the rates imposed, taking care so to adjust them on different articles as to produce in the aggregate the amount which, when added to the proceeds of sales of public lands, may be needed to pay the economical expenses of the government.

In levying a tariff of duties, congress exercise the taxing power, and for purposes of revenue may select the objects of taxation. They may exempt certain articles altogether, and permit their importation free of duty. On others they may impose low duties. In these classes should be embraced such articles of necessity as are in general use, and especially such as are consumed by the laborer and the poor as well as by the wealthy citizen. Care should be taken that all the great interests of the country, including manufactures, agriculture, commerce, navigation and the mechanic arts, should, as far as may be practicable, derive equal advantages from the incidental protection which a just system of revenue duties may afford. Taxation, direct or indirect, is a burden, and it should be so imposed as to operate, as equally as may be, on all classes, in the proportion of their ability to bear it. To make the taxing power an actual benefit to the class, a necessary condition

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