

that would, by a criminal inaction, sacrifice the interests of the country to the caprice or the obstinacy of a leader, I consider detestable. True patriotism and a genuine spirit of independence, I think, would point to quite a different course from that of silence and non-resistance, when we believe our rulers are acting wrong, and that in an affair that may prove to be of the last importance to the honor and interests of the republic. And least of all can I agree with those who remain silent through the secret or avowed expectation that the course pursued by the President may enable us to obtain a better bargain in the negotiation. Of this chaffering, higgling method of managing negotiations with foreign powers, I have spoken freely already. This setting up of exorbitant claims—asking a high price in order to drive an advantageous bargain—is a mean, pedlar-like policy, altogether unbecoming in a great nation, and altogether improper to be pursued in negotiating with a great and high-minded nation. It is also calculated to involve the administration which pursues it in difficulties. It may do so to a serious extent in the present case. When the President asserts a claim to the whole of Oregon, many of his partisans believe that he is in earnest, whether he is so or not; and should he choose to relinquish his extreme demands, it is not certain that he could carry enough of his friends along with him to give sanction to a treaty founded on reasonable principles.

It is in my opinion the best and the safest policy for those who are opposed to important measures, to speak out, in a manly way and at a proper time, their real sentiments. This course may possibly facilitate, instead of impeding, the action of the administration, by helping to prepare the country for the relinquishment of the extreme claims of the President. And now is the proper time to speak aloud. The whole subject is before the public—referred to the representatives of the people. Whilst it was confined within the cabinet, and under the exclusive control of the treaty-making department of government, the propriety and prudence of meddling with it might be doubted. But now the question is before the Senate, and it is in the power of that body to modify essentially the course of policy which shall be adopted in regard to this matter. It is not perhaps too much to say, that to decide for peace or war is now in their power.

I believe it to be the duty of all those who do not wish a war on account of the subject in dispute—of all those who think that the