

without gross mismanagement somewhere. I have confidence, therefore, that it will be avoided; but, to avoid it, the question *must now be settled*. The tendency of delay is to change the nature of the present dispute from one about a claim to property, to one of *national honor*. By keeping up the controversy, the feeling of the people on both sides will become irritated, until the cry *for justice* will be overcome by the louder cry of *revenge*. I have said that I approve, *heartily* approve, of the President's effort to compromise this question: the whole country has approved it, and will sustain him in any just settlement he may hereafter make; but I will say, that the voice of the people in favor of taking possession of the whole country is getting stronger and stronger every day; and I fear it will continue in that direction until the question is settled, as I have an abiding confidence it soon will be.

I have said, Mr. Chairman, that the President, by the course he has pursued hitherto, has given us plainly to understand what he will do hereafter. That he sincerely desires to preserve the peace of the country, if he can without a sacrifice of our national honor, no one can doubt. That he may be enabled to do this, let us not, by hasty and inconsiderate legislation, embarrass him. And this brings me to the consideration of the bill now before us—a bill, in my humble judgment, pregnant with mischief in the present state of the question. I say, *in the present state of the question*, Mr. Chairman; because, whatever acts Great Britain may have passed in relation to her citizens, (the character of which are greatly misunderstood,) we have subsequently entered into the joint-occupancy treaty with her, and so assented to them. Besides, Great Britain had not, at the time of passing her acts, given us notice, as we have now provided to give her; so that our legislation must be considered in connexion with the notice of the abrogation of the treaty.

The President informs us that the people of Oregon "are anxious that our laws should be extended over them;" and he says: "I recommend that this be done by Congress, with as little delay as possible, in the full extent to which the British Parliament have provided in regard to British subjects in that territory by their act of July 2, 1821. By this act, Great Britain extended her laws and jurisdiction, civil and criminal, over her subjects engaged in the fur trade in that territory." The President further says, that "subsequent to the date of this act of Parliament, a grant was made from the British Crown to the Hudson Bay Company, of the exclusive trade with the Indian tribes in the Oregon territory, subject to a reservation that it shall not operate to the exclusion of the subject of any foreign State, who, under or by force of any convention for the time being between us and such foreign State, respectfully, may be entitled to, and shall be engaged in the said trade."

Here is a recommendation that we extend our laws over our own citizens in Oregon, as Great Britain has extended her laws over her citizens. Thus far, I am more than willing to go; but the bill does not stop here. It proposes to extend our laws, after twelve months, over all citizens in any part of the territory, up to 54° 40'. Does not every one see that this must necessarily bring the two coun-

tries into a state of hostilities? The President saw it would not only do that, but would cut off all prospect of settling the question amicably, within the twelve months, which he tells us he is anxious to do. This bill proposes that all British subjects shall, after twelve months, be expelled from the Oregon territory. This we threaten to do while we have a treaty providing that the citizens of each country shall occupy it jointly; and while we are negotiating with Great Britain for an amicable settlement of the question. Do not gentlemen see that such an act must, to say the least of it, embarrass the negotiation? Can we calculate that we can pass this bill without interrupting negotiation? To enable us to appreciate the irritation that the passage of such a bill would produce on the part of Great Britain, let us suppose that she had given us the notice (as she had the right to do under the treaty) of the abrogation of the convention, and then that Parliament had passed a law, that at the end of the year our citizens were to be driven from the Oregon territory: is there a man on this floor—is there an American citizen anywhere, who has the heart of an American—who would not consider such acts as equivalent to a declaration of war? For one, I would not only refuse all negotiation with her under such circumstances, but prepare at once to meet her, and decide the contest by arms. I do not believe there is a man on this floor, whether he is for 49° or 54° 40', who would not, under such circumstances, be for ending all negotiation.

The President, after recommending the measures before stated only, says: "It is submitted to the wisdom of Congress to determine whether, at their present session, and until after the expiration of the year's notice, any other measures may be adopted, consistently with the convention of 1827, or the security of our rights and the government and protection of our citizens in Oregon. That it will ultimately be wise and proper to make liberal grants of land to our citizens there, I am fully satisfied."

I have, Mr. Chairman, stated every recommendation the President has made in relation to the exercise of our authority, by Congressional legislation, in Oregon. All are carefully expressed, with an eye to, and in view of, our solemn treaty stipulations. "The faith of treaties, (the President says,) in their letter and spirit, has ever been, and I trust will ever be, scrupulously observed by the United States." To all these recommendations, I heartily subscribe. I will vote for them all most cheerfully, because they are wise and proper, and in no respect in violation of our treaty obligations, or calculated to interrupt the free course of amicable negotiations. Beyond these recommendations we ought not to be required to go; and for one, I will not.

Having shown, Mr. Chairman, what the President recommends on this subject, I ask whether this bill does not go a great deal beyond his recommendation—beyond what he says, as plainly as he can say it, we can go consistently with our treaty obligations with Great Britain? This bill is entitled "A bill to protect the rights of American settlers in the territory of Oregon until the termination of the joint occupation of the same." I will vote for any bill that this title can apply to; but the first section extends the laws of Iowa over the Oregon

territory, "nor execute subjects of privileges with the United States shall for in the

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