

When the proposition of compromise was rejected by Mr. Pakenham, the President directed Mr. Buchanan to withdraw it, and assert our title to the whole of the Oregon territory; and claims that "the civilized world will see in these proceedings a spirit of liberal concession on the part of the United States;" and that "this government will be relieved from all responsibility which may follow the failure to settle the controversy." Is there anything, Mr. President, in these declarations, or in the claims on the part of our government to the whole territory of Oregon, stronger or more extensive than had been made by those who preceded the President in the high office he now fills? And it must be borne in mind, sir, that these claims had not only been asserted in the despatches of our negotiators, but they had been published to the world. I ask, then, in justice to the President, if he could, consistently with the honor and dignity of the country, have claimed less, or gone further, than he has done, in "a spirit of liberal concession," to settle this controversy? What party in this country, what Senator on this floor, what President would dare go further? To have done so would have lowered our national character before the nations of the earth, and been an insult to the national pride of our own people. When the President of the United States was elevated to his present exalted station, he found himself charged with the conduct of this negotiation, involving the questions of peace and war, the lives and fortunes of twenty millions of freemen, and the honor of his country. The responsibility was fearful; and, in the language of the legislature of the State which I have the honor in part to represent, "his efforts to adjust the controversy were marked by a spirit of liberal concession, firmness, patriotism, and signal ability." In fact, sir, it was the sentiment of the whole country, and no message has ever been promulgated in my time which was received with such a universal shout of approbation. You remember, Mr. President, our pleasure in listening to the just and patriotic remarks of the distinguished Senators from North Carolina, (Mr. MANGUM,) from Virginia, (Mr. ARCHER,) and Delaware, (Mr. J. M. CLAYTON,) in the debate upon the resolutions moved by the Senator from Michigan, (Mr. CASS.) Why, sir, are we divided now, when all was harmony then? In that discussion there was not a dissenting voice in regard to the President's course upon the Oregon question. A very different opinion seems to have grown up in this discussion; new readings have been given to the President's message; and new and very different objects discovered in his recommendations. On one side, it is made a test of willingness to dismember the Union for a Senator to avow himself in favor of compromise, and a test of patriotism to go for 54° 46'; and on the other side to be for the notice is to be for war. It is from discussions such as these that our present want of harmony proceeds. If Senators give to the message a construction which it does not warrant, surely the President is not responsible for it.

In connexion with this part of the subject, I will ask the Secretary to read the resolutions of the State of Mississippi: