

as far as I have most valuable commercial and the chairman has expressed defence and allowed to de- opinion ex- enlightened ed, seems to ds. The har- cover speaks on Admiralty d to the uses of

ot only in nati- those higher agricultural ad- vantage below that be no doubt, dmitted. The he would effect ress of our in- th parallel; and e it to time and est. But, Mr. inquiry into the notice. I have ld be an adjust- along the 49th yet to convince result. If the to consider this e of an amica- it very proba- accept it when nces which in- r proposition, or If the British of his govern- dispositions that ed to accept our it may suppose iced? If she re- an compromise l, is there any- that she might nces us favora- the blow? If she whole claim on e, and regards a think that the for her? Or if, on le the question r than terms ble by her o.w. it be conciliated e circumstances n up the whole, that if this step ed Great Britain, ir- ve advantage of the other hand, is it not more a renewal of ne- spirited people? probable ten- should think of little value ght be to us, eire for peace, n this notice so

probable as that of war. One thing is perfectly clear; this measure must either lead to a settlement on the basis of a boundary along the 49th parallel, or it must produce war. Our western friends say that they will be content with nothing less than the whole extent of our claim; and if this be so, is not war inevitable, under present circumstances? If war is to be the mode of settling this question at last, it would seem to me that it would be far wiser to preserve the present state of affairs, that we may be able to choose our own time for fighting, and select a period when we were better prepared for the contest, and when the attendant circumstances might be more propitious. Let us look, Mr. Chairman, into the circumstances under which this war would now be waged, and ascertain, if we can, its probable consequences. Have we made any of the military preparations necessary for such an event? Would one, or even two years, suffice for the preparation proper for such a contest? If war be inevitable, is not our internal condition such as to make delay desirable? The whole country is just recovering from a deep financial depression. Many of the States are either unable, or barely able, to pay their own debts. They are not in a condition to bear the weight of internal taxation, which must be one of the main resources of the war. A few years hence, a different and more favorable state of things might be fairly expected. What, let me ask, would be our position in the public opinion of the world? We break off the negotiation because our proposition was not accepted, and we give the notice under circumstances which proclaim that there must be war, unless she will settle the question upon our own terms. She has offered us a mode of settling this dispute, now universally regarded amongst civilized nations as a fair and honorable method of adjusting national controversies—I mean arbitration. This we have already refused; nor do I disapprove of that refusal, under the circumstances then existing. She will probably offer it again, and we shall again refuse it. I do not stand here, Mr. Chairman, as the advocate of arbitration; upon that question I have nothing to say at present; I am merely dealing in facts, with a view to the consequences. We shall again refuse arbitration, Mr. Chairman; and why? Because we say there are none of the nations of the world whose governments are honest and impartial enough to decide this controversy between us. This may all be so; but will a refusal of arbitration for such reasons be likely to win us much of the sympathy of the world? Under these circumstances, am I wrong in supposing that the world will be apt to regard us as the aggressor? The public opinion of Christendom would be thus fixed at the time when Great Britain has a better understanding with the continental states of Europe than she has ever enjoyed at any previous period of her history, so far as I am acquainted with it. The "cordial understanding" between herself and France, her ancient enemy and our former ally, is notorious throughout the world. Under these circumstances, what chance should we have for either sympathy or assistance from any of these powers in the event of a war? But this is not the whole view of the existing state of our foreign relations, and its connexion with our prospects in a war. If we have a war with Great Britain about this time, shall we not probably have Mexico also on our hands? It is known that she is sore under recent occurrences, and it is equally notorious that she is much under British influence. We should probably have a war

not only for Oregon, but Texas also. The Indian tribes beyond the Rocky mountains are known to be under the influence of the Hudson Bay Company, and it is probable that most of the western Indians would take sides with Great Britain in the event of a war between her and this country. Under these circumstances, what would become of Oregon, and of our infant settlements on the Columbia? I believe it is the opinion of our best military authorities, and, indeed, the very general opinion, that, during the war, Oregon itself must be abandoned, and that we should have to strike in Canada, and upon the seas. And yet gentlemen coolly demand war, or what will lead to war, as a duty which we owe our people in Oregon, when it is manifest that the very first step of that war would be to abandon them unprotected to British troops, to the Hudson Bay Company, and their savage allies—to a war, unless they at once made terms for themselves, as likely to be signalized by all the circumstances of barbaric atrocity as any of which we have an account. Those unfortunate people might well ask the chairman of Foreign Affairs if this be what he calls "making of his friends?" In such a contest, is it not probable that Oregon would be lost only to be recovered, if ever, by another war, to be undertaken at a more auspicious period? If this struggle were now to be commenced, I do not believe that there would even be an effort made to send troops to Oregon. It would be regarded as a waste of men and means, at a time when, with Mexico to the southwest, with the Indian tribes on our western frontier, with British and Canadian troops on our north, and with British fleets covering the eastern and southern line of our coast, we should be encircled as with a wall of fire. I doubt not but that we should emerge from it victorious. It is not on the soil which we occupy that we can be conquered, or even be worried. I have full faith in American spirit and patriotism. But I do not believe that we should pass unscathed through that fiery trial, nor ought we to task too highly those great qualities of our people by exposing them to unnecessary difficulties, as we should do if we engage in a war before we are prepared for it, or if we make war to attain what might be had far more certainly and honorably by peaceful means. That we should come out of such a contest with honor, I do not doubt; but that we should lose as much or more of Oregon than would be given up by any treaty likely to be made, I regard as also probable. If war be the only mode of maintaining our rights in Oregon, that war ought to be deferred, as it is manifest that our chances for success must increase with every year of delay. But if there be peaceful and honorable means (as I shall endeavor to show hereafter) which would more probably give us the whole territory, we owe it to ourselves and to the world to adopt them.

But gentlemen have promised that if war be once commenced with Great Britain, we shall terminate it by driving her from this continent, and depriving her of all that she claims or possesses upon it. I do not stand here, Mr. Chairman, to take issue with that proposition; I mean neither to affirm nor deny it. I will not even ask if "our old men see visions and our young men dream dreams." I will suppose the anticipation to be true; and I shall endeavor to trace such a war as this would be to its consequences, to see if the chance or the certainty of acquiring Oregon a few years sooner, would compensate us for them.

Mr. Chairman, I know of no instance in which a