

In the spirit of perfect justice, we should assert title to no more of Oregon than that which can be maintained by argument, and for the propriety of which we can appeal to God and man, and which we are willing, if need be, to refer to the decision of the sword. Like a wise and sensible farmer, who anticipates the possibility of a long and vexatious law-suit with a neighbor, in relation to a doubtful or disputed boundary between adjoining farms, we should plant our fence clearly within our own lands, so that when the hour of trial comes we can make our right manifest. Upon a question like this, on whose momentous issues hang the world's peace and all its blessings, or a war, the clash of whose conflicts, the din of whose disastrous battles would be heard throughout the world, if our rulers were like political managers in a canvass, or hucksters in the markets, either to advance the interests of themselves or to secure a good bargain, to assert claim to more of the territory than was clear, they would deserve, and they would receive, the indignation and scorn of all good men, for conduct whose infamy could only be equalled by treason itself.

The question, then, presents itself, which of the forms of notice shall we take—that proposed by the Committee of Foreign Affairs, or that by the gentleman from Alabama, (Mr. HILLIARD,) which proposes to confer on the President discretionary power of giving or not the notice; that suggested by the gentleman from Connecticut, (Mr. ROCKWELL,) or that by the gentleman from Georgia, (Mr. KING;) or any of the various amendments and propositions which have fallen so numerous and rapidly on the clerk's table, that it is difficult to keep their count, much less by name designate them.

The ground has been taken by some that no notice whatever ought to be given by this House, because it is said Congress has no constitutional power so to do, and such acts belong exclusively to those departments of the Government clothed by the Constitution with power to make treaties. Plausible as is this view, and taken, as it has been, by some very able gentlemen, it appears to me specious rather than true, cautious rather than correct. All that England has a right to require, is the will of the people of this nation, who are its sovereigns, expressed through some reliable and organized body; and, whenever that will is so expressed, whether through the Executive, or President and Senate, under their treaty-making power, or Congress, as the power representative of the whole people, England would have no right to refuse the notice because it was not constitutionally given. I am satisfied that, if the President of the United States were upon his own responsibility to give this notice, Great Britain could not raise the question of constitutional power. No, sir; as the chief executive officer of the nation, the only functionary through whom our intercourse with foreign nations can be conducted, as the representative of the people, whose voice is the concentrated expression of twenty millions of freemen, a notice given by him would not, could not, be questioned by any foreign government. The President has not thus chosen to act. I will not say that he ought so to have acted. He has appealed to Congress for the exercise of its power in giving this notice—for this body, which directly reflects and represents the interests and wishes of the people, who are to be the sufferers or gainers by our wise or unwise action, who are to be blessed with peace or cursed with war, and who are to reap the profits of that peace, or bear the heavy expenditure of money and blood of that war, we ought not now to shrink from an expression of opinion as to the best mode of extricating the Government from the difficulties and perils which embarrass it.

And, though those difficulties and perils have resulted from the unwise action of the President and his party leaders, and, religiously, I believe they are chargeable with it, yet we should not, who are Whigs, refuse to pursue the dictates of patriotism; but, forgetting party in the loftier considerations of duty to the country, we should now not so much enquire how the dangers have been produced, but do they exist, and how shall they be most honorably avoided or successfully met. I do not doubt that gentlemen, who have thought the opposite course as best, have been governed by patriotic considerations, but differ with them in their sense of present duty.

That this Oregon question is now involved in difficulties that never before beset it, that those difficulties have been produced by the would-be leaders, but, in fact, wire workers, of the Democratic party, is perfectly clear. Sir, the forcing this question of

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