

Georgia, [Mr. Cass,] that unless this notice be given immediately, England and the world will be induced to believe that the American Congress and people are disposed not to sustain, but to desert, the Executive and the administration. But can any such inference be fairly drawn, if we pursue the proper policy? Suppose we adopt every step proposed, and every measure recommended by the Executive, barring only this solitary one of immediate notice; suppose we follow the recommendations of the President as to the establishment of a Territorial government, the appointment of a governor, and Indian agents, the erection of block-houses and forts for the protection of our citizens, the overland mail, and the inducements to emigration, &c.: will any man go forth from this hall and say that we are disposed to desert the administration? Will it have that appearance in the eyes of the world? No, sir; it is ungenerous and unjust to make this charge against us; and whoever will make this charge against me, will do me foul injustice and slander me. But once again: it is urged that the honor of the country is at stake; and if the notice be not given, it will suffer in the estimation of the world. Sir, by the course of policy which I have proposed, the American Eagle shall not moult a feather, he shall not droop a wing. American honor shall remain as pure and intact as before, and the American name, for prudence, moderation, and wisdom, shall stand even higher than it now does among the nations of the earth. What, sir, have we slumbered thus long, through more than a quarter of a century, upon this convention, forgetful of our national honor, to awake thus suddenly and find it assailed or tarnished? What has Great Britain so recently done in this matter to impugn our honor? We have contrasted to the world the validity of our title, we now say to Great Britain, "Oregon is ours, but we mean in time to possess ourselves of every inch of it." Will the national honor suffer by this course? I think not, sir.

But now, sir, allow me to call the attention of the committee to the other side of this question. Imagine that to be done which I am afraid will be done shortly. Imagine this notice to be given, Great Britain to have received it, and the next vessel that leaves her island to bear to us from her a proposition to this effect: "We have failed to compromise this matter; you have ordered us out of the territory; we feel no disposition to fight with you; we do not desire war; give us now that which you have three several times offered us; divide the territory at the 49th degree of north latitude; we will cheerfully take the northern portion, leaving you the southern; this matter shall end, and we will sit down by you as friends, and shake hands with you as brothers." Imagine such a proposition as that coming from Great Britain immediately after notice given. Is the possibility so very remote that gentlemen cannot give it their reflection or consideration? Every advocate of immediate notice persists in declaring that Great Britain cannot fight, and will not fight for Oregon. Then if she cannot and will not fight, I say the chances are ten to one that she will make some such offer as I have mentioned. And if she shall do this, I respectfully beg of the next gentleman who shall take this floor on that side of the question, to march up manfully and at once to the question, and inform me what course the country and the administration should pursue? Should the administration accept the proposition, or should it reject it? I already see gentlemen around me—"immediate notice" men too—who are nodding assent, and by significant gestures

intimating that such a proposition should be accepted. I see others, warm advocates of the notice also, shaking their heads, and by indignant frowns answering "never! never!"

Sir, the thing is palpable; Great Britain by such a proposition, after notice given, would place the administration in a dilemma from which it would have no resource but in selecting the blunter or the softer horn. For if the administration should accede to the proposition, it would raise such a storm of opposition North, South, East, and West, as would shake, if not entirely overthrow it. The clamor would be raised, the cry would go forth, "You have sacrificed our rights, you have forfeited our interests, you have frittered away the better portion of our glorious territory, you have acted with timidity, imbecility, you have 'backed out,' we can no longer support you." If, on the contrary, the administration should reject such a proposition, public dissatisfaction would be even more violent and more to be dreaded. For it would be said that they had wantonly plunged us into a war, when they might have avoided it by compromise! Will gentlemen condescend to give this view of the question their consideration, and answer it frankly and fairly, if they can?

Now, take the other view of this subject. Suppose Great Britain, after having received our notice, shall make us no proposition, and refuse to compromise? The only question which can then arise is this, Will she, at the expiration of the twelve months, abandon what she considers her rights in Oregon, or will she prepare to maintain them by arms? I think, sir, no one can be found who seriously entertains the opinion that she will quietly pull up her stakes, chain her lions together, and remove to Canada, leaving us in possession of the territory for which she has been contending thirty years. If she will not do this, she must fight; and if she does fight, I ask gentlemen what will be the consequences of the contest? I speak now, not of the consequences to the North, or South, or East, or West, but to Oregon itself, and I call upon gentlemen to inform me by what possible means, in case of war, that territory can be preserved to this Union? Ye gentlemen of the West, I call upon you to answer me this question. Bold and daring, patriotic, and generous, and fearless as you are, by what means shall you rescue Oregon in case of war? You have the wills, you have the hearts, you have the patriotism more than sufficient, but trust me, gentlemen, you have not the power. You cannot do it—I tell you cannot do it. You may conquer Canada—you may whip Great Britain on land and sea—you may astonish the world by the success of your arms,—but the first result of the war will be the loss of Oregon; and if it is ever recovered, it will only be after the fiercest and most bloody contest ever recorded in your country's history. You must lose Oregon, because, before any army which you can possibly send to protect it, the steamers of Great Britain will already have arrived there. The Hudson Bay Company, with the thousands of Indian scalping knives at its command, are there already. The mouth of the Columbia and the whole Pacific would be guarded by British vessels, from whence supplies could easily be furnished to British armies in the territory. Whilst our army, even if it should arrive in time, would find no possible means of subsistence, and must either speedily return or perish. And having once gotten possession of the territory, you would find that years of des-

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