

The district, as well as the whole of the city of New York, is extensively engaged in foreign commerce. We have heard it stated, that if war comes that commerce would be destroyed, and that noble city, the commercial emporium of the continent, would be besieged by hostile fleets; its harbors and rivers filled with the vessels of the enemy; that its noble warehouses would be sacked; its splendid public edifices and the palaces of its merchant princes, would be given to the flames; its marts of trade and its pleasant places, would be laid waste. It may be so. But when the time shall come—and may that time be far remote—when we shall be involved in a war, I can assure the gentlemen that the city and the State of New York will do their duty to the country. I know it is the habit to speak lightly of commercial interests and commercial men when questions of war agitate the country. It is said they are apt rather to take counsel of their fears—apprehensive, not so much that the honor of the country may suffer, as that their own pecuniary interests may be endangered. Do those who make this charge consider from what source the revenues of the country, the sinews of war, are derived? Do they consider, also, that commerce suffers, not only from war, but from rumors of war? That, like the sensitive plant, which shrinks from the rude wind, commerce withers and dies under the blasting influence of war, and trembles as it hears the roar of the tempest in the distance? It is natural that it should be so. It is the first interest generally which suffers. A maritime war might sweep our vessels from the ocean, might lay waste our commercial cities, and yet the business of the husbandman would go on—his home and his land would remain to him. It is therefore to be supposed that commercial men will be sensitive when subjects are agitated which may lead to a war with the most powerful nation of the world. I repeat, sir, that if war should come, the city of New York would be as ready as any portion of the Union to contribute the means to sustain it and to carry it forward to a successful issue; but she must be convinced that it is a necessary war, and that it was resorted to only after all efforts for an honorable compromise of the difficulties were exhausted.

At a suitable time I intend to offer a series of resolutions expressive of my views on the subject, for the consideration of the House, reciting that, in the judgment of Congress, the time has arrived when the interest of the people whom they represent requires that the convention for the joint occupancy, with England, of the Oregon territory shall cease; that Congress is desirous of terminating that convention amicably, and without disturbing the peace of nations; that the President of the United States be authorized to give the requisite notice, and at the same time it be recommended to him to renew negotiations; and to accept the proposition of the forty-ninth parallel of latitude as a basis of settlement, if it be tendered to him. In my judgment the time has come when this long and vexed question ought to be settled, and that the most certain and speedy settlement will be attained by giving the notice, qualified if possible, but at all events in some form.

The public mind has been, and is now, greatly agitated by the Oregon question, and will continue so to be, and to a greater extent, if it should longer remain unsettled. It cannot escape the attention of the most casual observer that many causes exist for continuing and increasing this agitation, if the notice should not be given. Look at the Texan question and its combination with party movements. Objectionable as it was in some of its features to a large proportion of the people, especially at the north—aye, a large

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