

SPEECH

OF

MR. CHALMERS, OF MISSISSIPPI.

Mr. CHALMERS, being entitled to the floor, rose and addressed the Senate as follows :

MR. PRESIDENT : The question before us for consideration is viewed by Senators on all sides as involving vast consequences. Whatever we may have thought of it when its recommendation was first announced in the annual message of the President, it is now manifest to you, sir, to the Senate, and the country, that wide and conflicting views are entertained here and elsewhere as to the objects expected to be attained by giving the notice to annul and abrogate the convention for the joint occupancy of the Oregon territory. For, sir, notwithstanding all who advocate giving notice proclaim to the world that it is a peace measure, the ends and objects expected and desired to be accomplished are wholly incompatible. The Senators from Ohio, (Mr. ALLEN,) Indiana, (Mr. HANNEGAN,) and Illinois, (Mr. BREESE,) tell us that they are for demanding a surrender of the whole territory up to the boundary line established with Russia, upon the parallel of $54^{\circ} 40'$; and that we have only to give the notice, demand firmly and boldly, and the whole will be peaceably surrendered. The Senator from Georgia, (Mr. COLQUITT,) and others who are for giving the notice, tell us that they vote for it with a view to expedite a settlement of the question upon principles of just and honorable compromise; and that to give the notice, and demand a surrender of the whole territory, will be tantamount to a declaration of war. Such being the state of the question, and made so by those who advocate giving the notice, it is obviously one of the gravest character; and this contrariety of opinion only the more deeply convinces me of the importance of the issues involved. None can be greater than one which involves the peace of two of the most powerful nations in the world. A question so momentous demands of us deliberation, firmness, circumspection, and decisive action. The country expects it of us, and our duty to ourselves and it, requires that we should not disappoint that just expectation.

Before proceeding, Mr. President, to say what I desire on the immediate question before us, I feel bound to notice a remark which fell from the Senator from Maine, (Mr. EVANS,) upon the subject