

as little to be questioned as the former—and that is that this great territory is of such immense value and importance to this Union, that we would deserve to be regarded as idiots by the civilized world, if we should suffer any portion of it to be wrested from us by any power upon earth. No gentleman can possibly desire these facts to be more broadly and clearly admitted than I am willing to admit them. And, sir, it is for these very reasons—on account of these very facts, thus admitted—because Oregon is ours—because we should not surrender one pound of Oregon earth, one rock, one pebble, one tree, or one shrub—that I cannot, for the life of me, perceive the wisdom of terminating, thus abruptly and hastily, the convention between this country and Great Britain in regard to that territory. And if I had any weight or influence here or elsewhere—if I did not know that the poor words which shall escape my lips will fall cold and dead on the unheeding ears of those around me, to be forgotten even before the echoes of my voice shall have died in this hall—if I were not discouraged by this apprehension, I would, with all the earnestness and all the sincerity of my nature, call upon those who so zealously advocate it, and implore them to pause before pushing this policy to the extreme; they jeopardize or defeat the very object they have in view. Sir, how should a grave and deliberative body, such as this House should be, act upon a matter of such vital importance? What line of policy should a great nation, such as ours, pursue in a crisis such as this? I beg that I may not be deemed presumptuous, if I dare to suggest what occurs to my poor judgment as the wisest course we could possibly pursue.

First, then, this thing should stop where it is. Not another word should be spoken—not another effort at compromise or negotiation attempted. The negotiations have ceased, they are dead, and thus they should remain, never again to be revived. If any proposition should hereafter come from Great Britain—if she should now offer to take the 49th deg—nay, if she should declare herself content to receive the one-half of what we formerly offered her—though we should not scout her proposition, yet we should promptly reject it. We should say to her, “we cannot agree, and we want no compromise; twenty-five years of negotiation have failed; we shall try that no longer; we have demonstrated our title, and we are determined to maintain it, but we choose to hide our time.” What next, sir? “Masterly inactivity” on our part? No, sir; no inactivity, masterly or otherwise. But action, action, action, prompt, ready, energetic, immediate, and continued action, on the part of this government. Every possible inducement should be held out to our brave emigrants to go forth and possess the land, which we should give them as an inheritance. A Territorial government should be formed there, and a governor appointed at once. Where the cross of St. George waves over one fortification in that territory, the stars and stripes should float over two. Forts and block-houses should dot the whole of the “Oregon trail;” armed troops should guard our citizens in their emigrations thither; the flag of their country should float over them; the countenance of their country should be upon them; the arm of their country should be stretched out to protect them, and the American eagle should fly before them, heralding them on the rich lands of Oregon. They should have no cause to cry out

that their country neglects or deserts them. The overland mail recommended by the Executive should be established at once. Every barrier which might impede the tide of emigration should be broken down; every inducement which might increase it should be offered. The tribes of Indians now disposed to be hostile to us, should be conciliated, and quieted by Indian agents who should be appointed, and who should have purses, which they might use to some purpose. Sir, it does seem to me, if this policy were pursued, amplified, and improved as it might be by the congregated wisdom of this nation, it does seem to me that all the powers upon earth could not rend from our grasp the rich prize for which we are contending. See, sir, if I have not some tolerable authority for the course I have recommended. I find in the Union of the 7th instant, a very able article upon this question, from which I beg leave to read the following extract:

“The posture of our interests in Oregon is as now as this new aspect of our title. Our citizens have now gone, and are going forth in masses, to possess themselves of their broad patrimony there. Before Congress rises, ten thousand American citizens, tilling the soil of that territory, will stretch out their arms to us, for the protection which is their most manifest right,” &c.

So it seems, that before this Congress shall rise, ten thousand hardy settlers will have established themselves in Oregon. When this Congress commenced its session there were but seven thousand, when it shall rise, there will be ten thousand. And this, too, without any positive guarantee upon the part of their government of its countenance and protection. Sir, if there shall be ten thousand settlers in that territory when Congress shall rise, how many may we fairly infer there will be there at the expiration of five, or even three, brief years? The calculation is easily made, sir; I beg gentlemen to pause and make it. We shall have a sufficient number to bid defiance to the Hudson Bay Company and all its agents; enough of themselves to maintain and defend the whole territory; or, at least, enough to raise provision to maintain any army we may send there to aid and defend them. And cannot gentlemen wait five short years? Can they not wait three? Can they not even tarry till Congress shall rise? Sir, the territory will not take to itself wings and flee away; it will not be swallowed up in the Pacific, nor be wholly devoured by the British lion. If we will but “tarry at Jeno till our beards shall grow out,” Oregon shall be ours when our faces shall be covered with hair! Am I to be answered in the words of the honorable gentleman from Indiana, [Mr. KENNEDY,] that this would be “stealing the country;” that it would be “creeping and crawling into the country, and acting in bad faith.” No such thing, sir. All this should be done in the broad face of heaven and the world. We have said to Great Britain, “Oregon is ours;” and, we should add, “we mean to maintain our rights to every portion of it; we do not choose to fight for it at this moment, but we are getting ready, and we mean to get ready.” Would this be acting in bad faith?

Shall I again be answered, that unless this notice is given immediately emigration will cease? That Great Britain is establishing herself more and more firmly every day, and that in a short time our citizens will be afraid to venture there? It is too late to urge this objection, when they have already, even without the countenance and protection of our government, poured on in one continued stream to that

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