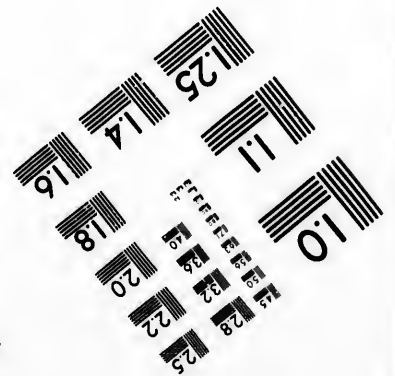
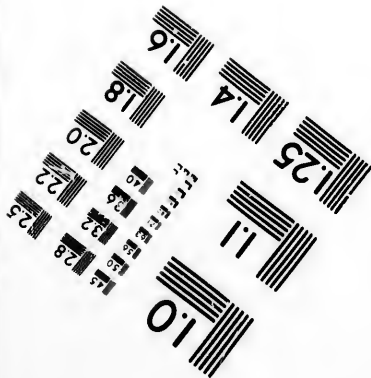
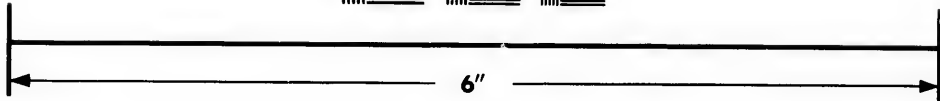
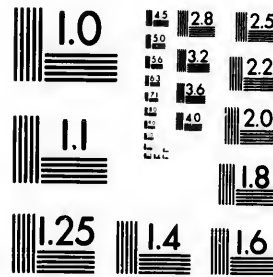


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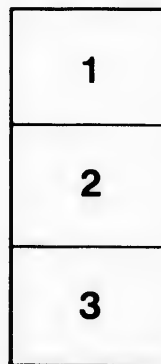
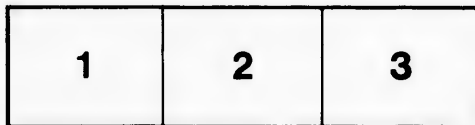
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## S P E E C H

OF

HON. GEORGE FRIES, OF OHIO,

ON

## THE OREGON QUESTION.

DELIVERED

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 1846.

The Resolution from the Committee on Foreign Affairs, requiring the President to notify Great Britain of the intention of the United States to terminate the joint occupancy of Oregon, and to abrogate the convention of 1827, being under consideration in Committee of the Whole—

Mr. FRIES addressed the committee as follows:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Were I about to act a professional part on that field where many believe the controversy now going on between Great Britain and this Government, in reference to the territory of Oregon, will terminate, there, midst saws and computing knives, scalpels, tenaculums, and bullet forceps, I should undoubtedly be able to act a part more creditable to myself than I shall be able to perform on this field of public discussion. Unaccustomed as I am to participate in public discussion duty to myself, but more particularly to my constituents, impels me to an unreserved expression of my individual views touching the question now under consideration, and to avow what I believe to be the will and wishes of those I have the honor to represent on this floor.

Sir, I approach this question with a most profound sense of its importance. Habituated as I have been, for the last fourteen years, to the responsibilities of a station, the duties of which gave me the control of the lives of thousands of my fellow-citizens; yet, at no time during the performance of the arduous duties of the station referred to, was every fibre of my heart so thoroughly imbued with a most profound sense of the importance of a single act as at present. When I reflect, that upon my single vote may depend the fate of governments and of empires, and the lives of millions of human beings, I cannot but feel, and deeply feel, that my position, in common with every member

of this House, is clothed with the most awful responsibilities.

The resolution now under consideration cannot be looked upon as a war measure, because it is only abrogating the joint convention in the manner and form prescribed by the treaty of 1818, and as renewed in 1827, concerning the Oregon territory. Yet I am fully sensible of the fact, that the Government of Great Britain, should she be disposed to engage in war with the United States, will not pause long ere she distorts the peaceful intentions of this Government in giving this notice, into a cause of war. A Government which could find a cause of war in the refusal of a people to be drugged with poison, would not be slow in manufacturing a cause of war, even out of so proper and peaceful a measure as the giving of this notice. Inasmuch as this resolution is the only action which this House proposes to take at this time, which can by possibility be distorted into a belligerent measure, I deem it a matter of deep importance to the House and to the nation, that we give it the most serious consideration. In carrying out this view of our duty, the validity of our title to the Oregon territory should be carefully examined and fairly determined. If, upon such examination, our title shall prove "clear and indisputable," I cannot see, nor have I heard any good and valid reason, why we should hesitate or falter in declaring the truth to the nation and the world, or in performing a function which properly belongs to this House. If, on the other hand, our title is disputable—is not clear, I, for one, should deem it my duty not to interfere with the provisions of the treaty, but leave the whole matter where it would then properly belong—in the hands of the President, to be disposed of by negotiation. But, sir, being fully convinced that our title to the whole

territory lying between the parallels of 42° and 54° 40' is clearly and unquestionably ours, I shall, therefore, vote for giving to Great Britain such notice as is now before this House, in the most prompt manner.

I shall not detain the House, nor worry my readers with a lengthy recital of the overwhelming array of facts and arguments which have been brought to bear in support of our title. The clear and conclusive arguments of our distinguished Secretary of State, together with the unanswerable and unanswerable speeches of a number of gentlemen on this floor, have left not a cloud, not a speck of doubt upon my mind as to the validity of our title to all the Oregon country south of the parallel of 54° 40'. It is admitted, on all sides, that the title to the whole of this country was in Spain until the year 1790. In that year, the noted treaty of Nootka Sound was entered into between Spain and Great Britain; and upon the provisions of that treaty, the latter now founds her right to the soil. A moment's examination of the objects of that treaty will show most clearly, as I conceive, that the whole pretended title will be found to rest on one single word, and that word is, "settlement," as used in the 3d article of the treaty of Nootka. That treaty was purely commercial in character, in intent, and meaning. It conferred on citizens and subjects of Great Britain the right to "carry on their fisheries in the Pacific ocean, and in the south seas, or in landing on the coasts of those seas, in places not already occupied, for the purpose of carrying on their commerce with the natives," and to make "settlements" in places not already occupied. In short, the *object* in entering into this treaty was the obtaining the right to fish in Spanish waters, hunt on Spanish grounds, and trade with the Indians upon those grounds; business which could not be successfully conducted without the right to make, at least, temporary "settlements." Had the party to whom such commercial grants were made been residing near, or within a few hundred miles—instead of twenty-five thousand miles, as was really the case in this instance—from this country, the right to make "settlements" would not have been absolutely necessary to the prosecution of the *trade*, which was the *object* of the treaty. The power to make "settlements" was, therefore, necessary to the carrying out of the before-granted rights, viz: to fish, hunt, and trade with the natives; without this power, or right, all the other granted privileges would have been worthless. But, did this right to make "settlements" give a right to the soil? As well might we contend that the right, by common lease, to take possession of a tract of land, on which to cultivate rye, corn, wheat, &c., would give a right to the soil. Sir, Spain never thought for a moment that she had given Great Britain any other than commercial rights; nor did the then ablest statesmen of England view it in any other light. Were it necessary, or were I disposed to consume time, I could produce the united testimony of all Spanish authority, of the most learned and distinguished men of those days, in Great Britain and of the whole world, to sustain me in the interpretation which I have given this famous treaty of Nootka Sound. I say, then, that England has no right whatever to the soil. The title was in Spain, and in her alone, to all the

country south of the parallel of 54° 40', until the 22d day of February, 1819, when, by the treaty commonly called the "Florida treaty," she ceded all her rights north of 42° of parallel to the United States; and, by virtue of that treaty, I hold that our right to the whole territory up to 54° 40' is "clear and indisputable." England having lost the commercial rights which she had acquired by the treaty of Nootka by the war which subsequently (in 1794, I believe) occurred between her and Spain, would not now have even the right to "hunt, fish and trade," but for the bungling diplomacy of our Government in 1827, when the consent was given to renew the treaty of 1818. This error of the past must be corrected—the people demand it; let us do our duty, and falter not.

But, sir, I must pass on from the question of title, upon which there seems to be little or no difference of opinion, to the objections which have been urged against the giving of this notice. There are a few who differ from us—honestly, I doubt not—on this single point, who, nevertheless, stand by us on the point of title. And, although I never have heretofore, nor can I now, see why we should not assert our right to that which all acknowledge to be ours, yet, when I look to the high source from which some of the objections emanate, I am almost led to pause, and once more review the ground. I listened, with great attention, to the remarks of the very learned and distinguished gentleman from Virginia, (Mr. HUNTER), for whose honor, inflexible integrity, and sterling patriotism, no one, in or out of this House, entertains a more profound respect than I do; but, sir, much as I respect his opinions generally, on this question I am constrained to differ with him. We are admonished by the gentleman, that the cost of a conflict with Great Britain would be immense, and, as the giving of the notice, in his opinion, would lead to war, he thinks the cost of such a war should be calculated before giving the notice. Sir, although we agree as to the great cost of a conflict with a great nation, and have given it a passing notice, yet we have not *counted* the cost; we have not made a strict mathematical calculation as to the number of dollars and cents it may require to maintain our rights and our honor. Such calculations, I humbly conceive, are not proper subjects for consideration when either the one or the other is involved. I hail from a State where few acknowledge the false and bloody code of honor, nor do they boast of their patriotism and their chivalry; but let me assure you, that they will not stop to count the dollars nor blood it may cost to maintain the rights and sacred honor of our common country. The cost! the cost! In the name of God, has it come to this, that the propriety of maintaining our rights must be weighed in the balance of "filthy lucre!" Shades of our sires, forbid it!

It has been alleged, in the course of this debate, that if a war should result from our actions upon this subject, it would become a war of "opinions,"—a "war of systems;" and, as our "opinions" and "systems" of Government are antagonistic to monarchy and despotism, all Europe would be arrayed against us. I doubt not that, were we to make such an issue direct, the risk might be worthy of consideration. Would the giving of this notice, or the maintenance of our just rights, be construed as an attack on "systems"

of European suppose the ain that the the great pr ment, if you the bosom of Is it probab would rush heaven-born the numbers ples of Gove of the peopl brue their li down our sy one at home, a hell to the people of Eur Let not Brita soul," that t Emerald Isle have been tr centry, will us, and again which every s eager to aveng know their fri clasped to the welcoming the home of the has robbed an the field again oppressed and and a home, ference, when there has been Would those hand that smol test in which t lose immensel Belgium, Prus district of Eu war between I moment's refl such would n fears, then, of the dollars and to England al France only and the United perhaps all b possess hersel has been robb world. And v also be. Thei their Sovereig people beat in tress of the ce head, as indie mere remnant found an ally and witnessed fail to counten ple her great ri son believe th German States England? Do pl: of those S opportunity a United States yoke under w

of European Governments? Certainly not. But suppose they should thus consider it: is it certain that the great principles of equality of rights—the great principles of our “system” of Government, if you please—have not found a dwelling in the bosom of a majority of the people of Europe? Is it probable that the crowned heads of Europe would rush to an uncalled-for attack upon our heaven-born “system,” without counting strictly the numbers at home for and against our principles of Government? Is it certain, that a majority of the people of Europe would be willing to imbue their hands in our blood, in order to break down our system of Government, and maintain one at home, which is a curse to their homes, and a hell to their hopes? Sir, never, never will the people of Europe entertain a contest so disgraceful. Let not Britain “lay the flattering unction to her soul,” that the brave and generous sons of the Emerald Isle, whose civil and religious liberties have been trampled under foot for more than a century, will be found aiding in a crusade against us, and against our country’s standard, around which every son of Erin in this land would rally, eager to avenge the wrongs of their fathers. They know their friends; they know the people who have clasped to their bosoms thousands of their kindred, welcoming them to the “land of the free and the home of the brave.” They know too well who has robbed and plundered them for ages, to enter the field against a people and a land where their oppressed and persecuted sons have found friends and a home. But why talk of European interference, when we all know that almost every Power there has been robbed and plundered by England. Would those Governments turn and “lick the hand that smote them?” Would they enter a contest in which they cannot hope to gain, but must lose immensely? Would not France, Holland, Belgium, Prussia, and every other manufacturing district of Europe, be immensely benefited by a war between England and the United States? A moment’s reflection would convince any one that such would necessarily be the case. I have no fears, then, of European interference. Give them the dollars and cents, and the fighting will be left to England alone.

France only waits another war between England and the United States, to pass England in many, perhaps all branches of manufactures, and to repossess herself of those possessions of which she has been robbed by this common plunderer of the world. And where France is, there will Belgium also be. Their feelings are identical; the blood of their Sovereigns are blended; the hearts of their people beat in unison. Holland, too—once the mistress of the ocean, carrying a broom at her mast-head, as indicative that she swept the sea; now, a mere remnant of her former greatness—will not be found an ally of the Power that stood calmly by, and witnessed her dismemberment; nor will she fail to countenance any measure calculated to cripple her great rival in manufactures. Does any person believe that any of the petty Princes of the German States will be seduced to lend their aid to England? Do not gentlemen know that the people of those States are anxiously waiting such an opportunity as a war between England and the United States would afford them, to throw off the yoke under which they are now groaning? No

people in all Europe are more attached to the pure principles of Republicanism, than they are; nor are any more thoroughly prepared for the important task of self-government.

But how stands the question of interference against our “system,” with reference to the great Autocrat of all the Russias? Have we anything of an unfriendly character to apprehend from that quarter? Will he forget the management of Lord Russell on the Bosphorus, by which he was prevented from extending his power and domain to the fairest part of Turkey? No, those acts, those intrigues, will not be forgotten. We have everything to hope for, but nothing to fear, in that quarter. In a struggle with England, I should, with great confidence look to Russia as an ally, if we needed one; and if war should come, and that war be a “world’s war,” as some believe, I doubt not that Russia will be found side by side with this glorious Union. Much as has been said against the Emperor Nicholas, I declare to you, sir, that I have more confidence in the honor and integrity of that potentate, than in any other of the crowned heads of Europe. Not that I approve of his numerous deeds of violence against the principles of national liberty; far be that from me. But when the head of a nation acts openly, boldly, and fearlessly, as he does, I am always disposed to give some credit for honesty of purpose, and never despair of such Sovereigns coming to a just sense of the relative rights of the sovereign people and their servants.

We have also been reminded that danger is to be apprehended from Mexico—that she may seek to avenge her imaginary wrongs. Having treated her fairly and honorably, we shall look for similar treatment from her. If, however, she is disposed to be further duped by England, and shall make an attack upon us, we shall let out the management of her case by the job; and as the State of Texas has had some experience in that line of business, having executed some excellent “jobs” at San Jacinto, and other places, she will undoubtedly be eager for the contract; and to them I doubt not it will be given. Texas would ask no other compensation for the management of all our difficulties with Mexico, than a portion of the small territory of California, or one or two Mexican mines.

The gentleman from Virginia warned us of the baleful influences which a war would have on the currency of our country; the tendency it would have to inundate our country with paper money; and the effect such a state of things would produce upon the morals, the trade, and commerce of the country. These objections are certainly worthy of the most profound consideration. When we look abroad in this and other countries, and behold the baleful influences of paper money upon every people where it has or does exist; witnessing the wide-spread ruin it has brought upon the masses; heaping wealth on the few, whilst it beggars the many; controlling and corrupting the ballot-box; subsidizing the press; corrupting the halls of legislation; defiling the judiciary; spurning the law;—when we see all this accomplished by the power of paper money, we should guard with great care the influence which our acts here might have upon this potent agent. But, sir, much as I fear this paper-money engine of corruption, yet my confidence in the honesty and patriotic



of the people is so strong, that they, with proper legislation on our part touching directly the question of currency, will undoubtedly prevent its further progress; even should war be the result of passing this resolution now before us, which I do not believe to be even probable. Let the present Congress do its duty in establishing proper agencies for the safe-keeping and disbursement of the people's money, and thereby relieve the present Secretary of State of the United States from performing what to him must be a painful duty, of furnishing, through Government funds, the food upon which those bank vampires feast, and my word for it, the power of paper money will be checked. Let this Congress co-operate with those States that are now engaged in the great work of exterminating banks of issue: then I shall have no fears of their powers being increased under any contingency growing out of our action upon this resolution. And I must here express the earnest hope, that my distinguished friend from Virginia will bring the force of his gigantic intellect and his great moral and political influence to bear upon the legislative action of the Old Dominion, so as to place her in the front rank, as she has been in other great works of reform, of the enemies of banks, and the friends of the currency of the Constitution. Let that gentleman go home, not in the way that another distinguished gentleman was once, on this floor, commanded to "go home," but let him go there with the all-powerful effusion of his mind, and the work of his pen, and soon will the foul blot of tolerating a rag-money currency be swept from her statutes; and once more will that honored Commonwealth stand erect on the platform of her ancient glory. Yes, sir, let us all do our duty; let us carry out the principles as avowed by the Baltimore convention, and responded to by the people; let us modify and correct the unjust and unequal tariff of 1842; have the revenue of the Government collected in "the hard;" see that it is safely kept, and honestly disbursed; and then we may hurl defiance in the teeth of those hot-beds of villany and corruption.

In the great State which I, in part, have the honor to represent here, the democracy have commenced the great work of extermination against all banks of issue. We have planted ourselves on the broad platform of the Constitution, and sworn eternal hostility against all and every system of paper money. That nothing short of a war of extermination will reach the evil, and experience has taught us in the west and southwest. Every proposition to improve or render more tolerable the banking system, was met with the scorn and contempt of those plunderers and their dependants. Instead of honestly endeavoring to improve the system, their constant aim seemed to be, to throw open still wider the floodgates of fraud and corruption. Their conduct and their purses gave ample demonstration that they fully appreciated the power of "paper money" to "fertilize the rich man's field with the sweat of the poor man's brow." Under these circumstances we have entered the field, and, by the blessing of God, we shall never leave it till every vestige of paper-money banking is swept from our border. Let not the friends of monopoly lay the false hope to their bosoms, that we shall be driven from our position. "Revolutions never go backwards."

Be the war one of twelve months or twelve years, we will always be found at our post. But, sir, with a cause so just, and a standard-bearer so able, so brave, and so fearless, as he whom the democracy of Ohio delight to honor with the highest commission in their army, the contest cannot, it will not, be long.

Those gentlemen who assume that this notice, if given, will produce war, urge, among other reasons why we should avoid it, the embarrassed condition of the States. It is true, that most of our States are deeply embarrassed; that the delusions of our banking system have led the people into a wild, visionary, ruinous system of internal improvements, which has brought upon us a most burdensome debt. These debts, however, afford one of my strongest reasons for believing that there will be no war. And why? Because those debts are generally due the subjects of Great Britain. And to what class of her subjects? To the aristocracy—the very class who will have to bear the burden of taxation necessary to furnish the means which would be required to prosecute a war against us. Do gentlemen think it probable that this class, who control the action of the British Government, will consent to an enormous increase of taxation, to conduct a war which will inevitably lose them two hundred millions of dollars of claims which they hold on our States? They know that the laws of nations make such debts a proper object of reprisal; and they know, too, how strong the probability is, that the States would avail themselves of such a favorable and legal mode of relieving their people from the burden of State debts.

Much as I despise and repudiate repudiation, in the common acceptance of that term, yet I am prepared to proclaim, that I, for one, am prepared to stand by and justify the States in sponging out every vestige of State or corporation debts due the subjects of Great Britain, should they make war upon us for a territory which never did and never shall belong to them. Why have we not as good a right to take and apply those State debts to indemnify the people against the loss of sustaining a war of defence, as Great Britain had to force the Chinese empire to pay the expenses of a war of offence?—an offensive war, too, than which none more unholly and unrighteous was ever waged on earth!—a war which forced an innocent and harmless people to take and eat the cursed poison of their East India Company, in order that that company might furnish more filthy lucre to keep up the luxury and extravagance of the lords and nobles of the home Government. Believing the States justifiable in the course indicated, I hereby proclaim the doctrine to the whole stock-jobbing and stock-gambling crew throughout the world; and warn them to keep their hands off State stocks, till after the settlement of the Oregon controversy. I am even prepared to go further, and declare, as I now do, that I shall justify the States, in the event of England making war upon us, to treat all claims which may be transferred, after the giving of this notice, to the subjects of other Governments, as though they belonged to the citizens and subjects of Great Britain. To them, too, would the sponge be a proper application. Once more let me say to stock-jobbers, From State stocks "keep hands off."

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this discussion, to impress this House and the people at large with the idea that, in case of a war with England, we would inevitably lose Oregon. How is this, sir? Would a war be certain to lose us Oregon? How? Why, say the opponents of this notice, because we could not move a single vessel from our shores with a view of sailing around Cape Horn to Oregon, without having the mortification of seeing her shattered remains swept back upon our coast by the first breeze. Sir, were those noble craft manned by the granite-hearted, iron-nerved spirits of the last war, thus sent back? The naval history of our country tells that story. And who, after looking over Cooper's Naval History, can stand up here and talk of our navy and its powers, when compared with that of England, as some gentlemen have done, without hiding their faces in the mantle of shame? But what, exclaim those fatherly gentlemen, will become of our citizens in Oregon? Might I not with more propriety ask, what will become of the British in Oregon? Sir, our Yankee boys and western rangers there, as everywhere else, know how to take care of themselves. Why, say those gentlemen, it will be an easy matter for England to convoy around by sea a force sufficient, with the Hudson Bay Company, to exterminate every American from the soil. Have those gentlemen forgotten that, besides the eight to ten thousand emigrants now in that country, we have eighteen thousand whalemen in the Pacific, than whom none more brave or more patriotic ever floated on an American bottom? Let those brave and fearless seamen be called into the service with their three years' stock of provisions—an amount with which they always supply themselves with before leaving home. Give them immediate assurances that, should their services be needed, we will pay them as liberally as we do those in our regular naval service; and in six months after the commencement of a war, not a John Bull would dare show his face south of 54° 40'. They will enter the service of their country with pride and pleasure. They will run their shipping into the Columbia; protect it there with the guns which they always carry, mounted in forts and fortifications; and, with the arms which we can furnish them by land and sea, this Oregon band of twenty-eight thousand persons will bid defiance to any power which may be brought against them.

Sir, we are not alarmed about the safety of the people of Oregon, nor are they, at the idea of giving this notice. They see no "visions;" nor does the fear of British navies and armies disturb their "dreams."

They are much less disturbed in this respect than certain gentlemen from the boasted land of chivalry. They have seen "visions" and dreamt "dreams," until it has produced a disease, which in its type is clearly "intermittent;" the paroxysms returning by-annually—differing in this respect from "intermittents" generally. One year ago those diseased friends were in the state of "asphyxia," cool as a cucumber—no fears of Mexico, backed as she then was by England and France, and "the gentleman with the white hat," and his "parlez-vous" man, Friday, to boot. Not a "vision," nor a "dream" retarded their onward march to the point at which they then aimed. But now, how changed the scene! An awful "paroxysm" has suddenly seized upon

them, and they "shiver in the breeze." Acres of British bayonets suddenly flash upon their visions; navies unnumbered,

With Paixhan guns  
And awful bombs,

haunt their midnight slumbers! A mighty change has "come o'er the spirit of their dream." That little Johnny Bull, about whom no one cared a fig one year ago, has, in one short year, consumed sufficient Oregon beef to make him grow a wondrous giant indeed. But stop; these "visions" and "dreams" are all the effusions of a disturbed imagination; all the result of a "paroxysm." Be patient; only wait one year, and they will again be found in a perfect state of asphyxia. Then, when perhaps the question of annexing California—a question involving cotton bales and locomotive cotton pickers—will come up here, gentlemen will again be as "calm as a summer evening, and as cool as the crystals of an April frost."

Mr. Chairman, having referred pretty fully to the consequences to us should a war unfortunately occur, let us for a moment look to the available force which could be brought to bear against us, and to our defensive preparations on the seaboard and along our northern and northeastern frontiers. First, along the seaboard, where we find the peculiar friends of peace. I shall not attempt a description in detail of the vast works of defence on the seaboard, their strength, or their efficiency in war. Nor will I stop to count the cost of all these works, and to state here, what we all know to be true, that the whole American family has been heavily taxed to defray the expenses. Neither will I refer to the notorious fact, that the immense population inhabiting the northern and northeastern shores, which are washed for two thousand miles by British water, have always borne the unjust and unequal system of taxation, which went to build up those seaboard defences; and that they stood up under all this without a murmur, notwithstanding these vast sums were applied for the benefit of our brethren in another section of our Union. We have not, heretofore, nor do we now, complain about the application of large and liberal sums of money to enable our friends to defend their property, their firesides, and their lives. It is true, however, that we have not been able to see the propriety of entirely overlooking the defences of our lake shores. We have looked to the vast preparations of Great Britain on the opposite shore, and then to our defenceless homes. We thought of our neglect, but we murmured not. We beheld their ship canal around the falls of Niagara, through which her fleets might reach all our towns and cities—whose commercial importance has already outstripped many on the seaboard—and sack and burn them without a shot or gun furnished by the General Government to defend them with. Still, with all this neglect of every interest on our northern border, we will not complain. Should war come, we shall not trouble ourselves much about defensive arrangements; it will be an offensive war from the start with us. We shall save John Bull all trouble about meeting us on this side of the lakes. We shall take great pleasure, too, in saving him the trouble of attending the locks on the Welland canal; and we shall do sundry other acts of kindness, too numerous to mention. And if our friends on the seaboard—after having nearly all the money which

has been spent since the foundation of our Government applied for their benefit—cannot defend their homes and their property against any attack from any quarter, then their degeneracy must be great indeed; but they can defend, and will defend themselves. To doubt their ability or their disposition, would be a base slander on their patriotism and their valor. Having the utmost confidence in both, I shall look, should the conflict come, for a repulsion of the enemy as signal as that which they received on the plains of New Orleans.

But from whence is this great British fleet to come—this fleet which is to sack and burn our cities—about which so much has been said? Will it be withdrawn from the protection, or rather subjection, of her colonies and possessions abroad, and from her disturbed and discontented millions at home? No, sir; she dare not withdraw her fleets and armies from her India possessions. Her one hundred and fifty millions of down-trodden subjects in that quarter are a dangerous material; one that only requires a few ardent and bold military leaders to enable them to give employment to all the power which she can muster in that quarter. Let us furnish them with a Boone, a Croghan, and a Wayne; and if they don't keep all the naval and land power of England in that quarter of the world in employment, I am much mistaken. But how stands the matter with reference to her home squadron? Dare she withdraw her forces from her home possessions? Look at old Ireland: behold in her bosom the accumulated elements of explosion, which have been gathering there for ages; elements that will soon explode war, or no war. Look at seven-eighths of her population, panting for an opportunity to strike a blow for "repeal." Instead of daring to withdraw, she would have to multiply tenfold her forces in and around that island; and even then the well-known battle-cries of

"Hereditary bondsmen, know ye not,

"That he who would be free, himself must strike the blow,"

would come thundering from every hill and from every vale, and one great, united blow would sever forever the bonds of union, which every true-hearted Irishman hates "with a holy hatred." Let us now withdraw from the "green sod," cross the channel, and look for a moment on that terrible revolutionary mass found in her factories and workshops. Look at their dependence upon our cotton fields for employment, and consequently for bread. See the difficulty which the Government now has to keep them in subjection, although they now have an uninterrupted supply of the raw material, out of which they make their scanty subsistence. Stop this supply for six or twelve months, and how many troops could they withdraw to send here; or rather, how many thousand, in addition to what they now have, would be required to keep in subjection this terrible mass? Every attempt to keep them down would be hopeless. They would force any Minister into a peace in sixty days after the stoppage of the cotton mills. "Give us bread, give us peace that we may earn it, or give us blood." These would be the cries that would greet the ear of a Minister from every quarter of the kingdom. Would the Minister yield? I leave gentlemen, who have given this matter a passing thought, to answer for themselves. For my part, I doubt not that the almighty voice of the people can make their servants obey even in old England.

Let us now, in this examination of British safety in case of war with us, come nearer home. How stand matters in reference to the Canadas, and her whole North American possessions? Can she depend on a friendly reception even in this part of her household? Will she not here see that attempt will admonish her that "discretion is the better part of valor?" Look to the last attempt at revolution, and that by a mere handful of those who pant for freedom. The most brave, the most valuable portion of their population—that portion who harbor the most undying hatred of the home government, though most prudent and cautious, have never struck a blow. They await that which some gentlemen so much dread—a war between this Government and England. They are cool, prudent, calculating men, who well knew that the attempt at revolution in 1839 was folly; but let their prayed-for contest come, then you will see thousands of her yeomanry rush to our standard, and defend it with their last drop of blood. I claim that we who live adjacent to and on the frontier of the Canadas know the feelings and desires of our brethren across the border too well to be deceived. And permit me here to add, that the desire to be freed from British tyranny is not confined to the people proper, but has also found its way into their temples, their high places; that even "the watch dogs of the tower" are panting for the day—the hour of their deliverance. Should the conflict come, and the two armies on our northern border be brought face to face, a scene will be witnessed to which a similar one at Trenton was a mere miniature.

A word in reference to a substitute offered here for the resolution reported by the Committee on Foreign Relations. I have watched that substitute since it first made its appearance in the other end of the Capitol, being satisfied, from the first glimpse I got at it in the Senate, that it would constitute the platform upon which the secret and open enemies of the notice would plant themselves. That it will prove the rallying ground of the mass of the White party in this Hall is already apparent. When I looked to the fountain, or rather the State from which this proposition comes, I must confess that I was no little surprised. I had formed the idea that any proposition coming from that State would be characterized by that open, bold, fearless, and independent trait, which usually distinguishes their people. Not so, however, in this case. A more mean, cowardly, skulking, irresponsible proposition never found its way into this Hall. Sir, I loathe and detest it; from my very soul do I despise it; and I hope it may be met with the contempt it deserves from every true friend of Oregon. What would gentlemen be at? Do they desire to evade all responsibility, and put the whole on the shoulders of the President, and this, too, after arguing for weeks that this notice is nothing more nor less than a declaration of war; showing by their acts and deeds that they are desirous of putting the whole war-making power, which properly belongs to Congress, into the hands of one man? A pretty commentary this upon your twelve years' whining against the "one man power." I cannot, I will not, believe that such a course meets a response from the great mass of the gallant hearts of "Old Kentucky." They spurn the idea of shifting responsibility from their shoulders, and they

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will yet spurn the man who thus seeks to place them in a false position.

But the most humiliating part of this proposition is yet to be told. After authorizing the President to give or not give the notice—which, according to Whig logic here, means to “make or not make war,”—just as he pleases, the whole proposition winds up with the bold proviso that it shall not be given “till after the adjournment of the present session of Congress.” Yes, sir; after the whole power and responsibility of making war (so Whig logic will have it) is put on the President, they turn round and most impiously say, “Mr. President, don’t give this notice now; don’t make war till after we get out of this city; for if you do, we might find it convenient to follow in the footsteps of our illustrious predecessors, “the Bladensburg ratters.”

One word as to the object of the Whigs in assuming this extraordinary ground. They no doubt still find themselves haunted by their Federal brethren who fell (politically) in the celebrated Hartford convention battle. Those “perturbed spirits” have unquestionably admonished their lineal descendants that it is highly expedient in all matters pertaining to this notice, to play a kind of a “good-God-good-devil” game. “That’s our game,” say they. “If the President give the notice in accordance with our substitute, and it should be followed by war and some serious consequences, we can turn upon the Democratic party, and say, Gentlemen, *we are not responsible*; this is all the fault of your wicked President; he gave the notice too soon; he gave it too late; we wash our hands of all this; the blood be on your heads.” “But look on the other side,” say they; “here again is a glorious chance for escape. If the President takes *all the responsibility*, and gives the notice, and the peaceable acquisition of Oregon should follow, why we can modestly tell our countrymen that we, too, were in favor of the notice; that we were for Oregon—for every inch of Oregon; and that we acted a *brave and fearless* part in behalf of all the proceedings which led to its acquisition. We will show most conclusively that cases alter circumstances, as well as that circumstances alter cases.”

Should this scheme of thrusting on the President powers to perform duties which properly belong to Congress, and which the people sent us here to perform—if this scheme succeeds, let me assure gentlemen that there will be no “backing-out”—no cowardly evasion of responsibility. He has the nerve that will not quail before any power, save the power of God. The notice will be given with that promptness which characterizes all his acts. But, sir, I shall oppose, with all the power which I may possess, this or any other effort to transfer powers from the legislative to the executive department of this Government. The power to make treaties unquestionably belongs to the President and Senate jointly; but the power to unmake, or abrogate, can only be performed in two ways consistent with the Constitution. First, by the President and Senate in making a new treaty, the provisions of which may set aside the old or pre-existing one; and, secondly, by the joint action of both Houses of Congress. Our object, as expressed on all sides of the House, is, to *abrogate* the treaty of 1818, as renewed in 1827 between Eng-

land and the United States, which is clearly a legislative duty, that cannot be performed constitutionally by any other power than the joint power of both Houses of Congress, as proposed by the resolution before us.

[At this stage of his remarks, a message from the President was presented to the House, by Mr. Walker, his private secretary, enclosing the late correspondence between Mr. Pakenham, the British Minister, and Mr. Buchanan, the Secretary of State, containing a proposition by the former, and a rejection by the latter, to arbitrate the subject of dispute in Oregon. After the reading of this correspondence, Mr. Fairs resumed, as follows:]

Mr. Chairman, my time being nearly expired, I shall add but little more. Permit me to say, however, that the character of this correspondence inspires me with new hope of success and refreshed confidence in the firmness of the Administration. To have yielded to arbitration—such arbitration as proposed—would have been a betrayal of the just expectations of the American people. Who would trust the adjudication of our rights in Oregon to any crowned head? None, I hope, in this House. And who would accede to that other proposition, which would leave it to arbitrators selected from both Governments, with power, in case of disagreement, to select an umpire? Gentlemen can certainly see at a glance that this is a gambling proposition, by which England would have two chances to our one. The original arbitrators would undoubtedly disagree; nothing else could be expected; and then from whence would come the umpire? Not from the United States—not from England—but just where England would want him from—from some European State. Where would be the difference between this mode of settlement, or leaving it to a foreign Power at once? All the power being in the umpire, and that umpire being foreign, there could be no difference, of course. Sir, all those propositions to arbitrate are essentially the same; and I therefore glory in the prompt rejection of them all.

Mr. Chairman, I am sorry to see a disposition manifested here to create the impression that there is a war party in this House; and from the language of some gentlemen, I doubt not that upon the “West” is to be charged the major part of this supposed war spirit. Sir, we spurn the charge, direct or indirect, of being desirous of urging this Government into an unnecessary war. We are as emphatically a peace-loving people as those in any other section of this nation. The people which I have the honor to represent, estimate as highly as any others the blessings of peace; they know its benign influences upon science, the arts, religion; upon everything tending to the happiness of mankind. But, sir, firm and fixed as our convictions are of the blessings of peace, we will never be found willing to yield to any other than an honorable peace. To our rights we shall cling with a grip as unyielding as death. Those rights must be preserved. Cost it treasure, cost it blood, they shall be preserved. We have entered the field to maintain those rights, “peaceably if we can, forcibly if we must.” We pitched our tents, and, if God willing, they shall never be struck till the stars and stripes wave over Oregon every inch of Oregon.

