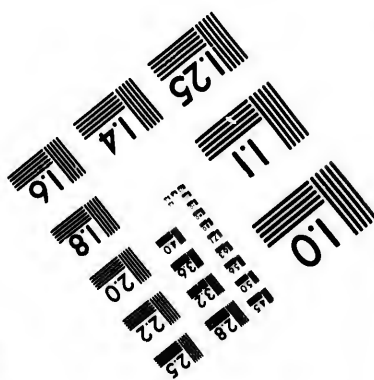
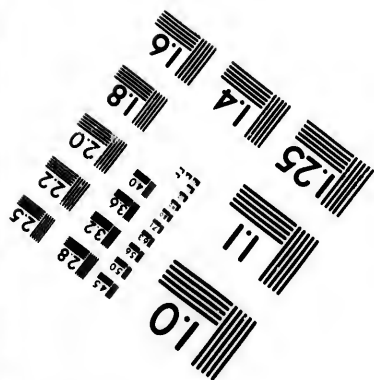
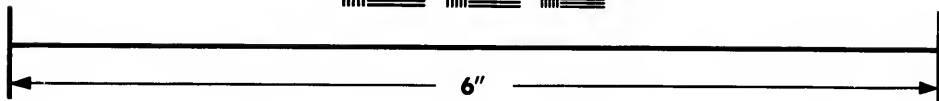
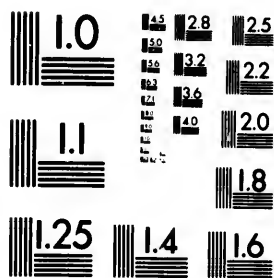


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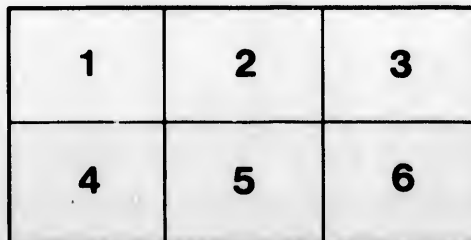
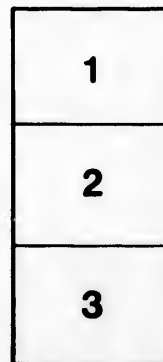
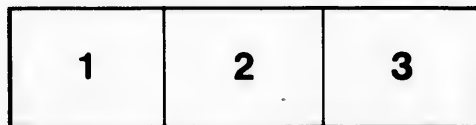
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SPEECH OF MR. HOUSTON, OF TEXAS,

ON THE

OREGON QUESTION.

DELIVERED IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES, APRIL, 1846.

Mr. HOUSTON said:

Mr. PRESIDENT: I am not insensible to the peculiarity of the position in which I now find myself placed. To any one, and more especially to one unaccustomed to participate in its debates, the occasion of addressing a body so influential and intelligent as the Senate of the United States, must necessarily be attended with much embarrassment. I am, however, now about to be called on to act, as a member of this body, on a subject of high importance, and it therefore becomes my duty, as one of the representatives of a State which has recently become an integral part of the great confederacy of this Union, to present my reasons, so far as I may be enabled, for the vote which I shall give on this occasion.

The proposition to abrogate a treaty which has existed for years with England is in accordance with the undeniable right of this government. I believe both those in favor of the resolution, and opposed to it, have acquiesced in that right. The Executive has thought proper, in his annual message to the Congress of the Union, to recommend the abrogation of the treaty by giving the twelve months' notice, necessary under its provisions. The question, then, arises—Is it politic, and is it wise, to exercise this right to the exigencies of the country require its exercise? I think it discreet and necessary that such a course should be adopted and carried out, for the reason that I can perceive no rational ground for hope, that by delaying the measure, its necessity will be obviated, or the rights of the country vindicated. Nor can I perceive the possibility of any detriment to the interests of the country by giving the notice as recommended by the Executive.

Consequences may grow out of it which, at this time, we do not anticipate; but that it is a war measure, or one likely to produce war, I cannot believe. Honorable and distinguished senators think differently on this subject.

If we were disposed to admit the opinions of gentlemen who have spoken on this question, war, with all its calamities, is inevitable, if this measure be adopted. But this does not seem to me to be the question. Is it wise policy in this government to pursue this course? Is it necessary for the preservation of our rights that the notice should be given? It seems to me to be the question properly presented; but not whether war is likely to result.

Were we to be restrained from action in a crisis like the present by any considerations as to the possibility of war, or the reverse, the public interest would be liable to suffer deeply. If we never dare adventure action, we can achieve nothing. It is

true I am not in favor of precipitate action, but for a calm, deliberate, and firm course of procedure.

No less than twenty-eight years have rolled round without producing a satisfactory result. Negotiations, though often attempted, have failed in effecting a settlement of the controversy. Repeated overtures to England, direct and favorable as the United States supposed, from a strong desire to preserve peace between the two countries, have been made, yet they have not been met in a corresponding spirit on the part of that government.

They have been declined or rejected, again and again. The last proposition made by our Executive, it appears, was, according to the representations of the English premier, decided upon by the minister resident here as inadmissible, and not transmitted to his government. This, to my mind, is conclusive evidence that his government would not have considered it more favorably than he did himself. No minister to a foreign court would assume so important a decision, unless well aware that it was in harmony and keeping with the policy and opinions of those who had delegated a trust to him. Nor have we any intimation from the government of England that it would have been otherwise considered by the ministry. I think it is idle to anticipate an agreeable termination to our negotiations with England upon the subject of Oregon, unless it is brought about by giving this notice.

England may desire to gain time, and she may have a desire to amuse the United States as long as possible. It may be that England at this time is not prepared for war, and therefore does not wish to bring things to an issue with us upon this subject; for if she contemplated any such basis for negotiation as that offered by this government, and rejected by her envoy, she has had, and yet has, an opportunity to renew it. Does delay on her part arise from the fact that the resolutions now under consideration have been introduced into the Congress of the United States in accordance with the recommendations of the Executive in his annual message? Can it arise from the fact, that England considers herself insulted, because the Executive assumed our right to the whole of Oregon in that state paper? Can she allege this as a satisfactory reason to this government for not stepping forward and making such an offer, if she really had it in contemplation? To be sure, honorable senators have suggested that the measure recommended by the Executive would be regarded by England as held in *terrorem* over her, and that she cannot, consistently with her national honor and dignity, accede to any proposition, nor make one, until after Congress has adjourned.

Such opinions are advocated in and out of Con-

gress, and honorable gentlemen may really entertain them. But I apprehend they will find that England has other reasons, and that those which they render to themselves are fallacious.

It has been said, that the President could have withheld this recommendation to Congress, and thus relieved this body from unpleasant embarrassments produced by no agency of theirs. I cannot conceive how that omission could have been properly made. In my estimation he was bound to assume his present position. The decision of the American people, in his elevation to the presidency, left him no alternative. The question of Oregon was one of the leading subjects in the last presidential canvass, by which he was called to his present station.

If the President had not assumed a claim to the whole of Oregon—if he had not declared that our right to it was unquestionable—that it belonged to us, (as I have no doubt he believed to be the fact,) certainly he would have fallen far short of the discharge of his duty. The question had been mooted and canvassed before the American people. It was a thing not done in a corner. The popular voice was conclusive upon this subject. Enlightened statesmen now entertain opinions in unison with the recommendations of the Executive.

Although the State from which I come was not at that time an integral part of the Union, nevertheless, there was no subject of importance in the United States, of political agitation and excitement, which did not command attention, and some degree of feeling, in our country. We were observant of all that passed here. I again repeat, that the Executive was bound to bring this subject before Congress, as he has done. Could he have acted otherwise, and yet taken his measures in accordance with the principles upon which he was elected? Had the President claimed the country only as far as forty-nine, do you not believe that many who now denounce his extended assumption of our claim to the whole territory, would have been found ready to denounce him for compromising the honor and interest of the country, and as guilty of a shameless abandonment of American rights?

Had he renewed the proposition made by Mr. Gallatin, what would have been the consequence? Would it not now be said *here is collision?* The joint navigation of the Columbia river will at once destroy all harmony between the two countries. His object must be to throw in contact men of different political interests—the subjects of governments of opposite character. War, in that case, would have been inevitable; and the policy would, indeed, have been energetically denounced. Circumstances precluded the President from taking such a course. That functionary assumed a proposition that all Oregon belonged to us; and whether it is correct or erroneous I will not now undertake to determine; for it is not, in my apprehension, a question necessarily connected with the investigation of the subject now before the Senate, which, as I understand it, is the propriety or impropriety, the necessity or want of necessity, of giving the proposed notice.

If England designs to negotiate, the notice will not exclude her from that privilege. The way to negotiation is as open to her as it ever was. But what indication has she given that she is ready to negotiate? England has proposed arbitration—she has not talked of negotiation; and are we wait for the nods and becks of England to determine our own

policy or property, or to what point our privilege extend? If we wait for the convenience of England that if, land—if we wait for intimations from her or the United States ministry to regulate our policy, we may wait of the great an indefinite period. I do not conceive it to be the duty of the representatives of the American people, or the head of this government, to await the intimations of what England may or may not do. We have to inquire of ourselves, is our policy singly was adoption of this measure necessary to the preservation of the Union? Is it necessary to the furtherance of our interests and the establishment and upbuilding of our nation that a certain measure should be adopted, or a certain policy pursued? If these questions can be answered affirmatively, then we have only to march forward in the highway to the destiny which is before us. We are not to falter in a decisive act because England may frown or smile on any particular line of policy. We are now called on to adopt a certain measure, and to pursue it with resolute and unflinching firmness. We can only judge of the course which England intends to pursue, and the sentiment which her government entertains at this time towards us, from the tone of her journals. We may have recourse to her newspapers, but not to opinions which only ascertain with any degree of certainty the views and designs which are entertained by her Majesty's government on this questionable issue. The British ministry have given only evasive intimations in reference to the proposition rejected by their envoy here; and judging from the less obscure and uncertain expressions in the English newspapers, we have little to apprehend from their favorable disposition towards our interests.

Honorable senators have spoken of "complying with the wishes of Great Britain." I labor the term. It sounds like "temporize." It implies that something unreasonable is demanded by one of the parties, and that the other, through over anxiety, is prepared or required to make a sacrifice of rights. "Temporize" implies insincerity and duplicity are to pass current for compromise, when it is nothing more than the doubtful character of that candor which it would be desirable to express. These terms should be expunged from the political as well as social vocabularies of the world.

Mr. President, I prefer the term "adjustment." I am decidedly in favor of an adjustment of the controversy. The term implies everything desirable in the present phase of this question. We know that there is diversity of opinion, and we should all be in favor of doing what is right—of arriving at a decision and carrying out the objects, which alone can be done by an adjustment rather than compromise. We need ask nothing but what is right. We should be satisfied that justice is on our side; and when satisfied of that, we should scrupulously contend our rights without reference to consequences. We should say, This is our right; we will maintain it, and abide the worst.

Much as I might deprecate war, which is full of desolation and calamity to all orders of society, I am anxious as I would be to eschew it by all means, my power, consistently with honor and integrity; yet we should be willing to encounter it rather than yield an inch in the maintenance of any ascertained right, either inherent or resulting. But let me ask, are we certain that concession even would cure peace with England? What nation is there that has ever grown or prospered, and become great without encountering war? It would, indeed, be a

our privilege, and the convenience of England, that if, in the present condition of the world, the United States could remain so distinguished as the great rival powers of the earth, an object of international envy, and yet escape the common calamities of nations. •

We cannot always expect to be free from war, which is inherent in the condition of nations. So long as this conviction impressed upon the mind of the illustrious Father of our country, that he departed he left, as a portion of the legacy bequeathed to his countrymen, the admonition to "prepare out of his wisdom and experience—"in time of peace prepare for war." This warning would be borne in mind. Washington knew well the springs of human action. He knew the passions and policy of nations, and that when it desired to ascertain their character and objects, you must not scan man in his social state in connection with his fellow-man. There you obtain the elucidation. The passions of men are always employed for the benefit or detriment of each other. They have feelings and sympathies; passions to intimidate, and sympathies to relieve. But nations are susceptible of the refined sensibilities of our nature, which only exist in the social relations. Nations are but corporations on a magnificent scale—as Iceland in their calculations; heartless as they are in their conclusions. In their cabinets every thing is done to procure certain results. They care nothing for the calamities they may entail on other nations. Think you that the British ministry feel sympathy with the millions of India whom they have slaughtered or enslaved? Have they tears to shed with the widows and orphans of the Sikhs, so cruelly slaughtered in their battles? No. Yet acts as these are evidences of the sympathies of nations. Nay, it is evidence of their ministerial spirit to compromise. I trust, however, it is a spirit of compromise never to be extended by England to any country; and yet the same love of aggrandizement which has directed her policy in India will undoubtedly characterize her measures towards the United States—the increase of power and extension of dominion.

I sincerely desire peace; but how are we to realize it? Will it be attained by permitting this question to fester in the public mind of both countries? Ask you not that the popular mind of England is excited to some extent? Can she be calm at heart? We know that the public mind in this country cannot be at rest, and is it therefore wise in us to perpetuate this agitating subject to remain in its present condition? I answer no, Mr. President. I venture to opine, however erroneous it may be, that the co-ordinate branches of the government connected with the Executive with the promptitude, and when he acted, to-day everything has been tranquil, England quiet, and the public mind in the United States calm, serene, and unexcited.

The subject of our having acted in accordance with our right in giving the notice, no question would have arisen. England knows it is our right, our prerogative to exercise it. But when Great Britain finds that the policy of the Executive is repudiated or denounced by American statesmen, her measures at once change their tone. This very opposition is sufficient to inspire England to beard this country into a war—to embarrass the Executive of the nation—I mean the measures of the Executive, the man. I do not know that he can be embarrassed. Twenty years since I was associated with

him in the councils of this nation. Since then, it is true, time has silvered his locks, and left an impress upon his brow. But I believe he yet retains unimpaired all the faculties which he ever possessed. Once I knew his perceptions were clear, his views comprehensive, his mind vigorous, his political purposes patriotic; and he was decidedly energetic in the accomplishment of his designs.

He is, I trust, yet all that he ever was; and by the efficient co-operation of the co-ordinate departments of government, I doubt not but that he will be enabled to bring this matter to a happy consummation, and thus avert the evils of war, so much deprecated in this chamber. If war is not averted, it has been suggested that preparations are necessary. I grant it true. Our situation is not one of preparation. We should always be in a defensible position. Within more than a half century, when have we been in a proper situation for defence? Are we now making preparations for war? Will we ever be prepared until it comes upon us? Never. It is not in the genius of this people. They are bold, daring, and confident; and until the shock of danger comes, every American is proud of the national character; and, glorying in his individual liberty, each feels that he is indeed a freeman, and therefore cannot be conquered. They cannot realize the necessity of concert and preparation. It is this universal feeling that prevents the national defences from assuming in time of peace that formidable character which such a nation as Great Britain at all times presents.

To place this country in a state of defence would require on land numerous fortifications and the construction of a great naval armament, which can only be accomplished by an expenditure of many millions. In time of peace this is impossible. The American people have a horror of taxation. No public man who would vote for unusual taxation in time of peace could maintain his position before the people, no matter what the emergency might be, short of actual war. Therefore you cannot induce our population to submit to taxation for defence in time of actual peace.

This being necessarily our situation, honorable gentlemen seem to consider it an argument in favor of a compromise on our part. If we once admit this principle, there will be no end to the concessions demanded of us. Admit it, and we will speedily be ruined by concession; for the principle, thus grafted on our policy, would not fail to be taken advantage of by every government with which, in future, we may have a controversy on any subject. Unprepared as our situation may be for war, we cannot, consistently with national dignity and honor, renew a proposition to negotiate. Suppose we were to do so in view of our present circumstances, and England were to reject it—for we have no reason to believe that she would accede to it—would it not justly degrade us in our own estimation, and incur for us the contempt of other nations? England can consistently take that step without compromising her national character; and this notice will interpose no barrier.

If England and the United States go to war, it will not grow out of the resolution before the Senate, but it will be contingent upon the inclination and disposition of England apart from this question. It is by no means likely that she will involve herself in war for a country described by honorable senators on this floor as barren and useless—a desert waste. England is too politic to haz-

ard war for such paltry considerations. She wars for empires; the gold and dominion of the Indies are the stakes for which she now plays.

It is not the policy of this country to seek war. Its policy has been peaceful, and it should so continue. The annexation of Texas to the United States—an event of too recent occurrence to require explanation—is a practical commentary upon the policy of this government. Eight years after Texas had become an independent nation, the United States thought proper to take action upon an application which Texas had made to them for admission soon after the declaration of her independence. This presented a fair opportunity for the United States to have extended her dominion by acquisition, had her policy been that of national aggrandizement and dominion. On the contrary, Texas was permitted to remain under embarrassed circumstances for eight years before action was taken upon her application, and ten ere annexation was consummated.

Permit me, Mr. President, in this connexion, to read an extract from a late number of the *London Sun*, a journal, I believe, of much respectability; and, though not strictly the official organ, it may be justly regarded as a pretty fair index to ministerial and popular sentiment in England.

In this way, I imagine, we may be enabled to obtain a significant and instructive view of the feelings entertained towards popular governments on that side of the water, if nothing more. The editorial to which I allude, bearing date March the 4th, last, reads thus:

"From the depression of the funds, caused by the intelligence from America, and the surprise with which it was received by certain parties in the city, one would imagine that the rejection, by the President of the United States, of the only mode left open to settle the Oregon question, was wholly unexpected, and that the most sanguine hopes were entertained that his excellency would recede from his haughty claims announced in his message to Congress. But these persons could have no grounds for any such supposition. The announcement in that document that America claimed the whole of the territory, was evidently made not without due consideration, and with good party reasons for maintaining the point; and whatever has occurred since in Congress, so far from weakening his authority in that respect, or providing some amicable means of settlement, has all been in the contrary direction. Violent war speeches have been made by Cass, and others, in the Senate, usually calm, disposed to peace, and inclined to check rather than encourage popular excitement; and even the most moderate speakers in that assembly ventured to adduce no arguments in opposition to Mr. Polk's views, but seemed rather to content themselves with expressing a wish to preserve peace, and not extend the frontier till the States had acquired more strength. There was no real objection to the principle. The time for action was the only question."

From this we should infer, Mr. President, that England imagines that her rights have not received the full advocacy in this honorable body to which they were entitled: and the inference is clear, that the Senate, to maintain its peaceful character in her estimation, should have rendered a decided opposition to the recommendations of the Executive. In corroboration of this, the article proceeds to say:

"In the House of Representatives a similar spirit prevailed, and no meetings out of doors were held for the purpose of checking the warlike policy of Polk, or giving the least encouragement to those who wished for peace."

If England should expect popular meetings to be held in this country for the purpose of encouraging the abandonment of our national rights, or withholding a proper support from the Executive in his recommendations in vindication of the national interests and character, she may rest assured that she

has formed an unfair estimate of the popular sentiment of America. I read further:

"From the commencement of this unfortunate business we have been fully convinced that Polk and the war party had made up their minds for extremes, not from a hard view of the question, but from the entire system of government, now unfortunately so popular in that country. Extension of territory seems to be the ruling passion of the present race. The inhabitants adjoining the lakes and the British territories on the northeast have for many years kept a longing eye on Canada, and only bide their time. The South aggression is the order of the day. Because Mexicans cannot defend themselves. The tide is flowing in that quarter with fearful rapidity, and nothing but the interference of European powers, so abominated by Polk, can prevent the whole of that rich country from being swallowed up by the Anglo-Saxon race. In the Union of sentiment prevails, and California and Oregon are considered absolutely necessary to make the Union complete."

It is true, sir, that such an opinion is entertained by many enlightened statesmen of the present day, but I think that such acquisitions are necessary to the United States, for the purpose of carrying out their destiny, and securing the peace of the continent. Her enterprise, with the character of her population, and that of her institutions, would unite in extension of human happiness, by reclaiming those wilderness regions to the dominion of agriculture and the arts.

Again, the writer says:

"It is said that this spirit of aggression is encouraged by Polk, in order to secure his election a second time; but if I possibly think that this may be the chief cause; but that renders the position of affairs more dangerous, and shows that the aggressive system is not the effect of State policy, but the crochets of a particular minister or president; but the choice of the restless and encroaching multitude. So palpable is the fact, that no government, under present circumstances, could maintain itself in security for a few months, on the principles professed by Webster and Polk."

From this, sir, it would appear that, in their opinion, the President is quite excusable for his present system of policy—not that he is himself to be blamed, but that he is acting in accordance with "the character of the restless and encroaching multitude."

In this country the President is considered as representative of "the multitude." He is the opinion of the nation. The measures recommended by him are supposed to derive their character from public opinion and from the peculiar relations which he bears to the nations of the world. If the Executive rightly apprehends public sentiment, it will be found that the energies of this nation, if once combined and not distracted by opposition, will sustain him in carrying out his policy to its full consummation.

I quote further:

"Polk is carried with the stream; and all that England need do is to look to her own interests, and take care her rights and possessions are not destroyed by the inundation. Hitherto she has displayed the utmost moderation and forbearance, whether we look to the government or the legislature, or the press."

That England will look to her own interests should entertain no doubt. She never ceases to favor her rights. She does not permit them to be destroyed by inundation; and it is our duty to see that inundation on her part should not deluge our rights. That she "has displayed the utmost moderation and forbearance," I have no doubt her advocates should propose, and also that it would be no assumption on her part to claim whatever she desires. Her moderation and forbearance have already, I trust, secured her sufficiency.

In the conclusion of this article, the writer says:

the popular sentiment. With the exception of a very few hasty articles in the English newspapers, provoked possibly by that tone of desire so loudly proclaimed by members in both houses of Congress, scarcely one ground of provocation can be urged against the American government. In the history of mankind, not from a land it would be impossible to point out a nation more anxious to preserve peace than the English are at the present moment to remain at peace, and more especially with America. If the last remaining passion of the day, then, must be assented to, we have here, as on the banks of the St. Lawrence, right on our side."

Mr. President, it has been a fortunate thing with England always to act as though she had right on her side. A nation acting on this principle will seldom fail of success. If we will now act on the same principle, we cannot fail to maintain our rights. In the Union of sentiment and co-operation with the Ex-territorial and Oregon territory, by the co-ordinate departments of government, will vindicate our national character, and preserve our interests. Their preservation will not lead to war, if England is not more desirous of dispossessing us of what is ours than a nation should professing such moderation. I sincerely hope she may never attempt, on this continent, to enact scenes of the St. Lawrence, or give a similar exhibition of her political moderation.

I cannot concur with a distinguished senator in the opinion, that the public sentiment is changing, and coming day by day more favorable to the establishment of the 49th parallel as the boundary between the two countries. I entertain no such apprehensions; but if I did, I would vote for this resolution, because it would more readily enable us to arrive at an adjustment of the difficulties. So long as the treaty of 1818 continues in force we have no reason to suppose that the controversy will be terminated; and it is proper that our citizens in the Oregon territory should be protected. Numbers have already emigrated there, and numbers more have it in contemplation to follow them. Until something is done, as an evidence of our regard for these pioneers, their situation must be exceedingly inefficient, as well as insecure. We should not predicate measures in relation to them upon the expectation of British inactivity, or the hope of negotiation, with the belief that England will slumber while our people are to occupy the territory. England never slumbers, more especially when her commercial interest is at stake; and her whole history warrants the conclusion that she never will, so long as the power remains with her to extend or establish her dominion.

What sort of policy would it be, as suggested, to encourage our people to remove to Oregon, and remain there without assurance of safety, surrounded by Indians under British control? It has been said that we have induced them to go there. If so, should not their situation claim our peculiar regard? An honorable senator has said, he would be in favor of giving protection to our settlers, but he is understood as to the manner in which that protection should be given. He says it should be done with great caution, and accomplished gradually. He is never ceasing to favor of protecting their personal rights, but he admits the policy of extending our political jurisdiction duty to sections over the territory. For my part, I cannot but delude our people how the United States could extend to them personal protection, and, at the same time, hold political protection; for without political, no assumption of personal protection could be extended to them. As her moderns now stand, they cannot settle north of the Columbia river. If they attempt it, they are secured by bribery or driven by menaces to remove south of that river. England, if need be, will

strengthen herself in Oregon. She has troops there, armed and disciplined, if she has not an agricultural population such as ours. In the mean time, what course has been recommended to us by the distinguished senator? To encourage our people to go into the territory until by-and-by the whole country shall fall into our possession. And this is an exemplification of the policy of inactivity. If theirs, would it not be filching their territory? Would it not be obtaining by indirection that which we dare not claim as a just right?

Why, sir, if we have no right to it now, we would have no right to it then. If it is theirs by occupation or discovery, it would still be theirs by the same right.

If we have rights at all to the territory, they are substantive, and do not depend upon anything short of a just assumption of them. Sir, we should act with such policy as to enable us to secure our rights in question as occasion may require, and to that end I would recommend a fair and just, but at the same time a firm and decided course.

I trust in my opinions upon this subject, I am actuated by no unworthy prejudices against England, or in favor of our own country. To Great Britain I do not intend the slightest reproach or disrespect. On the contrary, in many respects I much admire the glory of her character. I approve many of her institutions. I admire the character of the English people, for they are generous and magnanimous. I admire their loyalty to their government, and I admire the gentlemanly bearing of their representatives abroad. For these reasons I can entertain no improper prejudice, nor desire a collision between the two nations. Were it in my power, I would not impose injustice upon England. But at the same time I assert that towards her I would act without reference to the power she may possess. In this case we should act independent of all apprehensions of that power. We should take measures for ourselves, and, pursuing justice, treat her as though she had not a fortress on land, or a sail on the ocean.

If the fear of offending England should dictate our policy, we would be driven, as I have before remarked, to concession after concession, until our boundaries would be curtailed, and we should be reduced within the limits of the good old thirteen States. We might expect trench after trench upon the extent of our territory, until we would be driven in from every outpost of the republic. Whatever is justly hers, at the expense of great national inconvenience, I would say let her have it, if we could not obtain it by the exchange of a fair equivalent. We should always bow to the majesty of principle. But in this case, until the rights of England are clearly ascertained and defined, I should be inclined to believe that our right to the territory in question was by no means inferior to that which she has assumed.

I will not, Mr. President, attempt a discussion of the subject of boundary, because I consider it unnecessary, if not improper. That question does not arise out of the resolution before the Senate, but would necessarily be appropriated to the diplomatic action of the two governments. Nor shall I now indicate what would be my course should a treaty be negotiated and submitted by the President. I think any avowals beforehand would tend, more or less, to increase the difficulties which at present exist in relation to the adjustment of the difficulty. Why? Because they tend but to make England more wary. They are calculated to induce her to

abstain from proposals which she might otherwise make; and might render her more haughty in her demands. If a treaty should be made, I would decide upon my vote when it should be submitted to this body. I will not even say for what boundary I may vote.

If, by chance, opinions are expressed in this body favorable to the pretensions of England, and in furtherance of her views, it might induce her to withhold an offer of settlement which she may be ready to tender, and thus prevent the very object which we desire. She will never be prepared to take less than we are prepared to concede; and opinions favorable to her pretensions will not be likely to lessen her demands. However, this I will say, that I never could consent to the proposition made by Mr. Gallatin—to the boundary of the parallel of 49°, with the navigation of the Columbia river accorded to England. Rather than vote for such a proposition, I would resign my place in the Senate. I am led to this determination for the reasons already stated.

If the country is to be divided by an ideal line, the sooner it is done the better. But I apprehend if it should be done the evil will be felt by our children's children; and I am fearful that whatever is now done to effect that object will be but patch-work of the difficulty, and will inevitably lead to a rupture at some future day.

I believe if this controversy is susceptible of satisfactory adjustment, the present measure will attain that object; and I am free to confess that in giving my vote for the notice I would prefer, if it could be done, to take it in its most simple form without any qualification whatever. To what does the proviso amount? It is probably intended by some that it should be understood by Great Britain to mean no barrier to negotiation. I would leave that to be inferred, though I think it manifest. I would not state it in advance of the notice, as if it were placed there under the influence of fear. Has England ever adopted such a course;—or is America to set such an example? I would give the notice respectfully and with the utmost decorum, but I would leave its qualification, if any, with the Executive. I would not trammel the President; I would not have the head of this nation manacled; I would leave him free, because he is responsible to the American people, and his acts to the revision of this body. Let him be left free to conduct the negotiation, for we have nothing to do with treaty making. We have the power of ratification or rejection. The President alone is charged by the constitution with negotiations and international correspondence. He knows the course and progress of each, for they are conducted under his direction. When he has performed what he believes to be his duty, the power then results to the Senate to approve or dissent from his action. But we have no power to mould a treaty, or to direct the President on what terms he shall, or shall not, treat. Therefore I would consider it disrespectful to him to attach any qualification to the notice. No co-ordinate branch of the government can take so clear and comprehensive a view of the whole ground as can the Executive. The Congress is in session temporarily; he is perpetually present at the seat of government, ready to watch the public interests as they change. We remain here but a few months and then return to private life; but the Executive is constantly present watching every emergency. We should therefore leave him not only unembarrassed, but uninfluenced.

Allusion has been made to the subject of the negotiations between the United States and Texas and claiming some little identity with these transactions, I may have a right to correct any errors that may exist on this subject before they are received in history by the public mind. They were interesting then, and it may be that they are so still. Therefore I will endeavor here to give some account of the progress of events as they occurred.

The authorities of Texas in 1836 proposed annexation to the Union of the United States. This was done in obedience to the express will of the people of that country, and after the fullest expression that will had been given. The proposition was rejected by this government, though the desires of Texas continued the application for a considerable length of time; until, finding there was no hope of admission, the executive of Texas ordered the withdrawal of the proposition for annexation. In the mean time the independence of Texas had been recognised by the United States. In December, 1838, when a new administration came into power, the Executive, in his inaugural address, denounced the measure of annexation, and it was not revived for three years, nor were any measures taken for its effectuation. During this time a treaty was negotiated between England and Texas, in which the latter proffered to give five millions of dollars to England, if she would guarantee the recognition of the independence of Texas by Mexico. England did not succeed; but the misfortunes of Texas accumulated to an extent which I will not here describe.

In December, 1841, that administration expired and a new one commenced. The first leading act of the new administration was to appoint a minister to the government of the United States, with instructions to sound it on the subject of annexation; and it met with a favorable reception, that negotiation should be immediately opened. The minister (Mr. Riley) hastened to present the subject to the consideration of this government. It was received without any indications of favor; and though somewhat importunate in the discharge of his duty on the subject, he received no encouragement. A little while he was gratified with the reception of the proposition, that he asked, and obtained leave from the government, to return. His successor, Mr. Van Zandt, was then appointed, and referred to the instructions of his predecessor, by which he was authorized to renew the proposition. He did not renew it, but soon ascertained from the response with which it was met, that there was little hope of success. Not long afterwards, a proclamation was issued by the Executive of Texas for an armistice between Texas and Mexico. The armistice was founded upon which it was received, and more through her Majesty's chargé d'affaires, resident at Texas; nor did the Executive fail in that proclamation to allude to the kind offices of England in the most friendly terms. Still, our minister, and they had been unable to make progress towards opening negotiations with the United States upon the subject of annexation, and so advised the government. A few weeks after the issuance of the proclamation, Mr. Van Zandt was directed by the Secretary of State of Texas to inform the government of the United States that the proposition for annexation was suspended, and that the subject was no longer open to discussion. In December then following the Executive of Texas, in submitting his annual message, made no allusion to the subject of annexation; but took care to remark frankly upon certain

subject of the annexation of Texas, and the transactions with these states, and the errors that have been received, were interesting still. Therefore, on the account of the proposed annexation. This was the will of the people, and the expression of their desires, and a considerable number of them were no longer in the annexation. In the month of December, 1845, I came into power, and denounced the measures taken for the treaty, which was negotiated in which the late President had given England the preference of the United States, and the Texas accumulated. I describe the administration expired, and the first leading act was to appoint a minister to England, with instructions for annexation; and that negotiation the minister (Mr. Calhoun) received with some delay, though somewhat of his duty of encouragement. The proposition of the President to leave from the President, Mr. Vinton, was referred to the board, which he was appointed. He did not in the response, there was little afterwards, a private of Texas to Mexico. The deed was received, and the residents, and the fall in that price, and the offices of England, and our minister, and the law restored; and our independence recognised by that power; upon the subject, government, and the proclamation of the Secretary of the Government of the United States, for annexation, it was no longer then following, and his annual subject of annexation upon certain

tragedies committed by American citizens on the vector of the Red River district, and to the affair Col. Snively, whose command had been captured and disarmed within the territory of Texas by the troops of the United States. Believing, as the Executive did, that this subject was one authorizing a demand for reparation, he felt no hesitancy in speaking of the wrong. In the same message, France was spoken of in kind terms, and England in terms more intimated, and expressing a confident belief that all pledges would be redeemed in good faith. It was believed that such a course taken by the Executive of Texas would have a tendency to arouse the American people, while it would create new feelings and serious apprehensions on the part of the government, lest the future relations of Texas might be desirable to the United States. It had the desired effect; for soon after these events, a proposition was made by the United States to treat for annexation—a measure which had been discountenanced to that time. Thus it was manifest that so long as Texas evinced great anxiety for annexation, she was treated with indifference, and her application held in disdain. Hence a change of policy had become necessary, and such a change as would induce the belief that Texas was about to form new relations with some other country. It was from these circumstances that the charge of "coquetry" arose; and if the term was employed, it was in reference to the United States, but not to England. It was not applicable to the relations of Texas and England, and would but apply to our relations with the United States.

It had become necessary to operate upon the apprehensions and jealousies of the United States; to give them to exertion; and no other course was well calculated to attain that object as to speak England in terms of commendation. The then existing administration of Texas had commenced under the most unfavorable auspices, and found the country in a most lamentable condition. The institutions of the country were in chaos without means, without defences; hundreds of citizens prisoners in the dungeons of Mexico; confidence between man and man destroyed; the government not respected; no sympathies from abroad; an Indian war raging on our borders; Mexico ready to invade us from the Rio Grande; the seaboard undefended; the navy in foreign service; several of our counties in civil war, and open resistance to the laws; and without five hundred pounds of power and lead to defend our soil.

Under these circumstances had application been presented for admission into the Union. How different were the circumstances under which annexation was consummated! Texas had assumed a more and more imposing attitude. She had realized a currency composed of the precious metals; peace had been restored with the Indians; our citizens released from prison; our internal condition was orderly, and the law restored; at peace with Mexico, and our independence recognised by that power; the seaboard free from invasion; Texas tranquil, and respected by other nations.

It was in this condition that she became an intimate part of the United States. She did not enter this Union as a suppliant. No. The last offer for annexation was made by the United States, by Texas. Texas was more coy than forward. The overture was received with as much coyness as her part as the United States had previously made towards her. I have said, Mr. President,

that she was not a suppliant. She came into this confederacy as a sovereign and independent State. She brought with her as warm attachments to republican institutions as those of any other State represented in this chamber. If she did not make her advent with all the paraphernalia of bridal array, she brought a nation for her dowry, and the hearts of freemen for her jewels.

In the course of this debate the subject of war has been adverted to with its demoralizing influence and desolating consequences. It was a maxim of the venerable Macon that war was necessary to such a government as ours at least once in every thirty years. I hope that condition of things has run out with us, and that wisdom will obviate the necessity for many years to come. Yet war may sometimes be productive of good; it may be a means of ridding a community of restless and turbulent spirits whom nothing can govern but the iron rod of military rule. It embodies such men at last, and places them in a situation where, if they are not killed off, they must submit to control, and are rendered subordinate to law; and if they should survive the dangers of battle, they return better members of the community. War has its evils, but not to the extent, or of the character, imagined and described by an honorable senator. The last war of the United States was not entirely productive of evil; on the contrary, it called forth the energies of the people, and advanced us in the march of improvement at a rate unexampled in the history of mankind. It was, no doubt, one of the agents employed in developing the resources of American mind and enterprise.

I am far, however, from advocating war as a principle of this government. I desire peace, where there is a prospect of its proving more advantageous than war. I would rather remain a little stationary than to run the hazards of war. But while I admit that peace ought to be pursued and cultivated, I hold another great principle of government, and that is, always to resist oppression. If, to maintain this principle, war should become necessary, I would endure it. War, with all the evils attendant in its train, is preferable to national degradation, or the loss of empire. What people ever remained free that did not pay a price for their freedom? The government has to be supported at every hazard; and if, in doing this, war should come upon us, we must meet it as a necessary evil. As for the pernicious influence apprehended from generals who have successfully led the armies of their country, I cannot assent to it. If admitted, it would be an argument against war under any circumstances. Men as pure and patriotic as any of those who have filled civil stations have achieved victories, and secured liberty to mankind, and passed off without abuse of their power.

The history of those who led the revolutionary armies of America afford evidence of the truth of my assertion; for when they had conquered in the field they voluntarily laid down their command, and submitted to the civil authorities of the country. They co-operated with their influence and power, to create and establish, but not to overturn, constitutional government.

What did the military leaders, who have filled the presidential chair, to justify such apprehension? Whatever may be thought of the policy of the last greatly distinguished military leader who occupied that station, or whether that policy was right or wrong, it cannot be denied that after defending his country in war, he left it in peace, prosperous and

happy. His whole aim and effort was through life to oppose and put down whatever he believed injurious to liberty, and to uphold whatever, in his judgment, would promote the freedom and safety of his country. A man who has sacrificed most to secure the glory and independence of his country, need not be excluded from a participation in the civil advantages and happiness which his valor and discretion have secured to his fellow-citizens. To the army and navy of the country, do you in a great measure owe the splendid destiny which makes you the envy of the Old World. What encouragement would it be to men to brave the front of battle where danger lowers, and to charge through the serried ranks of opposing thousands, to expel the invader from your soil, to know that the moment he had achieved the victory and sheathed his sword, he was for those very deeds to be proscribed from civil honors and posts of profit and distinction, and that the brave soldiers who fought under his orders, and by his example, were to be excluded from the lowest magistracy in the land! The dread of military chieftains will never induce me to avoid a war that may be necessary for the defence of my country's rights.

I admit freely that there are many would-be heroes who have been the most pestiferous members of a civil community, and the greatest curses of their country. I would give to military men no special advantages. I would let them enjoy like rights and privileges with others, and no more. The

dread of the mischievous influences to arise from war to civil liberty, in the United States, would never induce me to vote either for or against the now proposed.

I do not believe that this question has been introduced with any view to operating on the next presidential election, nor with any other ulterior object; to secure the best interests and peace of the country. I trust in God the American people have the capacity to select a man for themselves who will promote the interests and glory of the republic, and the selection will be made with no view inconsistent with the great principles which should govern the independent action. I trust that a measure of so much magnitude as the present will never be diverted to material for electioneering purposes. Certainly, views of this kind will ever influence me, either this or any other occasion, to vote for or against a measure. I shall vote on the questions presented me in this body upon their merits alone; on the present occasion I will vote in favor of the measure because I believe it to be necessary to enable the Executive to secure harmony in our foreign relations. If peace is to be preserved, I believe that the measure to insure it. If war springs from it will be because war was inevitable in any event. My vote in favor of the measure will be an ear that I have not sought to embarrass the Executive or failed to strengthen his hands while toiling for honor, the interests, and the glory of his country.

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