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The President's Message.

To the Senate and House of Representatives:

In coming before you for the first time as Chief Magistrate of this great nation, and it is with gratitude to the Giver of all Good for the many benefits we enjoy. We are blessed with peace at home, and are without entangling alliances abroad to forbid trouble; with a territory unsurpassed in fertility, of an area equal to the abundant support of 500,000,000 of people, and abounding in every variety of useful minerals, for quantities with exuberant crops; with a variety of climate, adapted to the production of every species of earth's riches, and suited to the habits, tastes, and requirements of every living thing; with a population of 40,000,000 of free people, all speaking one language; with facilities for every mortal to acquire an education; with institutions doing to none the avenues to fame or any blessing of fortune that may be coveted; with freedom of the pulpit, the press, and the school; with a revenue flowing into the National Treasury beyond the requirements of the Government, happily, harmony is being restored within our own borders. Manufactures hitherto unknown in our country are springing up in all directions, producing a degree of National Independence unimagined by that of any other power. These blessings, and countless others, are entrusted to your care and mine for safe keeping, for this brief period of our tenure of office. In a short time we must each of us return to the ranks of the people who have conferred upon us our stewardship. I earnestly desire that neither you nor I may be condemned by a feeble and enlightened constituency, nor by our consciences.

RETROSPECTIVE—THE CASE OF GEORGIA.

Emerging from a rebellion of gigantic magnitude, aided as it was by the sympathy and assistance of nations with which we were at peace, eleven States of the Union were, four years ago left without legal State Government; a national emergency was almost driven from the country had been taken from the control of the capitalist and placed where all labor rightfully belongs—in the keeping of the laborer. The work of restoring State Governments loyal to the Union, of protecting and fostering free labor and providing means for paying the interest on the public debt, has received ample attention from Congress, although your efforts have not met with the success in all particulars that might have been desired; yet, on the whole, they have been more successful than would have reasonably anticipated. Seven States which passed ordinances of secession have been fully restored to their places in the Union; the eight Georgia held an election at which the qualified for Constitution, republican in form, elected a Governor, members of Congress, a State Legislature, and all other officers required. The Governor was duly installed and the Legislature met and performed all the acts then required of them by the Reconstruction acts of Congress. Subsequently, however, in violation of the Constitution which they had just ratified, as since decided by the Supreme Court of the United States, they unseated the colored members of the Legislature and admitted to seats some members who are disqualified by the third clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution—an article which they themselves had undertaken to ratify. Under these circumstances I would submit to you whether it would not be wise, without delay, to enact a law authorizing the Governor of Georgia to convene the members originally elected to the Legislature, requiring each member to take the oath prescribed by the Reconstruction acts, and none to be admitted who are ineligible under the third clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

The freedom under the protection which they have received are making rapid progress in learning, and no complaints are heard of lack of industry on their part when they received fair remuneration for their labor. The means provided for paying the interest on the public debt with all other expenses of the Government are more than ample.

The loss of our commerce is the only result of the late rebellion, which has not received sufficient attention from you. To this subject I call your earnest attention. I will not now suggest plans by which this object may be effected, but will, if necessary, make it the subject of a special message during the session of Congress.

VIRGINIA, MISSISSIPPI, AND TEXAS.

At the March term, Congress, by joint resolution, authorized the Executive to order elections in the States of Virginia, Mississippi, and Texas, to submit to them the Constitution which each had previously in Convention framed, and to submit the Constitution, either entire or in separate parts, to be voted upon at the discretion of the Executive. Under this authority elections were called. In Virginia the election took place on the 6th of July, 1869; the Governor and Lieutenant-Governor, elected have been installed; the Legislature met and did all required by this resolution and by all the Reconstruction acts of Congress, and obtained from all doubtful authority. I recommend that her Senators and Representatives, and that the State be fully restored to its place in the family of States. Elections were called in Mississippi and Texas, to commence on the 30th of November, 1869, and to last two days in Mississippi and one day in Texas. The elections have taken place, but the result is not known. It is to be hoped that the acts of the Legislatures of these States, when they meet, will be such as to receive your approval, and thus close the work of reconstruction.

THE CURRENCY—THE NATIONAL DEBT.

Among the evils growing out of the rebellion, and not yet referred to, is that of an irredeemable currency. It is an evil which I hope will receive your most earnest attention. It is a day, and one of the highest duties of Government, to secure to the citizens a medium of exchange of fixed unvarying value. This implies a return to a specie basis, and no substitute for it can be devised. It should be commenced now, and reached at the earliest practicable moment consistent with a fair regard to the interests of the debtor class. Immediate resumption, if practicable, would not be desirable. It would compel the debtor class to pay beyond their contracts the premium on gold at the date of their purchase, and would bring bankruptcy and ruin to thousands. Fluctuation, however, on the paper value of the measure of all values, gold, is detrimental to the interests of trade. It makes the man of business an involuntary gambler for an all sales where future payment is to be made both parties speculate as to what will be the value of the currency to be paid and received. I earnestly recommend to you, then, such legislation as will insure a gradual return to specie payments, and put an immediate stop to fluctuation in the value of currency.

The methods to secure the former of these are numerous as are the speculations on political economy. To secure the latter I see but one way, and that is to authorize the Treasury to redeem its own paper, at a fixed price, whenever presented, and to withhold from circulation all currency so reduced until it is again for gold.

The vast resources of the nation, both developed and undeveloped, ought to be made to yield the best on earth, with a less burden of taxation than the citizen has endured for six years past. The entire public debt could be paid in ten years; but it is not desirable that the people should be taxed to pay it in that time. Year by year the ability to pay it increases in a rapid ratio. But the burden of interest ought to be reduced as rapidly as can be done without the violation of contract. The public debt is represented, in great part, by bonds having from five to twenty, and from ten to forty years to run, bearing interest at the rate of six per cent and five per cent respectively. It is optional with the Government to pay these bonds at any period after the expiration of the last time mentioned upon their face. The time has already expired when a great part of them may be taken up, and is rapidly approaching when all may be. It is believed that all which are now due may be replaced by bonds bearing a rate of interest not exceeding four and one-half per cent, and as rapidly as the remainder becomes due that they may be replaced in the same way. To accomplish this it may

be necessary to authorize the interest to be paid at either the three or four money centers of Europe, or by an Assistant Treasurer of the United States at the option of the holder of the bond. I suggest this subject for the consideration of Congress, and also simultaneously with this the propriety of reducing our currency as before suggested at its market value at the time the law goes into effect, increasing the rate at which currency will be bought and sold from day to day, or week to week, at the same rate of interest as Government pays on its bonds.

THE TARIFF—INTERNAL REVENUE.

The subject of Tariff and Internal taxation will necessarily receive your attention. The revenues of the country are greater than the requirements, and may with safety be reduced; but as the funding of the debt in a 4 or 4 1/2 per cent loan, would reduce the annual current expenses largely, thus, after funding, justifying a greater reduction of taxation than would be now expedient. I suggest the postponement of this question until the next meeting of Congress. It may be advisable to modify taxation and tariff in instances where unjust or burdensome discriminations are made by the present laws regulating the subject. I recommend the postponement of it for the present. I also suggest the renewal of the tax on incomes, but at a reduced rate, say of three per cent, and this tax to expire in three years. With the funding of the National debt as here suggested, I feel safe in saying that taxes and the revenue from imports may be reduced safely from sixty to eighty millions per annum at once, and may be still further reduced from year to year, as the resources of the country are developed.

The report of the Secretary of the Treasury shows the receipts of the Government for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1869, to be \$370,943,747, and the expenditures, including interest, bounties, &c., to be \$321,490,597. The estimates for the ensuing year are more favorable to the Government, and will no doubt show a much larger decrease of the public debt.

The receipts in the Treasury beyond expenditures have exceeded the amount necessary to place to the credit of the Sinking Fund as provided by law. To look up the surplus in the Treasury, and withhold it from circulation, would lead to such a contraction of the currency as to cripple trade and seriously affect the prosperity of the country. Under these circumstances, the Secretary of the Treasury and myself have agreed to issue the surplus currency in the purchase of Government bonds, thus reducing the interest-bearing debt of the country, and of submitting to Congress the question of the disposition to be made of the bonds so purchased. The bonds now held by the Treasury amount to about \$75,000,000, including those belonging to the Sinking Fund. I recommend that the whole be placed to the credit of the Sinking Fund.

Your attention is respectfully invited to the recommendations of the Secretary of the Treasury for the creation of the office of Commissioner of Customs Revenue, for the increase of salary to certain classes of officials, and the substitution of increased national bank circulation to replace the outstanding three per cent certificates, and most especially to his recommendation for the repeal of laws allowing shares of fines, penalties, forfeitures, &c., to officers of the Government or to informers.

The office of Commissioner of Internal Revenue is one of the most arduous and responsible under the Government. It falls but little, if any, short of a Cabinet position in its importance and responsibilities. I would ask for it, therefore, such legislation as in your judgment will place the office on a footing of dignity commensurate with its importance, and with a character and qualifications of the class of men requisite to fill it properly.

THE CASE OF CUBA.

As the United States is the first of all nations, so, too, the people sympathize with all peoples struggling for liberty and self-government. But while so sympathizing, it is due to our honor that we should so abstain from enforcing our views upon unwilling nations and from taking an interested part without taxation. In the quarrels between different nations, or between governments and their subjects, our course should

always be in conformity with strict justice and law, international and local. Such has been the policy of the Administration in dealing with these questions. For more than a year a valuable province of Spain and a near neighbor of ours, in whom all our people cannot but feel a deep interest, has been struggling for independence and freedom. The people and Government of the United States entertain the same warm feelings and sympathies for the people of Cuba in their pending struggle that they manifested throughout the previous struggles between Spain and her former colonies in behalf of the latter. But the contest has at no time assumed the conditions which amount to a war in the sense of International law or which would show the existence of a *de facto* political organization of the insurgents sufficient to justify a recognition of belligerency. The principle is maintained, however, that this nation is its own judge when to accord the rights of belligerency either to a people struggling to free themselves from a government they believe to be oppressive, or to independent nations at war with each other. The United States have no disposition to interfere with the existing relations of Spain to her colonial possessions on this continent. They believe that in due time Spain and other European powers will find their interest in terminating those relations, and establishing their present dependencies as independent powers—members of the family of nations. The dependencies are no longer regarded as subject to transfer from one European power to another. When the present relation of Cuba ceases, they are to become independent powers, exercising the right of choice and of self-control. In the determination of their future condition and relations with other powers, the United States, in order to put a stop to bloodshed in Cuba, and in the interest of a neighboring people, proposed their good offices to bring the existing contest to termination. The offer not being accepted by Spain on a basis which we believed could be received by Cuba, was withdrawn. It is hoped that the good offices of the United States may yet have advantageous results.

The settlement of this unhappy strife—Members of the number of illegal expeditions against Cuba have been broken up. It has been the endeavor of the Administration to execute the neutrality laws in good faith, no matter how unpleasant the task, made so by the suffering we have endured from lack of like good faith toward us by other nations.

On the 26th of March last the United States schooner *Lizzie Major* was arrested on the high seas by a Spanish frigate, and two passengers were taken from it and carried as prisoners to Cuba. Representations of these facts were made to the Spanish government as soon as sufficient information of them reached Washington. The two passengers were set at liberty and the Spanish government assured the United States that the captain of the frigate, in making the capture, had acted without law; that he had been reprimanded for the irregularity of his conduct, and that the Spanish authorities in Cuba would not sanction any act that could violate the rights or treat with disrespect the sovereignty of this nation.

The question of the seizure of the brig *Mary Lowell* at one of the Bahama Islands by Spanish authorities is now the subject of correspondence between the government and those of Spain and Great Britain. The captain-general of Cuba, about May last, issued a proclamation authorizing search to be made of vessels on the high seas. Immediate remonstrances were made against this, whereupon the captain-general issued a new proclamation limiting the right of search to vessels of the United States, so far as authorized under the treaty of 1795. This proclamation, however, was immediately withdrawn. I have always felt that the most intimate relations should be cultivated between the republic of the United States and all independent nations on this continent. It may be well worth considering whether new treaties between the United States and them may not be profitably entered into to secure more intimate relations; friendly, commercial, and otherwise.

THE DARIER CANAL.

The subject of the interoceanic canal to connect the Atlantic and Pacific

oceans through the Isthmus of Darien is one in which commerce is greatly interested. Instructions have been given to our minister to the republic of the United States of Columbia to endeavor to obtain authority for a survey by the government in order to determine the practicability of such an undertaking, and a charter for the right of way to build by private enterprise such a work if the survey proves to be practicable. In order to comply with the agreement of the United States as to a mixed commission at Lima for the adjustment of claims, it became necessary to send a commissioner and a secretary to Lima in August last. No appropriation having been made by Congress for this purpose, it is now asked that one be made covering the past and future expenses of the commission.

The good offices of the United States to bring about a peace between Spain and the South American republics, with which she is at war, having been accepted by Spain, Peru, and Chili, a congress has been invited to be held in Washington during the present winter. A grant has been given to Europe, in exclusive right of transit over the territory of Nicaragua, to which Costa Rica has given its consent, which it is alleged, conflicts with vested rights of citizens of the United States. The department of state has now this subject under consideration.

PERU AND THE SPANISH GUNBOATS.

The minister of Peru having made representations that there was a state of war between Peru and Spain, and that Spain was constructing in and near New York 30 gunboats, which might be used by Spain in such a way as to relieve the naval force at Callao, so as to operate against Peru, orders were given to prevent their departure. No further steps have been taken by the representative of the Peruvian government to prevent the departure of these vessels, and I not feeling authorized to detain the property of a nation with which we are at peace, on a mere executive order, the matter has been referred to the courts to decide.

THE ALABAMA CLAIMS.

Toward the close of the last administration a convention was signed at London for the settlement of all outstanding claims between Great Britain and the United States, which failed to receive the advice and consent of the senate to its ratification. The time and the circumstances attending the negotiation of that treaty were favorable to its acceptance by the people of the United States, but its provisions were wholly inadequate for the settlement of the claims which had been sustained by this government as well as by its citizens.

The injuries resulting to the United States by reason of the course adopted by Great Britain during our late civil war in the increased rates of insurance, in the diminution of exports and imports and other obstructions to domestic industry and production, in its effect upon the foreign commerce of the country, in the decrease and transfer to Great Britain of our commercial marine in the prolongation of the war and the increased cost, both in treasure and in the lives of its suppression, could not be adjusted and satisfied as ordinary commercial claims which continually arise between commercial nations; and yet the convention treated them simply as such ordinary claims, from which they differ more widely in the gravity of their character than in the magnitude of their amount. Great even as is that difference not a word was found in treaty and not an inference could be drawn from it to remove the sense of the unfriendliness of the course of Great Britain in our struggle for existence which had so deeply and universally impressed itself upon the people of this country. Believing that a convention thus misconceived in its scope and inadequate in its provisions would not have produced the hearty, cordial settlement of the pending questions which alone is consistent with the relations which I desire to establish between the United States and Great Britain. I regarded the action of the senate in rejecting the treaty to have been wisely taken in.

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