

WASHINGTON CITY.
OCTOBER 17, 1863.

This day, at 3 o'clock, the following MESSAGE was delivered to the two Houses of Congress by Mr. Harvie, Secretary to the President:

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States:

In calling you together, fellow citizens, at an earlier day than was contemplated by the act of the last session of Congress, I have not been insensible to the personal inconveniences necessarily resulting from an unexpected change in your arrangements; but matters of great public concern have rendered this call necessary, and the interests you feel in this will supercede in your minds all private considerations.

Congress witnessed, at their late session, the extraordinary opinions produced in the public mind by the suspension of our right of deposit, at the port of New Orleans, no assignment of another place having been made according to treaty. They were sensible that the continuance of that privation would be more injurious to one nation, than any consequences which could flow from any mode of redress. But reposing just confidence in the good faith of the government whose officer had committed the wrong, friendly and reasonable representations were resorted to, and the right of deposit was restored.

Previous however to this period, we had not been unaware of the danger to which our peace would be perpetually exposed, whilst so important a key to the commerce of the world, and so important a means of our foreign power, was thus being retained under ourselves as to the navigation of other streams, which, arising within our territories, pass through those adjacent. Proposals had therefore been authorized for obtaining, under certain conditions, the sovereignty of New Orleans, and of other possessions in that quarter interesting to our quiet, to such extent as was deemed practicable; and the provisional appropriation of two millions of dollars to be applied and accounted for by the President of the United States, intended as part of the price, was considered as conveying the sanction of Congress to the acquisition proposed. The enlightened government of France saw, with just discernment, the importance to both nations of such liberal arrangements as might best and permanently promote the peace, friendship and interests of both; and the property and sovereignty of all Louisiana, which had been restored to them, on certain conditions, became the property of the United States by instruments bearing date the 30th of April last. When these shall have received the constitutional sanction of the Senate, they will, without delay, be communicated to the Representatives; also, for the exercise of their functions as to these conditions which are within the powers vested by the constitution in Congress. Whilst the property and sovereignty of the Mississippi and its waters secure an independent outlet for the produce of the western States, and an uncontrolled navigation through their whole course, free from collision with other powers, and the dangers to our peace from that source, the fertility of the country, its climate and extent, promise, in due season, important aids to our treasury, an ample provision for our posterity, and a wide spread for the blessings of freedom and equal laws.

With the wisdom of Congress it will rest to take those interior measures which may be necessary for the immediate occupation, and temporary government of the country; for its incorporation into our union; for rendering the change of government a blessing to our newly adopted brethren; for securing to them the rights of conscience and of property; for conforming to the laws which inhabit their occupancy and self-government; for establishing friendly and commercial relations with them, and for ascertaining the geography of the country acquired. Such materials for your information relative to its affairs in general, as the short space of time has permitted me to collect, will be laid before you when the subject shall be in a state for your consideration.

Another important acquisition of territory has also been made, since the last session of Congress. The friendly tribe of Kaskaskia Indians, with which we have never had a difference, reduced, by the wars and wants of savage life, to a few individuals unable to defend themselves against the neighboring tribes, has transferred its country to the United States, reserving only for its members what is sufficient to maintain them, in an agricultural way. The considerations stipulated are, that we shall extend to them our patronage and protection, and give them certain annual aids, in money, in implements of agriculture, and other articles, of their choice. This country, among the most fertile in our limits, extending along the Mississippi from

the mouth of the Illinois to, and up, the Ohio, though not so necessary as a barrier, since the acquisition of the other bank, may yet be well worthy of being laid open to immediate settlement, as its inhabitants may descend with rapidity in support of their country, should future circumstances expose that to foreign enterprise. As the stipulations, in this treaty also, involve matters within the competence of both houses only, it will be laid before Congress so soon as the Senate shall have advised its ratification.

With many of the other Indian tribes, improvements in agriculture and household manufacture, are advancing; and, with all, our peace and friendship are established on grounds much firmer than heretofore. The mutual advantage of our established trading-houses among them and of furnishing them necessaries in exchange for their commodities, at such moderate prices as leave no gain, but cover us from loss, has the most conciliatory and useful effect on them, and it that which will best secure their peace and good will.

The small vessels authorized by Congress, with a view to the Mediterranean service, have been sent into that sea; and the able men employed to command the Triplicate cruisers with their harbors, and supersede the necessity of convoy to our commerce in that quarter. They will sensibly lessen the expenses of that service the ensuing year.

A further knowledge of the ground in the north eastern, and north western angles of the United States has evinced that the boundaries established by the treaty of Paris, between the British territories and ours in those parts, were so imperfectly defined, that they should be susceptible of execution. It has therefore been thought worthy of attention, for preserving and cherishing the harmony and useful intercourse subsisting between the two nations, to have timely and judiciously made such amicable incidents might otherwise render a ground of future misunderstanding. A convention has therefore been entered into, which provides for a practicable demarcation of those limits, to the satisfaction of both parties.

An account of the receipts and expenditures of the year ending the 30th of September last, with the estimates for the service of the ensuing year, will be laid before you by the Secretary of the Treasury, so soon as the receipts of the last quarter shall be returned from the more distant States. It is already ascertained that the amount paid into the treasury, for that year, has been between eleven and twelve millions of dollars, and that the revenue, accrued during the same term, exceeds that counted on, as sufficient for the current expenses, and to extinguish the public debt, within the period heretofore proposed.

The amount of debt paid, for the same year, is about three millions one hundred thousand dollars, exclusive of interest, and making, with the payment of the preceding year, a discharge of more than eight millions and an half of dollars of the principal of that debt, besides the accruing interest; and there remain in the treasury nearly six millions of dollars. Of these eight hundred and eighty thousand have been reserved for payment of the first instalment due, under the British Convention of January 8, 1802, and two millions are, what have been before mentioned, as placed by Congress under the power and accountability of the President, towards the price of New Orleans and other territories acquired, which, remaining untouched, are still applicable to that object; and in diminution of the sum to be funded for it.

Should the acquisition of Louisiana be constitutionally confirmed and carried into effect a sum of nearly thirteen millions of dollars will then be added to our public debt, most of which is payable after fifteen years; before the first term, the present existing debts will all be discharged, by the established operation of the sinking fund. When we contemplate the ordinary, annual, augmentation of impost from increasing population and wealth, the augmentation of the same revenue, by its extension to the new acquisition, and the economies which may still be introduced into our public expenditures, I cannot but hope that Congress, in reviewing their resources will find means to meet the intermediate interest of this additional debt, without recurring to new taxes, and applying to this object only the ordinary progression of our revenue. Its extraordinary increase, in times of foreign war, will be the proper and sufficient fund for any measures of safety or precaution, which that state of things may render necessary in our actual position.

Remittances for the instalments of our foreign debt having been found practicable without loss, it has not been thought expedient to use the power, given by a former act of Congress, of continuing the same, by means of the sale of public lands, or of equal sums of domestic debt, although no difficulty was found in obtaining that accommodation.

The sum of fifty thousand dollars, appropriated by Congress for providing gun-boats, remains unexpended. The favorable and peacelike turn of events on the Mississippi, rendered an immediate execution of that law unnecessary. As the time was desirable, in order that the installation of that element of our force might begin on models the most approved by experience. The same issue of expense dispensed with consent to the appropriation of a million and an half of dollars, contemplated for purposes which were deemed of a more important nature.

We have seen with sincere concern the flames of war lighted up again in Europe, and notions with which we have the most friendly and useful relations, engaged in mutual destruction. As I have regrets the associates in which we are engaged, let us bow with gratitude to that kind Providence, which inspiring with wisdom and moderation, our late legislative councils, wisely placed under the urgency of the greatest wrong, gathered us from distant entering into the present quarrel, and left us only to look on and to pity its ravages. We will be heaviest on those immediately engaged, yet the nations pursuing peace will not be exempt from all evil. In the course of this conflict it is our endeavor as it is our interest and desire, to cultivate the friendship of the belligerent nations by every act of justice and of innocent kindness; to receive their armed vessels, with hospitality from the distresses to which our own interests, the means of annoyance to none; to establish in our harbors, such a police as may maintain law and order; to restrain our citizens from embarking individually in a war in which their country takes no part; to punish severely those persons, citizen or alien, who shall mar the career of our flag, for vessels not entitled to it, infecting their flag with suspicion those of our Americans, and committing us into controversies for the redress of wrongs not our own; to exact from every nation the observance, towards our vessels and citizens, of those principles and practices, which all civilized people acknowledge; to merit the character of a just nation, and maintain that of an independent one, reasserting every consequence to insult and habitual wrong. Congress will consider whether the existing laws enable us efficaciously to maintain this course with our citizens in all places and with others, while within the limits of our jurisdiction; and will give them the new modifications necessary for these objects. Some contraventions of right have already taken place, both within our jurisdictional limits, and on the high seas. The friendly disposition of the governments from whom agents have proceeded, as well as their wisdom and regard for justice, leave us in reasonable expectation; that they will be rectified and prevented in future; and that no act will be countenanced by them which threatens to disturb our friendly intercourse. Some nations, however, from the nations of Europe, and from the political interests which entangle them together, with productions and wants which render our commerce and friendship useful to them, and thence to us, it cannot be the interest of any to assault us, nor ours to disturb them. We should be most unwelcome indeed were we to cast away the singular blessings of the position in which nature has placed us, the opportunity she has endowed us with of pursuing, at a distance from foreign contentions, the paths of industry, peace, and happiness, of cultivating general friendship, and of bringing collisions of interest to the umpirage of reason, rather than of force. How desirable then must it be, in a government like ours, to see its citizens adopt individually the views, to establish, and the conduct which their country should pursue, divesting themselves of those passions and partialities, which tend to lessen friendships, and to embarras and divide the peace, and scenes of Europe. Confident, fellow citizens, that you will only estimate the importance of neutral dispositions, towards the observance of neutral conduct, that you will be sensible how much it is our duty to look on the policy of a neutral nation, with commiseration indeed, but with no other wish than to see it closed. I am persuaded you will cordially cherish these dispositions, in all discussions among yourselves, and in all communications with your constituents. And I anticipate with satisfaction the measures of wisdom, which the great interests now committed to you, will give you an opportunity of providing and executing, with the approval, and of carrying into execution, with the fidelity I owe to my country.

TH. JEFFERSON.

OCTOBER 17, 1863.

Both Houses this day received the following Message. The Senate voted John Jones, Proclaim protempore. The House of Representatives elected Nathan Matthews, Speaker. John Beckley, Clerk.