THE ST. DOMINGO PROJECT.

Ben Wade and His Expedition in This City.

PERSONNEL OF THE COMMISSION.

ITS PROBABLE DEPARTURE TO-DAY.

Secretary Fish's Documents Relative to the Status of Dominica Before the Senate.

THE COMMISSION IN NEW YORK.

The Personnel of the Expedition—Probable Departure This Afternoon.

The St. Domingo Commissioners, with their numerous following of secretaries, interpreters, stenographers and representatives of the press, mustered yesterday in strong force at the Astor House. Ex-Senator Wade and Professor White, accompanied by Secretary A. G. Burton and Assistant Secretary Fred Douglass, arrived early in the morning, and Commissioner Howe later in the day. Secretary Robeson, General Porter, the President's secretary, and Commodore Alden, Chief of the Bureau of Navigation, have also come on from Washington to speed the parting commissioners, and to personally superintend the arrangements on board the Tennessee. On this vessel preparations have been made to convey the three commissioners, the two secretaries, two stenographers and the representatives of the press. General Sigel and Fred Douglass, Jr., will also accompany the expedition.

A meeting of the commissioners was anounced for yesterday afternoon at the Astor House to examine the credentials of the journalists who are to be granted a passage with the expedition. These gentlemen, however, did not come up to time, and it was evening ere the last of them put in an appearance.

As yet it is uncertain whether the expedition can find sufficient accommodation on the Tennessee, and, if necessary, a second vessel-of-war will be detailed for this duty.

No positive method of prosecuting their investigations has yet been decided upon by the Commissioners, nor has even their first destination been as yet finally resolved upon. It is probable that instead of landing at Samana Bay and travelling thence overland to St. Domingo City, as was at first proposed, the commission will go directly to the latter port.

Everything is in readiness on board the Tennessee to receive the Commissioners, who, with their suite and the representatives of the press, will occupy every available space in the cabins, ward room and steerage.

A short trial trip of a couple of hours was had yesterday with a satisfactory result. The ordinary speed of the ship will be about nine knots an hour, which will require about seven days to make the run from New York.

The commission will probably sail this afternoon.

SCIENTIFIC MEN WHO ARE TO ACCOMPANY THE ST. DOMINGO EXPEDITION.

The following are the names of the scientific men who are to accompany the St. Domingo expedition:—Professor William P. Blake, principal mineralogist and geologist, and two assistants—one from Yale and one from Harvard; Dr. Parry, botanist, and an assistant from the Cambridge Scientific School; Professor Newcombe, of Cornell University, as genera naturalist; Professor Ward, of the University of Rochester, as assistant geologist. Mr. George Geddes, formerly president of the New York State Agricultural Society and State Engineer, has been invited to accompany the expedition in the agricultural interest.

THE DOMINICAN DOCUMENTS

Official Papers Submitted to the Senate Relative to the History, Present Status and General Features of the Island.

WASHINGTON, Jan. 16, 1871.

The following is Secretary Fish's letter accompanying the President's message transmitting the documents and correspondence called for by Senator Sumner's resolution:—

TO THE PRESIDENT:—

The Secretary of State, to whom was referred the resolution of the Senate of the 4th instant—"That the President of the United States be requested to communicate to the Senate, if in his opinion not incompatible with the public interest, copies of all papers and correspondence relating to the proposed annexation of the Dominican portion of the island of St. Domingo, or the purchase of any part thereof, including the first and all subsequent instructions to any agent or consul of the United States, with the correspondence of such agent or consul; also any protocol or convention signed by such agent or consul; also an account of the debt and liabilities of the Dominican government, especially its obligations to the neighboring republic of Hayti; also the provisions of the existing constitution of Dominica, so far as the same relate to the sale or transfer of the national domain; also any treaty with Hayti or France by which Dominica is bound or affected; also any communication from the neighboring republic of Hayti or from our Minister there relating to the proposed annexation; also instructions to the commander of our naval squadron in the waters of the island since the commencement of the late negotiations, with the reports and correspondence of such commander; also any information tending to show what European Power, if any, proposed to acquire jurisdiction of any part of the island, and if so, what part; also any information with regard to the position of President Baez, under whom the treaty of annexation was negotiated, and the extent which he has been maintained in power by the presence of United States vessels of war; also any information with regard to the sentiments of the people in Dominica and the report of the pendency there of civil war; also any information with regard to any claim of jurisdiction by the republic of Hayti over the territory of Dominica," has the honor to report to the President:—

The limits of those parts of the island of St. Domingo which were formerly under the dominion of Spain and France respectively were defined with fulness and precision by the treaty between those Powers, signed at Paris on the 30 of June, 1777, a translation of which is hereunto annexed. This boundary has been compared with the line shown by the official map of the island published by the Dominican government, and has been found to correspond with it. A copy of that boundary line, as shown by the official map, is herewith transmitted. By the ninth article of the treaty of peace between them of the 22d of July, 1795, commonly called the Treaty of Basle, Spain ceded to France her territory in and sovereignty over that island, which, however, were restored to Spain by the eighth article of the treaty between the allied Powers of Europe of the 30th of May, 1814. By an ordinance of King Charles X. of France, of the 17th of April, 1820, a translation of which is also hereunto annexed, the independence of the French part of the island was acknowledged upon certain conditions, one of which was that the inhabitants were required to make certain annual payments into the French treasury. These payments were further regulated by formal treaties between France and Hayti, of the 31st October, 1825; the 12th of February, 1838; the 15th of May, 1847, and the 1st of October, 1854. In none of these instruments is any reference made to the Spanish part of the island of St. Domingo, and no public document of any kind can be found which makes the territory or the inhabitants of that region liable for any of the debt to France assumed by the government of Hayti. The independence of the Dominican republic was declared and a constitution for its government was proclaimed on the 1st of December, 1821. On the 19th of April, 1844, that government issued a decree equalizing the treatment to be given to the flags of all nations in its ports. Under date of the 12th of October, 1848, it negatived a treaty of commerce and navigation with France. On the 9th of March, 1850, it concluded a similar treaty with Great Britain. On the 8th of May and the 26th of July, 1852, other similar treaties with France and Denmark were respectively concluded. On the 22d of March, 1854, it concluded a treaty of commerce with Sardinia. On the 18th of February, 1855, the Dominican republic concluded a treaty with, and its independence was formally acknowledged by, Spain. On the 24th of July, 1856, it concluded a treaty of commerce with the Netherlands, and on the 24th of October, 1867, a similar treaty with the United States. On the 22d of February, 1845, that government having applied to this government for recognition, Mr. John Hogan was despatched from this department as a special agent, with instructions to inquire as to the extent of the territory of the republic, as to the character and composition of the population, as to the number and discipline of the troops, as to the people of the country and its division in races, and as to its finances. Mr. Hogan reported that the territories of the republic are those which formerly belonged to Spain; that the population was about 230,000, of whom 40,000 were blacks and over 100,000 were whites, and the other information called for was given in a correspondence and series of tables appended to the report. A copy of the instructions to Mr. Hogan, of his report and of the enclosures in it, are herewith transmitted.

In the following year the subject was again taken up by the administration of Mr. Polk, and under directions of Mr. Bancroft, the then Secretary of the Navy, Lieutenant (now Admiral) D. D. Porter traversed nearly the whole island, from east to west and from north to south, travelling sometimes on foot and sometimes on a mule, and made an elaborate and highly favorable report of the resources of the island and of the character of the population. It is understood that only fragmentary portions of this interesting document remain in the archives of the Navy Department.

During the administration of Mr. Pierce Captain (afterwards Major General) George B. McClellan was sent by the War Department to survey the Bay and Peninsula of Samana, and a valuable report was made by him, a copy of which is herewith transmitted. The agent of his department at that time wrote with reference to this survey:—

Captain McClellan wrote me on the 3d without informing me that the position selected for a coal depot will require at least two square miles of land, and, perhaps, somewhat more. In pursuance of instructions I will endeavor to obtain these concessions.

Efforts were also made under the administration of Mr. Pierce to negotiae a general treaty with that republic, which apparently did not result to the satisfaction of this department.

On the 16th of January, 1856, Mr. Elliott, the commercial agent at St. Domingo, wrote to the department:—

I have this day received word from President Santana, who has been all the time with the army, that he will be here in a few days, when the treaty shall be immediately attended to and concluded as soon as possible. They desire to make a separate convention in regard to Samana when the country is more tranquil.

On the 19th of July following the same officer wrote:—

The Spanish Charge and Consul General arrived here about the end of December last, and from the very day of his arrival he began speaking to all the members of this government of the extreme injury the American treaty, if made, would cause to Spain, and advised the Executive, in all his interviews, to reject the same resolutely and at all peril. After the treaty was signed he proposed to this government that they should withdraw it or refuse to ratify its exchange, and in order to accomplish this he offered a Spanish protectorate, a quantity of troops and a good navy. Besides he would assume for all the consequences that might occur in making opposition to the United States. This was also refused. He then declared that the Spanish government would infinitely prefer securing this for the Haytiens than for it to be under any American influence.

On the 10th of September following the same officer wrote to the department that on the 5th of the last July—

The consuls of Spain, England and France held a secret interview with the Dominican Cabinet, the object of which was to oblige the withdrawal of the American treaty, threatening them in case of refusal to put in execution threats already made, declaring that it never would be permitted for the people of the United States to have a foothold in the Dominican republic.

On the same day he wrote:—

I am authorized to offer to the United States government not only any location in the Bay of Samana for their purposes, but the coal mines in that harbor, and any other commercial advantages they require.

On the 30th of October following the Acting Commercial Agent, Mr. Pereira, notified the department of a change in the government unfriendly to the United States, and on the 22d of November he wrote that the common town cry was, "Down with the Yankees!" and that he and his family owed their protection from violence to the unsolicited interference of a commander of a British man-of-war.

The government of Spain, which fell with the revolution of 1868 at Madrid, following the example of the French in Mexico, took advantage of the late internal dissensions and conflicts in the United States, to endeavor to repossess the portion of the island of St. Domingo referred to in the resolution. The political and military objects aimed at in this effort were too palpable to need extended comment. One side of the Mona channel being already under Spanish rule, the possession of the Bay of Samana would give the absolute control of the main entrance to the Caribbean Sea, with the political and military consequences that would flow from that fact. After sacrificing many thousand lives in endeavoring to force monarchical institutions upon a people who, as represented by the consular officer of the United States, were of the opinion that America should be ruled by Americans, Spain abandoned the contest about the month of August, 1865. A provisional government was established, and a call was made for the election of delegates to a convention for the purpose of framing a constitution. A strong feeling in favor of a more intimate connection with this country found immediate expression in the consular correspondence. Under date of the 14th of August, 1865, the consular officer of the United States wrote to this department that "in the month of August, 1854, our government sent here the United States flagship Columbia, Commodore Newton, with General George B. McClellan and other engineers, who surveyed the Bay of Samana for the purpose of obtaining a naval station in that first of bays in the Antilles. If such should still be the mind of our government, I am sure it could be obtained."

Before the convention to frame a new constitution met the provisional government was superseded by what the consular officer styled "a counter revolution," and General José Maria Cabral was by proclamation announced as the "Protector of the Republic." (Despatch of September 25, 1865.) In the same paper the consular officer says:—"Indeed, the influence of our glorious republic is well nigh omnipotent here."

On the 25th of the same September the convention for framing a constitution met, eight days having been spent in the election of its members. On the 27th of October following General Cabral resigned his position as "Protector of the Nation," and the convention that followed the departure of the Spaniards appears to have been closed by the election to the Presidency of General Baez, as the representative of the idea of universal suffrage, and by the adoption of a constitution in December, which was on the subsequent April (1866) set aside, and a former constitution, adopted in 1854, substituted in its place. The consular officer styles the proceedings with which this was done as "a farce." The third article of the first title of this constitution is probably the one referred to in the resolution of the Senate:—"The territory of the republic is and shall remain inalienable."

General Baez appears to have acted as President until the following August (1866) when three military chiefs—Pimental, Garcia and Luperon—calling themselves the "Triumvirate of the Republic," forcibly drove him from power, and issued a decree for the election of a president by a direct, universal, free and spontaneous vote, to be held during three days of the current month. It will be observed that this election was called and held in direct violation of the provisions of the constitution of 1854, which provides for an electoral college to be chosen by limited suffrage. The vote polled was very small, and General Cabral was returned with great unanimity. (Despatch of September 9, 1866.)

Mr. Somers Smith, who had just been appointed commercial agent, reports that he felt sanguine that any arrangement that might be desirable could be effected advantageously. The new government lost no time in conveying to this government its willingness to part with some of its possessions on the Bay of Samana. The manner in which this ultimatum was made, and the steps which were taken by this government, cannot be better described than in the language of my predecessor, Mr. Seward:—

On the 8th of November, 1866, Senor Jose G. Garcia, Secretary of State in charge of foreign relations of the Dominican republic, addressed a "very confidential" letter to the Secretary of State of the United States. In that letter Senor Garcia inquired of the undersigned whether, in view of the deplorable condition to which the Dominican republic had been reduced, in consequence of the unequal contest which it had maintained during two years with the Spanish Monarch, the United States would be disposed to advance to that republic a million of dollars, in the character of a loan, on just, equitable and reasonable conditions. Senor Garcia expressed a desire to learn also whether, in view of the fact that the United States would be disposed to give to the Dominican republic, on credit, a number of pieces of heavy artillery sufficient to meet the necessities she had for them, because all that she had were broken up in her fortifications before the late recent Spanish war. Senor Garcia solicited a confidential reply. Senor Garcia's letter was accompanied by a despatch of the same date from John Somers Smith, Esq., United States Commercial Agent at St. Domingo, to the Secretary of State. Mr. Smith stated in that despatch that he had been requested by the Dominican government to address the undersigned on the subject of such a loan as has been before mentioned. Mr. Smith stated that the necessities of the Dominican republic impelled it to obtain a loan from some quarter, and it addressed the United States in preference to European Powers. Mr. Smith stated the nature of the financial embarrassments of the Dominican republic, and he also set forth its condition in regard to its debts and its revenues. He stated that the Dominican government was desirous of purchasing certain munitions of war and a small steam propeller for packet or other service. Mr. Smith further stated that the Dominican government is very liberal in granting privileges to parties desiring to explore and work the numerous and valuable mines with which the country abounds, and that a great revival of business was anticipated to take place soon from the vast resources of that favored country, so rich in mines and valuable woods, and a soil unsurpassed in the West Indies, and that it was confidently expected that the revenue would soon be adequate to meet all expenditures in connection with the loan for which they applied; that he (Mr. Smith) had been authorized to offer to the United States the use of the coal mines of Samana and certain keys called Lavantado and Barenero, at the mouth of the Bay of Samana, for such purposes and for such time as might be agreed upon, if satisfactory arrangements could be concluded. Mr. Smith represented that the possession of Lavantado and Barenero would be of great advantage as a naval station, commanding as it does the transit from Europe to the Gulf of Mexico through the Mona passage. Mr. Smith stated that during the then recent Spanish annexation the Spanish marine used Lavantado as their headquarters and Barenero was a coal depot; that the adjacent republic of Hayti was menaced with European war, while war was actually being carried on between Spain and the South American republics of the Pacific, and that the Dominican government was apprehensive that if that war should extend into the waters of the Caribbean Sea Spain might in that event seize again on her old position at Samana. In conclusion, Mr. Smith added that he was desired to request of the government of the United States that in the event of their declining to accede to the proposition for the loan it would consider as confidential the offer of that government to lease the islands in the Bay of Samana, as its publication might be prejudicial to the Dominican republic in her relations with other Powers.

The United States have long desired, for naval, political and commercial reasons, to obtain a station in the West Indies. The proposition which the Dominican government submitted furnished grounds to expect that those desired advantages might be secured by the United States through some arrangement with the Dominican republic, which afford a moral guarantee of its independence and a harbinger of prosperity and welfare of the Dominican republic. Induced by these considerations the Assistant Secretary of State, attended by Rear Admiral Porter, United States Navy, on the 6th of January, 1867, proceeded to the city of St. Domingo, invested with ample power to conclude, subject to ratification by the Senate of the United States, a convention with the Dominican republic for the cession or lease of the Peninsula and Bay of Samana, provided that, in the judgment of the Assistant Secretary, with the concurrence of the Admiral, that peninsula should be found to offer the advantages which were sought. The Assistant Secretary was authorized to offer to the Dominican government $5,000,000, payable one-half in cash and the other half in arms and munitions of war, as a consideration for the proposed cession. He was instructed to require a full sovereignty of the United States over the territory to be ceded. He was authorized to pay part of the consideration money at once, if the cession should be made and ratified by the government of the Dominican republic. The Assistant Secretary arrived at St. Domingo on the 18th of January, 1867. He was cordially received, and the government of the Dominican republic entered very frankly upon a discussion of the affair with which he was charged. Conferences were continued so long as they promised any favorable result.

On the 22d of January, 1867, the Assistant Secretary of State transmitted a final report. He stated that the Dominican government expressed a willingness, and even a desire, to make some arrangement with the United States in regard to Samana which would provide us with a suitable naval harbor and coaling station; that it could not consent to an absolute sale of territory without violating an express provision of the constitution of the Dominican republic just adopted, and that it would be inconvenient to await amendments to the constitution. The Dominican government, therefore, proposed a lease of the Cayes Lavantado, which command the entrance of the Bay of Samana, and the use of the adjacent waters, together with certain specified privileges on the mainland of the peninsula. This measure would not answer the purpose of the United States. The Assistant Secretary, therefore, declined to entertain that proposition, and stated frankly that we wanted no place at all unless it was one which we should have absolute control over while we owned it, one which was large enough for our use, and one which we could hold, fortify and maintain against all enemies. The Assistant Secretary reported as the result of all the discussions that it was impracticable to conclude any arrangement at that time with the Dominican republic on the basis of the instructions of the department; that they offered to concede only such privileges as it needs no treaty to obtain in any part of the civilized world—namely, space for yards, wharves, buildings, &c., to be paid for by our money, but not to be under our flag or protected by our guns. The Assistant Secretary concluded that the project of selling or leasing the Peninsula of Samana to the United States was one which commended itself to the better judgment and sagacity of the leading minds of the Dominican republic; that they saw in it a relief from dangers and misfortunes that then menaced them, and that they fully comprehended that such a transfer on such terms as the United States could offer would be quite as advantageous to the Dominicans as it would be to the United States; that they were, nevertheless, reluctant to risk the responsibility of so bold a step, fearing the public sentiment or the popular prejudice of the Dominican people; that the Spanish invasion and seizure of Samana had evoked a distrust of foreign Powers and a dread of foreign designs for aggrandizement; that time and reason would perhaps show how unfounded these prejudices were as regarded the United States, the one Power whose presence and friendship would save them from the very evils which they dreaded, and lead peace and prosperity to a republic hitherto the theatre of so many unhappy discords.

On receiving this report the President of the United States was unwilling to relinquish his desire that the very liberal propositions which the Assistant Secretary had made, and which had been disallowed by the Dominican government, might yet, on reconsideration, be accepted. The President, therefore, on the 20th of February, 1867, transmitted a full power to J. Somers Smith, Esq., Commercial Agent of the United States at St. Domingo, authorizing him to conclude a convention for the cession of the territory and waters in question, should he find it practicable, upon the same basis with those submitted by the Assistant Secretary. No progress having been made by Mr. Smith, the power with which he was invested was revoked on the 8th of May, 1867.

Friendly sentiments concerning the delicacy of the subject induced the Secretary of State to direct that no publicity should be given to these proceedings, and that no trace of them should be left on the records of the Commercial or Consular Agent of the United States in St. Domingo.

At subsequent periods during 1867 the Dominican government was understood to have entered into a formal treaty with the republic of Hayti, by which those two Powers (which divide the Island of St. Domingo between them) mutually stipulated that neither would in any case alienate any portion of its territories, and a proclamation was issued by the President of the Dominican republic announcing that he had not made, and should not make, any session of the Bay or Peninsula of Samana to the United States or to any other Power. The undersigned now learns with pleasure that the treaty thus referred to was not concluded. It appears that the government of President Cabral was unwilling to rest on the failure of the negotiations with the Assistant Secretary of State. Mr. Somers Smith wrote the department confidentially on the 24th of November, 1867, that "an informal proposal had been made to him for a lease of Samana," to which Mr. Seward replied on the 15th of December, 1867, that "it would be inconsistent with the self-respect of this government to entertain the question which Mr. Pinllo had raised without being first furnished with authentic evidence of powers of negotiation conferred upon him by the government of the Dominican republic." Upon the receipt of this emphatic letter Mr. Pujol was sent to Washington by General Cabral, with full powers, and Mr. Somers Smith was confidentially informed that "the President, in his refusal to cede territory, had acted for the dignity and honor of his country; but that affairs had become desperate and might terminate in complete anarchy. It therefore became necessary to yield to the situation, and the President had been ordered by twelve of the leading generals in Ciboa at once to make a proposal to the United States for the lease of Samana."

These negotiations with the Cabral government, which promised to be successful, were terminated abruptly on the 6th of the following March (1868), by the downfall of the administration of General Cabral, and the reinstatement of General Baez as President of the republic, by means of a revolution. It would seem that this failure had caused apprehensions in some minds lest some European Power should avail itself of the opportunity which the United States was, apparently, letting slip from its grasp. The archives of this department show inquiries on that point.

On the 1st of June, 1868, the following letter appears to have been received at the department, addressed to the "Hon. William H. Seward, Department of State:"—

"SENATE CHAMBER, May 30.

"DEAR SIR—If you have any information with regard to any movement on the part of the North German Confederation to obtain a naval station in the West Indies, I should be obliged to you to communicate it to me. Faithfully yours,

"CHARLES SUMNER."

The answer to this letter is not found on the files of the department. It is to be presumed, however, that efforts in that direction at that time by European governments were unsuccessful. The new government of St. Domingo reopened negotiations with the United States, and on the 9th day of December, 1869, Mr. Somers Smith wrote the Department:—

"I have had repeated interviews for the past fortnight with President Baez. General Luperon has protested against any kind of arrangement between the United States and the Dominican republic, and has written to President Salnave saying that it was necessary to forbid all negotiations, adding that it was requisite to protect the negroes, the only caste that numerically governs the island. Salnave refused to agree with him, and has sent to Mr. Baez the communication of General Luperon. General Pimental has likewise protested. The only true government that possesses power and popularity, and wishes to be under the protection of the United States, is that of Mr. Baez."

And again, on the 16th of December, 1869, Mr. Somers Smith wrote to the Department that since his "despatch of the previous day Mr. Delmonte had called on me (him) at the special instance of the President to inform me (him) that he (Mr. Baez) addressed letters to the different authorities throughout the republic on the question of seeking the protection of the United States, and has received replies from all quarters affirming that such a measure is most highly approved of and is very popular in all parts of the country."

Again, on the 19th of December, 1869, the same officer wrote:—"Mr. Baez is well aware that the Congress of the United States may not be inclined to bring about the annexation of any State or country by an act of war, or what might be construed as conquest, but only by the free and general consent of the people expressed in a constitutional manner. The government of the Dominican republic is prepared to obtain the national declaration by the common vote or by acclamation, or in any form that our government may indicate as satisfactory."

Such was the condition of these negotiations when the administration of Mr. Johnson ceased.

A mass of correspondence in the archives of this department, from a variety of sources, much of which was unprejudiced and some of which may have been biassed by prejudice or interest, appeared to demonstrate the following points:—

First—That the Spanish portion of the island of St. Domingo was thinly populated. The estimates varied from 150,000 to 200,000 persons. Those who would appear to have the best opportunities for correct information fixed the number at less than 200,000.

Second—That the soil of that part of the island was rich, and capable of a productive power beyond any corresponding extent of the Island of Cuba.

Third—That its actual production was greatly diminished by the disturbed state of its civil and political society, caused partly by the Spanish invasion, partly by the character of the population and largely by the aggressive policy of the neighboring republic of Hayti.

Fourth—That all parties, with equal unanimity, sought refuge from these disturbances in a more intimate connection with the United States, which was regarded as the natural protector of republican institutions in the Western Hemisphere.

Fifth—That, to this end, all desired to lease the Bay and Peninsula of Samana to the United States for a naval station as a first step toward ultimate annexation.

Sixth—That the Bay of Samana was the key to the Mona Channel, which was the "Gate to the Caribbean Sea and the Isthmus of Panama."

The policy which led several previous administrations to entertain the negotiations which have been referred to was regarded as too well settled by a practice of nearly seventy years to be then questioned. It was also supposed, in the striking language of a then recent speech in the Senate on the acquisition of Alaska, that "one city can be nothing less than the North American Continent, with its gates on all the surrounding seas." Nevertheless, it was thought best not to act without further information derived through accurate and trustworthy sources, of which the administration had actual knowledge. On the 24 day of June, 1869, Mr. Benjamin S. Hunt, of Philadelphia, a gentleman peculiarly well qualified for the mission, was instructed as follows:—

"The President deeming it advisable to employ a special agent to obtain information in regard to the Dominican republic, selected you for that purpose. The points to which your inquiries will be directed are—the population of that republic in towns in the country on the north and south coasts and in the interior respectively; the number of whites, of pure Africans, of mulattoes, of other mixtures, of the African and Caucasian races, of Indians and of the crosses between them and Africans respectively. You will also inquire and report upon the soils of the country and their production in each locality, as to the timber, dyewoods and minerals, and as to whether any mines are worked and the extent and value of their proceeds. You will likewise endeavor to obtain full and accurate information in regard to the position of the government and people of that republic towards the United States; the character of the government; whether it be military or civil; whether it be stable or liable to be overthrown. It is also desirable to know what the revenues of that country may be and whence derived and the tonnage to be classified, so as to show the proportion of its foreign trade under its own flag and under those of other countries. Similar returns in regard to the coasting trade would be acceptable. You will also ascertain what the debt, foreign and domestic, of that country may be; how long it may have to run and where debt may be held. Inquiry should also be made as to whether any other foreign Power may be seeking to obtain possession of any other point of that country. Generally any information tending to illustrate the condition and resources of that republic and the character and influence of those charged with its destinies would be acceptable."

Mr. Hunt accepted the appointment, and was making preparations for his departure, when he was attacked by a serious illness which compelled him to resign his appointment. On the 13th of July Brevet Brigadier General Babcock, who was employed in the Executive Office, and who enjoyed the full confidence of the government, was, in the place of Mr. Hunt, instructed to proceed to St. Domingo on the same mission, and sailed from New York about four days after receiving his instructions. The instructions previously given to Mr. Hunt were enlarged by directing an inquiry into the issues of paper money and as to the supposed views of foreign Powers towards that country. They may be found in Senate Report No. 234, second section, Thirty-first Congress, page 183, and also upon the third page of the correspondence confidentially communicated to the Senate, hereinafter referred to, which is herewith transmitted. The manner in which General Babcock executed those instructions has been minutely detailed by him in his examination before the committee of the Senate, which is reported to the Senate in the same document to which the report of the Secretary of State respectfully refers. Upon his return to Washington General Babcock made a favorable verbal report, fully confirming the information previously in the possession of the department as to the population of the island, the salubrity of the climate, the wealth of the soil and the disposition of the people and government towards annexation, and he presented, as a response to his instructions, the following documents:—

First—The paper dated September 4, 1869, to be found on the 186th page of the Senate Report, already referred to, in which were stated the terms upon which the territory of the republic could be annexed to the United States.

Second—A contract or treaty with Harlmont & Co., of London, which may be found on the tenth page of the printed copy of a letter from the Secretary of State to the chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, which was confidentially communicated to the Senate by the chairman on the 24th of March last.

Third—The prospectus of that loan, which is to be found on the fourteenth page of that copy.

Fourth—The statement of the "Dominican debt," to be found on the fifteenth page of that copy.

Fifth—The official statement of the Dominican concession, which is to be found on the sixteenth page of that copy.

No other statement of the grants and concessions made by that republic has been returned to this department, except the statement shown on the twenty-first and twenty-second pages of said copy, and the said Secretary of State does not know of any other.

Sixth—A statement of the "national properties," to be found on the seventeenth page of said copy.

Seventh—A statement of the population of the republic, to be found on the seventeenth page of said copy.

A copy of these papers thus confidentially communicated is herewith transmitted, in compliance with the resolution of the Senate.

The results of General Babcock's examination were deemed favorable to the maintenance of the American policy. He was, therefore, directed to return to St. Domingo, in order to aid Mr. Raymond H. Perry, the Commercial Agent of the United States, to negotiate for the annexation of the whole territory of the republic to the United States, and, as an alternative proposition, for a lease of the peninsula and Bay of Samana to the United States. A treaty for the examination of the territories of the republic and a convention for the lease of the bay and peninsula of Samana were accordingly concluded. Copies of these documents are herewith transmitted in compliance with the resolution. The treaty did not receive the assent of the Senate. The convention is still pending before that body. The terms of the treaty require that a popular vote should be taken upon the question of annexation. The almost unanimous affirmative vote, the transcripts of which are in the Department of State, show it to have been of a spontaneous character. Mr. Perry bears repeated testimony, justifying the opinion alike of the friends of General Cabral and of the friends of General Baez—in other words, of all the political leaders of the republic—that the whole people desire annexation. So much of the correspondence of Mr. Raymond H. Perry, the agent who signed the treaty and convention on the part of the United States, as is not printed in the Senate report and relates to the information called for by the Senate resolution is herewith transmitted.

Some irreconcilable discrepancies will be observed in this correspondence. The communication from the Secretary of State to Mr. Perry, which will be found upon the 26th page of said report, comments upon the false information which he said had been communicated to the department and upon his disregard of instructions. It is evident that nearly all parties in St. Domingo were favorable to annexation; but there appears to have been a hostility to the form in which it was to be consummated, growing out of the repudiation by the Baez government of the grant of salt mines to one David Hatch, originally made by the Spaniards when they attempted to reassume their old dominion during the rebellion in the South, and confirmed by Cabral during the few days that he held power. After the retirement of Spain it was claimed that Mr. Hatch was a naturalized Spanish subject.

Having thus rapidly conveyed the negotiations between the two governments, extending over a period of twenty-five years, the Secretary of State is enabled to answer more intelligently the questions submitted to him by the President:—

First—He is asked for copies of all papers and correspondence relating to the proposed annexation of the Dominican portion of the island of St. Domingo, or the purchase of any part thereof, including the first and all subsequent instructions to any agent or consul of the United States, with the correspondence of such agent or consul. In reply to this he has the honor to refer to the instructions of Mr. Hogan, already noticed, and his report, with its enclosures; to extracts from and references to the correspondence with the commercial agent at Samana, already made in this report; to the correspondence of this department with Mr. Raymond H. Perry, in the Senate Report, already referred to; to the extracts of the correspondence of that office, which are herewith transmitted, and to the copy, herewith transmitted, of the confidential correspondence already alluded to.

Second—Any procotol or convention signed by such agent or consul. For the procotol signed by General Babcock the Secretary of State refers to the Senate report already referred to. For the convention he refers to the said confidential correspondence herewith transmitted.

Third—Also an account of the debt and liabilities of the Dominican government, especially its obligations to the neighboring republic of Hayti. The Secretary of State respectfully refers to the said confidential correspondence, herewith enclosed, for the latest and most accurate account of the debt and liabilities of the Dominican government in the possession of this department, and he has no knowledge of any obligation which it is under to the neighboring republic of Hayti, unless such obligation is shown in the papers contained therein.

Fourth—Also the provisions of the existing constitution of Dominica, so far as the same relate to the sale or transfer of the national domain. It is not possible for the Secretary of State to determine from the archives of this department which constitution is now in force in the republic. All parties alike have seemed to seek annexation to the United States, as the surest hope for the future of the republic. The Secretary of State cannot decide whether the clause already quoted from the constitution of 1854 is now in force. It may be that all parties regard it as inapplicable to the fundamental change in the political character of the government, which, like annexation to the United States, changes the relations of the national sovereignty without alienating the national domain, or it may be that it is now in force. It is clear that it is not recognized by the friends of Cabral or of Baez as an impediment to annexation to the United States. The Department of State is in the possession of official information of a secret and confidential character fully confirming this statement, which it is understood that the President has transmitted confidentially to the Senate.

Fifth—Any treaty with Hayti or France by which Dominica is bound or affected. The Secretary of State has the honor, in reply to this, to refer to the translation of the treaty of boundary made in the year 1777 between France and Spain for determining the boundary between their respective possessions on the island of St. Domingo, and together with this to a map of the island showing the position of this boundary to be the line now claimed by the Dominican republic, also the ordinance of the King of France, dated April 12, 1825, herewith transmitted.

Sixth—Any communication from the neighboring republic of Hayti or from our Minister there relating to the proposed annexation. The Secretary of State has the honor to transmit herewith a copy of a despatch from the United States Minister at Hayti, dated February 8, 1869, with its enclosures; also the copy of a note from the Minister of Hayti at Washington, received by the Secretary of State a few hours after the introduction into the Senate of the resolution herewith answered and a copy of the reply thereto. Although this correspondence, which is the only correspondence on the subject, did not reach the Secretary of State until after the resolution was introduced into Senate, it is supposed to be the correspondence called for by the resolution.

Seventh—Instructions to the commanders of our naval squadrons in the waters of the island since the commencement of the late negotiations with that republic and correspondence of such commanders. No such instructions are to be found in the archives of this department.

Eighth—My information tending to show what European Power, if any, proposes to acquire jurisdiction of any part of the island, and if so, what part. Information of this character is usually in a form that cannot be properly made the subject of a public official communication. The Secretary of State respectfully refers to the papers herewith transmitted, including that of Mr. Hogan's report of the late attempted occupation by Spain, to the correspondence of Mr. Elliot and other Consular officers of the United States, herein before quoted, to the above recited letter from the honorable chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, to the history of the relations of the leading monarchies of Europe to this Continent, and to the repeated avowals of such purposes and designs in the public press to show that such an acquisition of jurisdiction was formerly contemplated, has been actually attempted during the period covered by the negotiations above narrated, and is supposed to have been within the contemplation of some European Power within a quite recent period.

Ninth—Any information with regard to the position of President Baez, under whom the treaty of annexation was negotiated, and the extent to which he has been maintained in power by the presence of United States vessels of war. On the former point the Secretary of State has the honor to state that all the correspondence in the archives of the department tends to show that should President Baez fail in the effort to secure the annexation to the United States the popular disappointment may find vent in another revolution. On the latter point he refers to the correspondence of Mr. Raymond H. Perry, transmitted herewith, which tends to show that the people of the city of St. Domingo were dissatisfied with the administration of General Baez, because more energy was not shown in taking the vote on the question of annexation, and that the presence of a United States man-of-war in the port was supposed to have a peaceful influence.

Tenth—Any information with regard to the sentiments of the people of Dominica and the reported pendency there of civil war. The Secretary of State has the honor to state that, except as herein before set forth, he has no such information.

Eleventh—Any information with regard to any claim of jurisdiction by the republic of Hayti over the territory of Dominica. The Secretary of State respectfully refers to the treaty of boundary of 1777 and to the correspondence between the Minister of Hayti and this department for the reply to this inquiry.

Respectfully submitted. HAMILTON FISH.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE, Jan. 16, 1871.

THE DEBT OF ST. DOMINGO.

[From the Cincinnati Gazette, Ja n. 14.]

St. Domingo has for half a century been plundered and pawned in succession by the chiefs of factions as they gained the temporary control, just as the chief who is now sustained in the constructive control of the government by our navy is trying to realize on the remains by a sale to our President. The statement is made in the legislative deliberations, without denial, that her debt is ten millions, and that there are other grants for which public property is pledged, which amount to three or four millions more. The fact is shoved aside by the assumption that our government will not be liable for it. Without doubt the President, whose former occupation has not led him to much thought upon public law, honestly supposes that the sum which he agrees to pay in the treaty of annexation is the limit to the liabilities the national government will assume; but a little reflection will show the contrary.

By annexation the United States will take possession of all the customs revenue of St. Domingo, and will enforce there our excises upon tobacco, spirits, beer, the stamp tax, tax on sales, income tax, &c. To take possession of her sources of revenue and leave her to pay the debt she had incurred upon those revenues would be equivalent to confiscation. To take possession of her revenues from customs and repudiate the debt she had contracted upon them would be not only to cheat the creditor, but to rob the inhabitants. Of course, we shall not turn thieves in that way, but shall assume her debt, which, upon this certainty, will swell to its utmost expansion.

Secondly—By the law of nations the Power which acquires foreign territory becomes liable for its debt. If this government acquires St. Domingo it will not attempt to repudiate what public law as well as common honesty make its obligations.

Thirdly—If we could gain St. Domingo and reject its debt we would not desire to gain a State dishonored by repudiation or bankruptcy.

Fourthly—If we could acquire St. Domingo and leave the debt resting only on the inhabitants, still it would be a debt in most inordinate proportion to their means, and which would be a great oppression on all their future industry and on all adventurers who go there.

But it is so plain that after reflection no public man who has any character to lose will attempt to deny it, that if this government annexes St. Domingo it will be liable for its debt, and will at once add from $10,000,000 to $15,000,000 to our public debt, for that which did not so yield to the St. Domingo chiefs one-half of the face of the obligation.

This is not an insuperable objection—it is merely a consideration in calculating the value of the acquisition; and this an objection to the use of dishonest methods and repudiating arguments to promote this purchase.

THE PENNSYLVANIA REPUBLICANS.

Attempt to Harmonize the Party—The President on a Pilgrimage to Philadelphia—Propitiating the Disaffected with a Cabinet Appointment.

PHILADELPHIA, Jan. 16, 1871.

President Grant will be here on Wednesday next. Borie, Welch, Stuart and others of the Union League have induced Grant to come here personally to reconcile the differences in the republican party in Pennsylvania by appointing a Cabinet officer from this State. While the Grant republicans recognize the peril in which Grant stands as regards re-election, they are unable to induce the disaffected ones to work with them.

Welch, of Indian bureau fame, had a long interview this morning with a leading republican, whose influence Grant is eager to secure, but retired without accomplishing his object.

Carroll Brewster is a prominent candidate for the Attorney Generalship. His claims will be canvassed when Grant arrives.

THE MASSACHUSETTS SENATORSHIP.

Henry Wilson to be Re-elected.

BOSTON, Jan. 16, 1871.

At the caucus of the republican members of the Legislature this afternoon Henry Wilson was declared the nominee for United States Senator by a vote of 108 to 22 for