WASHINGTON.

Opening of the Short Session of Congress.

Reception of the President's Message.

The American Claims Against the Spanish Government.

Dilatory Negotiations Censured by Congressmen.

CAUCUS OF REPUBLICAN SENATORS.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 7, 1874.

Opening Day in Congress—A Manœuvre to Repeal the "Gag Law" Causes Excitement.

Both houses adjourned almost immediately after the reading of the Message. Before the House adjourned Mr. Phelps, of New Jersey, managed adroitly to get in his bill to amend the Frelinghuysen "Gag law." As soon as it was discovered that his amendment would practically repeal the "Gag law," the House became very lively. General Butler insisted on the regular order, and Mr. George F. Hoar objected also. The bill will come up under a suspension of the rules next Monday, and will probably pass.

Comments on the President's Message by Representatives and Senators of Both Parties—Apathy of Feeling Shown.

The Message was heard in both Houses with singular apathy. There seemed no curiosity to hear the President's recommendations, and conversation this afternoon and evening with a number of members and Senators shows that they have the misfortune to be considered of no public importance. The part relating to the Southern difficulties met with the most appreciation, but some republicans saw in this and in the menace toward Spain a new plan for a third term. Even the friends of contraction and resumption were not greatly pleased with the President's financial ideas, thinking them crude and impracticable or vague. The Message surprised many by its very moderate tone and entire absence of scolding or recrimination. Others complained that it has no vital energy and presents no rallying point for the party. It was remarked that it leaves the party where it was before, and has no power to gather around it the disorganized materials which the announcement of a broad, bold and positive policy might have had. "An administration party which does not believe in the administration is in a bad way," said one member. The democrats had very little to say. They evidently think that the Message does them no harm. It was remarked that the Message contained two errors; the President states the debt of the District of Columbia at a little less than $14,000,000, whereas the report of the Board of Audit, made public this evening, states it at a little less than twenty millions, or at over seventeen millions, deducting unadjusted claims, which, however, the Board says, will have to be allowed. The other error is probably an oversight. The President says that at the last session of Congress a very considerable reduction was made in the rates of taxation and the number of articles taxed. But there was no change made in the taxes at the last session.

The Nomination of Postmaster General Sent to the Senate.

The President sent to the Senate to-day only one nomination, namely, that of Marshall Jewell, of Connecticut, to be Postmaster General.

Caucus of the Republican Senators on Committees.

After the adjournment of the Senate the republican Senators held a brief caucus and appointed Messrs. Morrill, of Maine, Sargent, Scott, Oglesby and Pease as a committee to report to-morrow to an adjourned meeting a revised list of Senate committees. No important changes are anticipated in the present membership.

Claims of Our Government Against Spain—The Indemnity Demanded—Congressmen Impatient at the Delay of Settlement.

Negotiations for a money indemnity for the massacre of Americans at Santiago de Cuba have been going on for a long time, without much headway being made. Our government will not accept less than $25,000 per man, white or colored, and a larger sum for the officers. On this basis negotiations are proceeding. Spain does not deny her responsibility, but her actions are vexatiously dilatory. There is increasing impatience with the conduct of Spain, and in the House to-day some disappointment was expressed by members that the President had not made more positive recommendations on the Cuban question. A return will be asked for in the House to show how much our commerce with Cuba has suffered during the period of disorder.

A Democratic Social-Political Reunion.

Representative Fernando Wood has issued invitations to meet the democratic and conservative members of the Senate and House of Representatives, socially, at his residence, on Thursday evening next, in congratulation of the recent elections. The card is headed, "Justice is slow but sure."

Proposed New System of Government for the District of Columbia.

The new government proposed for the District of Columbia is remarkable in several respects. It creates a department of the District of Columbia as part of the federal government, and places almost the whole function of government in the hands of three regents to be appointed by the President. The regents appoint almost all the heads of boards and other officers, and make all the ordinances or local laws. The heads of the Board of Education and school trustees are to be elected, and voters must, after 1876, be able to read and write, and must send their children to school. Congress is to authorize all expenditures.

Statement by the Commissioners.

The report of the Commissioners for the District of Columbia to the President gives the receipts from all sources to the 1st of December at $3,086,188, and the total expenditures at $2,917,329, leaving a balance of $168,859, which, added to the estimated receipts to June 30, of $1,535,600, will make a total of $1,704,459. The total estimated expenditures to June 30 are $1,572,066, giving an estimated balance at that time of $132,892. They say, from their showing, that the actual debt of the District, less the assets, is $13,994,613; but the aggregate sum thus stated includes something more than the funded debt chargeable exclusively to the District of Columbia. By a former act of Congress part of the expenses which are included in the debt are to be borne by the general government. The full amount of claims outstanding and still unadjusted is $3,147,787.

Proposed Treaty with the Hawaiian Islands.

Hawaiian envoys, who are here seeking to negotiate a reciprocity treaty with our government, are at work upon the terms and means, in order to have a project of the treaty ready for presentation after the Christmas holidays. They do not favor a cession of Pearl River.

Richard Schell as the Advocate of Railroad Subsidies.

The Hon. Richard Schell openly said to-day that he came to Congress as a representative of New York to vote for every railroad subsidy which is brought forward. He thinks the country ought to be restored to a prosperous condition, that capital ought to be able to employ labor, and that it would be a good thing to spend $800,000,000 to that end.

PROCEEDINGS OF CONGRESS.

SENATE.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 7, 1874.

The Senate was called to order promptly at noon by Vice President WILSON.

The Rev. Dr. Sunderland, the Chaplain, in his opening prayer, returned thanks to Divine Providence for the many blessings bestowed upon our nation, and said:—"We acknowledge our chastisements, and pray we may be corrected through them. We beseech Thee to show Thy favor upon this people, and help the government in its great responsibility, help the Congress of the United States. May the candle of the Lord light them through every difficulty."

Vice President Wilson then took the chair.

Mr. ANTHONY, (rep.) of R. I., offered a resolution instructing the Secretary of the Senate to inform the House of Representatives that a quorum of the Senate had assembled and the Senate was ready to proceed to business, which was agreed to. He also submitted an order providing that the hour of meeting of the Senate should be daily at twelve o'clock until otherwise ordered. Agreed to.

Mr. CONKLING, (rep.) of N. Y., offered a resolution providing for the appointment of two members of the Senate to join a committee on the part of the House of Representatives to wait upon the President of the United States and inform him that a quorum of each House of Congress had assembled and were ready to receive any communication he may desire to make. Agreed to; and the Chair appointed Messrs. Conkling, of New York, and Thurman, (dem.) of Ohio, as the Committee on the part of the Senate.

Mr. MORRILL, (rep.) of Me., from the Joint Select Committee appointed at the last session to frame a government for the District of Columbia, submitted a written report accompanied by sundry statutes, for the organization of such government. Laid on the table and ordered to be printed.

The CHAIR laid before the Senate a letter from the Secretary of the Senate, giving a detailed statement of the receipts and expenditures for the last fiscal year. Laid on the table and ordered to be printed.

Also a communication from the Secretary and Sergeant-at-Arms of the Senate, giving a list of the government property in their custody. Laid on the table and ordered to be printed.

Also, the certificate of election of George F. Edmunds, United States Senator from the State of Vermont, and the certificate of election of Hon. William W. Eaton, United States Senator from the State of Connecticut, for the term commencing March 4, 1875. Read and placed on file.

BILLS INTRODUCED.

The following bills were introduced and ordered to be printed and lie on the table till the appointment of the standing committees of the Senate:—

By Mr. SHERMAN, (rep.) of Ohio—A bill to provide for the revision of the laws for the collection of customs duty. It provides for a commission of seven persons to be constituted as follows:—One member of the Senate, to be designated by the President of the Senate; two members elect of the next House of Representatives, to be designated by the Speaker of the present House, and two officers in the customs service and two citizens familiar with customs law, to be appointed by the President. The commission is to terminate on the first Monday of December, 1875, and in the meantime shall report to Congress, through the Secretary of the Treasury, a revision of all the customs laws, together with such facts as they can elicit by examination and inquiry pertaining to the trade, industry, commerce and taxation of the country, with a view to making changes of rates and classification and modes of collecting duties, in order to promote the public interests. The commissioners are also to report as to the relations of foreign trade to domestic industry, and the mutual adjustment of the customs and excise systems of taxation, with a view to securing the requisite revenue with the least inconvenience to the development of the resources of the country, and also as to the manner in which the customs officers perform their duties. In order to conduct this investigation the commissioners are empowered to examine the books, papers and accounts of any custom officer and to administer oaths. The members of the commission are to be allowed their necessary travelling expenses, but are not to receive any compensation.

THE GRASSHOPPER PLAGUE.

Mr. INGALLS, (rep.) of Kan., introduced a bill to provide that homestead and pre-emption settlers in Kansas shall be allowed a year's absence from their lands ravaged by grasshoppers without loss of their rights.

Mr. HITCHCOCK, (rep.) of Neb., introduced a bill appropriating $100,000 for the purchase of food to be issued to starving sufferers from the ravages of grasshoppers on the Western frontiers. The bill also directs the issue of disused army clothing to relieve the extreme wants of those destitute sufferers.

By Mr. PATTERSON, (rep.) of S. C.—A bill to increase the efficiency of the medical department of the United States Army.

By Mr. SARGENT, (rep.) of Cal.—A bill to protect persons of foreign birth against forcible restraint or involuntary servitude.

Also a bill to enable Indians, in certain cases, to enter the public lands of the United States under the homestead laws.

Also a bill to correct the date of the commissions of certain officers of the army.

Mr. SARGENT, of Cal., presented a memorial from Rear Admiral Worden, and those under his command who assisted in disabling the Confederate ram Merrimac, asking to be awarded prize money on the same principle as in the case of the officers and crew of the steamer Kearsarge for the destruction of the Alabama. Laid on the table to be referred to the Committee on Naval Affairs, when appointed.

The Senate then, at a quarter-past twelve, on motion of Mr. ANTHONY, took a recess till one o'clock P. M.

Upon reassembling at one o'clock Mr. WRIGHT, (rep.) of Iowa, said last session he reported from the Judiciary Committee a bill to abolish the Western Judicial district of Arkansas. He therefore desired to give notice that on Wednesday next, immediately after the expiration of the morning hour, he would ask the Senate to proceed with the consideration of said bill.

Mr. INGALLS, of Kansas, submitted a resolution instructing the Committee on Indian Affairs to inquire into the recent disturbances in the Indian Territory and to report to the Senate what measures are necessary for the protection of life, liberty and property and the preservation of law and order in that region and whether the best interests of civilization do not demand the immediate establishment of courts of the United States in said Territory as provided by the treaties of 1866. Laid on the table until appointment of committees.

Mr. SARGENT, of Cal., presented the memorial of Mrs. Susan Roberts, of Humbolt county, California, praying compensation for lands taken and used by the government of the United States. Laid on the table.

The Senate then, on motion of Mr. ANTHONY, took a further recess till half-past one P. M.

Upon reassembling at that hour, Mr. CONKLING, from the committee appointed to wait upon the President, reported that that duty had been discharged and that the President replied that he would soon communicate with the two houses in writing.

THE MESSAGE RECEIVED.

At twenty-five minutes to two P. M. General Babcock appeared at the bar of the Senate and delivered the Message. It was read by Major McDonald, the Chief Clerk, Secretary Gorham being absent on account of sickness in his family.

The reading of the Message was concluded at twenty minutes to three P. M.

Mr. CARPENTER, (rep.) of Wis., moved that it be laid on the table and printed, together with the accompanying documents. Agreed to.

The CHAIR laid before the Senate reports of the Secretary of the Treasury, Department of Justice and Comptroller of the Currency, which were ordered to be laid on the table and printed.

The Senate then, on motion of Mr. EDMUNDS, (rep.) of Vt., at fifteen minutes to three P. M. adjourned till 12 o'clock to-morrow.

THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.

The bill for the better government of the District of Columbia, reported to-day by Senator Morrill, of Maine, from the joint select committee appointed for that purpose by Congress at last session, provides that a department shall be created in the government of the United States to be called the Department of the District of Columbia, and that it shall have a corporate capacity. It is to be headed by a board of three regents to be appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate, and to be removable by the President at any time for causes. The first board are to be appointed for terms of six, four and two years respectively. Thereafter the term of office will be six years. Their salaries will be $4,500 each per annum. They are to appoint and to have power to remove for cause subordinate boards or superintendents of Health, Police, Excise, Street Cleaning, Public Buildings and Fire Department, and also three members of a Board of Education, which shall contain three other members elected by the voters of the District of Columbia, and be presided over by the United States Commissioner of Education, who shall be *ex officio* a member. The Public Works of the District are to be in charge of an army engineer, detailed by the President for three years, and the Board of District Public Buildings will be headed by the United States Superintendent of Public Buildings. The powers and duties of all these subordinate officers and those also of the regents are minutely specified, defined and limited, and the same general principle of rigid responsibility runs throughout the bill, which is very voluminous, consisting of eighty printed pages, divided into fifteen chapters. The power to make, alter or abrogate local ordinances is confided exclusively to the Board of Regents, and no officers are to be elected by the people except three members of the Board of Education, as above stated. The bill fixes two per cent as the rate of taxation which shall be levied on all the real and personal property owned by individuals or corporations in the District. The valuation for the purposes of taxation is to be made by three assessors, appointed by the Board of Regents, and is to be that just valuation which would be recognized on appraisement between debtor and creditor, all taxes to be payable to the United States Collector of Internal Revenue, and to be paid by him into the United States Treasury. All other revenues or moneys of the District are to be collected and deposited in the federal Treasury in the same way. All vouchers and bills of expenses of every description are to be audited in the United States Treasury, and all warrants for the payments of moneys on account of the District shall be subject to the Second Comptroller of the United States Treasury. The bill provides explicitly that no expenditure or liability shall be incurred by or for the District of Columbia that has not been appropriated for by Congress, and no payments for the District shall be made out of the Treasury except in conformity with the appropriations of Congress. The bill finally provides for a revision and codification of all laws of the United States which relate especially to this District.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 7, 1874.

The hour preceding the opening of the session was spent by the members, as they entered the hall, in mutual greetings, friendly hand-shaking and expressions of sympathy or of rejoicing over the results of the recent elections. It is doubtful whether there ever has been in the past history of the House a more demonstrative reassembling of its members. Representatives of the press, Representatives-elect to the next Congress, lobby members and others elbowed each other on the floor and participated in the general demonstrations. The spacious galleries were crowded with spectators and the corridors of the Capitol were almost impassable.

Suddenly, at noon, there was a lull; the Speaker's hammer fell; the persons not entitled to the privileges of the floor withdrew, and the proceedings were formally opened with prayer by the Chaplain, Mr. Butler. He prayed for wisdom and divine guidance, for the President and his Cabinet, the Senate and House, for the agricultural and commercial prosperity of the country, and for the purification and increased power of the great engine, the press. Then the Clerk of the House, Mr. McPherson, proceeded to call the list of members.

THE ROLL CALL

showed the presence of 238 of the 301 members constituting the House. Four new members—Messrs. Schell (dem.) and Chittenden (dem.), of N. Y.; Carpenter, (rep.) of S. C., and Finck, (dem.) of Ohio, came forward, had the oath administered to them by the Speaker, and took their seats as members of the House.

Resolutions were offered by Messrs. GARFIELD, (rep.) of Ohio, and DAWES (rep.) of Mass., to notify the Senate of the fact that the House is in session, and for the appointment of a joint committee to wait upon the President and inform him that Congress was prepared to receive any communication he desired to make. Messrs. Dawes, Hale (rep.) of N. Y., and Beck, (dem.) of Ky., were appointed such committee on the part of the House.

POLAND'S FATAL BLUNDER.

Mr. PHELPS, (rep.) of N. J., asked unanimous consent for the introduction and immediate consideration of a bill to repeal the law known as the "Press Gag Law" in the District of Columbia. He also asked that if after the reading of the bill any member objected to its consideration he might be allowed three minutes in which to state its scope and object.

Mr. GEORGE F. HOAR, (rep.) of Mass., asked the Speaker whether it was the custom of the House to transact any business before the receipt of the President's Message.

Mr. BUTLER, (rep.) of Mass.—Oh! yes.

The SPEAKER—The usage is in accordance with the drift of the gentleman's question—that is, not to transact business after a committee is appointed to wait on the President until the President has been heard from.

Mr. COX, (dem.) of N. Y.—Let the bill be read and perhaps there will be no objection.

The bill was read. It amends the second section of the act of the 22d of June, 1874, by providing that the provisions of the thirty-third section of the Judiciary Act of 1789 shall apply in all cases, except in action of libel and slander, in courts created by act of Congress in the District of Columbia.

Mr. HALE, of New York—Is that bill before the House?

The SPEAKER—It requires unanimous consent.

Mr. HALE, of New York—I object unless it be referred to the Judiciary Committee.

The House then, on motion of Mr. GARFIELD, of Ohio, at thirty-five minutes past twelve P. M., took a recess of half an hour.

RECEPTION OF THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.

The recess was further extended for half an hour, and at the end of that time (twenty-five minutes of two) the President's Message was received and read to the House by Mr. MCPHERSON, the Clerk.

The reading of the Message, which was listened to with remarkable attention, was concluded at a quarter to three. It was then, on motion of Mr. DAWES, ordered printed.

APPROPRIATION BILLS REFERRED.

Mr. GARFIELD, of Ohio, from the Committee on Appropriations, reported the Legislative, Executive and Judicial Appropriation bill, which was made the special order for Tuesday of next week.

Mr. HALE, (rep.) of Maine, from the same committee, reported the Naval Appropriation bill, which was made the special order for Wednesday of next week.

Mr. WHEELER, (rep.) of N. Y., from the same committee, reported the Army Appropriation bill, which was made the special order for Thursday of next week.

Mr. LOUGHRIDGE, (rep.) of Iowa, from the same committee, reported the Indian Appropriation bill, which was made the special order for Friday of next week.

Mr. STARKWEATHER, (rep.) of Conn., from the same committee, reported the Fortification bill, which was made the special order for Tuesday, December 22. The amount appropriated by these several bills is as follows:—

Legislative bills	$19,653,434
Navy	16,976,005
Army	27,701,500
Indians	4,561,507
Fortifications	855,000

NEWSPAPER POSTAGE.

Mr. TYNER, (rep.) of Ind., from the same committee, reported a bill appropriating $30,000 for the purchase of scales for the use of the Post Office Department in executing the law requiring prepayment of postage on newspapers.

Mr. COX, of New York, wanted to offer an amendment excepting from the operation of the law, cases where subscriptions were taken prior to the 1st of January, 1875, and allowing postage in those cases to be paid at the place of destination.

Mr. TYNER declined to allow the amendment to be offered or spoken to by Mr. Cox, who intimated that in the next House he would have more privileges; to which Mr. Tyner replied that he (Tyner) would not be there to see. (Laughter.)

The bill was then passed.

Mr. COX thereupon introduced a bill to carry out the object indicated by him, and it was referred to the Post Office Committee.

Mr. PHELPS, of New Jersey, gave notice that he would next Monday, if he got the floor, move to suspend the rules and pass the bill which he sought to introduce and pass to-day—to repeal the press gag law.

The House then at three o'clock adjourned.

OUR FOREIGN RELATIONS.

Important Correspondence of the State Department with Representatives Abroad—The Rights of Naturalized Citizens in Foreign Countries—The Tripoli Slave Trade—American Filibustering in Formosa Suppressed—The Spanish Warfare in Cuba.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 7, 1874.

The papers concerning the foreign relations of the United States transmitted to Congress this afternoon with the President's Message make a volume of 1,222 printed octavo pages, from which the following items of interest are extracted:—

In October last Acting Secretary of State Cadwallader addressed a letter to Minister Jay, at Vienna, acknowledging the receipt of a communication in reference to the case of Josef Barts, who had presented a naturalization certificate to the Austrian authorities as proof of citizenship. Mr. Cadwallader says:—

The right to enjoy such privileges as may attach to a citizen of the United States is properly proved by the production of a passport legally issued. In every case where the action of a diplomatic or consular officer of the United States is invoked on behalf of a person claiming to be a citizen of the United States it is incumbent on such officer, not only to carefully and zealously guard and protect the rights of all *bona fide* citizens, but also to carefully abstain from committing this government to a demand for protection on behalf of a person presenting a false or fraudulent claim to citizenship. Naturalized citizens, who have become such solely to avoid the duties and burdens attached to a residence in and allegiance to their own country, and who have returned to their native country without any intention to reside in the United States or to assume the duties or burdens common to its citizens, who, in other words, are desirous of enjoying all the benefits and immunities common to citizens of each country, and of avoiding all corresponding duties in each, may be held to have forfeited all right to the protection of the United States. Particular instructions will be found on these questions in section 30 of the personal instructions, lately issued.

The attention of the department has also been called on several occasions to applications for passports in foreign countries founded on certificates of naturalization, which upon their face bear conclusive evidence that they have been illegally or fraudulently obtained. In such cases a passport should be refused, and the fraudulent certificate forwarded to this department.

NATURALIZED CITIZENSHIP.

Secretary Fish, writing to Chargé d'Affaires Nicholas Fish at Berlin, in August last, says:—

While acknowledging the receipt of the correspondence between Mr. Bancroft and the Minister of Foreign Affairs in relation to the interpretation and application of the fourth article of the Naturalization treaty of February 22, 1868, between the United States and the North German Union, that Mr. Bancroft's note of the 28th of June to Mr. Von Bulow correctly sets forth the interpretation of that article of the treaty as understood by the government, and it is with much satisfaction that the President learns that that interpretation is not controverted by the German government, which declares its intention to execute the treaty at all times with the greatest moderation and respect for the rights of individuals. The point suggested by Mr. Von Bulow that the treatment of each case must depend entirely upon the circumstances of the same is in accord with the position which this government holds. The value of American citizenship must not be trifled with. This high right must not be invaded by fraud or by false representations, and when honestly acquired and faithfully maintained must carry with it to its possessor all the privileges and the protection which a great government can give to its citizens. The case of Mentheim Cohn seems to be disposed of. Without admitting the inference drawn by Mr. Von Bulow from his recital of the facts of the case, it cannot be denied that that inference is at the least plausible.

"The legation will in the future continue carefully to watch the rights of all naturalized citizens of the United States who may visit or temporarily tarry in Germany, and will assert for them all the privileges and immunities to which they are entitled by treaty or by public law. At the same time it will be careful not to commit the government of the United States in a demand for its protection in behalf of one who may be manifestly presenting a false or fraudulent claim of citizenship, or who may have already forfeited his right to citizenship in accordance with the letter and spirit of the treaty."

A CHINESE INSURRECTION ENDED.

Charge d'Affaires Williams, writing to the Secretary of State under date of Pekin, February last, speaks of the reduction of the last stronghold of the Mahommedan rebels who controlled the northwestern provinces of Shensi and Kansuh for more than ten years. He shows the merciless nature of Chinese warfare and the rancor of war as aggravated in this rebellion by the bitterness of religous bigotry in which the Mahommedans excelled.

There is no reason for doubting the statements here given, and as the rebels had themselves given no quarter I suppose they expected none. The insurrection thus ended has left large portions of these two provinces nearly depopulated and years must elapse before they can recover from the desolations of war. In cases where these rebels, who are said to be all pure Chinese, and not Turks, met bodies of native Catholics in their progress, they are reported to have always spared their lives if not found in arms. The capture of Sun-Chan brings to an end all organized rebellion within the borders of China proper or the eighteen provinces. It began in 1848 in the towns lying west of Canton city, and, through the mismanagement of the provincial authorities, its leaders waxed stronger and more desperate, and under the name of Taepings (Great Peace) nearly succeeded in dismembering the Empire. They were finally subdued in 1865. After the capture of Nankin the Mohammedans rose in array in the southwest and northwest, where they set the imperialists at defiance for ten years or more, but are no longer formidable, and the few chiefs who may have escaped with a small following will not be able to gather head in those devastated districts. The manner in which orderly government, trade and rebuilding in the ruined towns has revived in those departments in the Valley of the Yangtze, which were left almost like a wilderness in 1865, leads us to hope for a similar reviving in the western provinces."

Mr. Williams says, March 30:—

"A Roman Catholic bishop, whose diocese comprises a part of Manchooria and the region contiguous to Corea, has lately reached Pekin from Newchwang, and brings an account of an entire change in the government of Corea within the last three months, and the removal of the ruler who had usurped the chief authority during the past fifteen years. The change has been brought about without bloodshed, and the Bishop looks forward to a peaceable state of their missions, seeing that the new authorities are favorably disposed toward foreigners and Christianity."

THE SLAVE TRADE OF TRIPOLI.

The following was received by Secretary Fish from Sir Edward Thornton, June 30 last:—

SIR—In compliance with an instruction from the Earl of Derby, I have the honor to inclose a copy of a despatch addressed to His Lordship by Her Majesty's Consul General at Tripoli, in which he expresses his opinion that the slave traffic from Tripoli to Constantinople, via Malta, is on the decrease, and that there is no reason whatever for supposing that the Malta police authorities in any way connive at its existence.

THE OPPRESSION OF ITALIAN CHILDREN.

Secretary Fish, addressing Count Corti, the Italian Minister, in May last, acknowledging the reception of letters referring to the alleged vagrancy of Italian children, and the false inducements under which they are taken from their native land, and inclosing an act promulgated by the Italian Parliament on the 25th of December last, says:—

This government cordially unites with that of Italy in the hope that that government may, by the means of this act and the energetic enforcement of its most commendable determination to suppress the traffic in these poor children, referred to in your note, succeed in arresting the very inhuman practices which the Italian government so strongly condemns.

AMERICAN FILIBUSTERING IN THE EAST.

Secretary Fish, writing to Mr. Bingham, our Minister at Japan, July 26 last, says:—

Referring to your despatch, No. 78, in which you seek instructions upon the various questions arising out of the participation of citizens of the United States in the late expedition against Formosa and the employment of an American vessel, I have to inform you that your proceedings to detach the citizens of the United States and the steamer New York from the expedition are approved. You are referred to the instructions already given by this department on this question. The act of June 30, 1860, affords ample authority to the Ministers of the United States to issue writs and proclamations to prevent the citizens of the United States from enlisting in the military or naval service of China or Japan to make war upon any foreign power with whom the United States are at peace, or insurrectionary movements, and should a warning or proclamation prove ineffectual the Minister is authorized to resort to such force as may be within his reach, belonging to the United States, to accomplish the purpose. It is believed by the Department that the powers conferred upon the Ministers of the United States by this act will prove sufficient in these cases. The representatives of the government will take every means to prevent any violation of these provisions of law, and it is believed that in most instances no actual resort to force will be required. Your response to the representation of General Lezendre, that the act of 1860 was unconstitutional is approved. No officer of the government is made a judge of the constitutionality of an act of Congress, and all acts are to be deemed constitutional until the question be legally decided otherwise.

This department has been officially informed by the Secretary of War that Mr. Wasson, who was attached to the expedition against Formosa above referred to, has not been in the service of the United States since July 1, 1872.

MACKENZIE'S RAID INTO MEXICO.

It appears from the diplomatic correspondence that Mr. Mariscal, the Mexican Minister, has formally protested against the invasion by General Mackenzie of Mexican soil in pursuit of Indians, saying:—

In view of the good faith and friendly spirit which actuate the government of the United States in its relations with Mexico my government hopes that an act similar to the one in question will not be committed hereafter, and that if any measures shall be deemed necessary in order to remedy evils on the frontier which it may be necessary to carry out on Mexican soil such measures will be adopted and carried out by both governments jointly, since an incursion of foreign troops into the territory of Mexico besides being at variance with the principles which govern nations in time of peace, may in my country bring the administration into very serious conflicts and materially disturb the peace of the Republic. This last consideration will probably be sufficient for a friendly government, for it will not wish to run the risk of causing such terrible evils to its neighbor when it relies upon the good will of the latter to secure the just ends which it seeks to attain.

THE SPANIARDS IN CUBA.

Hon. Caleb Cushing, writing to Secretary Fish from Madrid, in July last, says:—

According to the latest official estimates here the number of troops sent from the Peninsula to Cuba from the year 1869 down to the present day, is 82 500, of which number 36,413 have succumbed in the field or from disease, leaving only a nominal force of say 46,000, many of whom must be invalids, for the present service of the government, in addition to which it deserves to be noted that a large number of muskets purchased by the last Captain-General for use in Cuba have been withdrawn and ordered home for use in the Peninsula. It is not surprising that under these circumstances great discouragement should prevail in official circles here, to say nothing of the uncertainty, more or less, respecting the purposes and actions of political parties throughout the country, with the great question rising above all others whether or not at some unexpected moment the troops may not "pronounce," for it is no exaggeration to say that the political fortunes of Spain at all times during the present generation, and never more so than at the present time, are mainly dependent on the will of the army. The conscription will yield at least 60,000 men for the army; it will also yield to the treasury at least 300,000,000 of reals ($15,000,000) on amounts paid for exemption.

Secretary Fish, writing to Minister Cushing, August 27, says:—

I acknowledge the receipt of your interesting despatch of the 30th ult., No. 66, in relation to the possibility of European intervention in the affairs of Spain. It confirms the accounts which have reached this country of atrocities in warfare which seem incredible in the nineteenth century, which are without excuse or palliation, and a continuance of which would be degrading to human nature.

THE VIRGINIUS AFFAIR.

Much of the correspondence under the head of Spain relates to the Virginius affair. The results up to the end of last year are already known. Nothing appears regarding negotiations since that time.

BRUTAL CONDUCT ON BOARD AN AMERICAN SHIP.

[From the Liverpool Mercury, Nov. 26.]

The American ship Nancy Pendleton, Captain Pendleton, which left Penarth Docks on Monday night, coal laden, for Point de Galle, was shortly after leaving dock the scene of a frightful tragedy. It appears that the ship was entirely manned by colored men, the officers being white. The crew were perfectly sober, and it is said that the officers began to strike the men with billets of wood, capstan bars and belaying pins without any apparent provocation. The cries of the men were heard by the crews of several vessels as she passed and also by the tugboat Columbus, which was towing her, and the men in the pilot boat towing astern. The captain of the Columbus, shortly after the vessel rounded Penarth Head, heard two shots fired on board the ship, and soon after a man got on the martingale and called out that his brother had been shot and pleaded to be taken ashore. The man was, however, ordered on board, and was no more seen. It appears that the first shot was fired from the direction of the poop right among the men on the main deck. The mate, who had been aft, rushed forward and shot one of the crew right between the eyes. He staggered along the deck to the forecastle, and when passing the galley the cook or steward dealt him a severe blow with an axe, laying his face open. The poor fellow got to the forecastle only to meet the captain, who pinned him down, when the English pilot interfered, and threatened to leave the ship if the man was not at once released. The man was then carried to his bunk below. All this occurred while the ship was between Penarth and Lavernock Point.

The tugboat was ordered to tow to the Nash, the pilot leaving her at Lundy Island on Tuesday morning, and on arriving at Cardiff yesterday at once lodged the information with the police. As it is blowing a gale from the southwest, it is probable that the ship may be overhauled before leaving the land.

THE WEATHER YESTERDAY.

The following record will show the changes in the temperature during the past twenty-four hours, in comparison with the corresponding date of last year, as recorded at Hudnut's Pharmacy, HERALD Building, New York:—

1873.	1874.		1873.	1874.
3 A. M. 29	38	3:30 P. M.	35	43
6 A. M. 28	38	6 P. M.	34	41
9 A. M. 30	40	9 P. M.	33	38
12 M. 35	41	12 P. M.	32	37

Average temperature yesterday 39½
Average temperature for corresponding date last year 32

SUFFERING IN NEBRASKA.

An Appeal to the People for Food and Clothing.

THE GRASSHOPPER PLAGUE.

What General Brisbin Saw During a Tour of Inspection.

NAKED AND HUNGRY.

At a committee meeting of the Produce Exchange held yesterday afternoon General Brisbin, of Omaha, appeared before the Board on behalf of the suffering poor of Nebraska. The members, after listening to the pathetic story of General Brisbin, decided to send on to General Ord at Omaha a sum of $1,000 remaining over in the charity fund of the Board at once, and requested the General to visit them at the meeting of the full Board to be held to-day, and explain the objects of his generous mission. According to the most reliable authorities, 10,000 people in the State of Nebraska are at the present moment in a state of almost absolute destitution. They are the population of a long belt of country on the western frontier of the State over which the grasshoppers passed last summer. When the plague had apparently ended and the suffering condition of the population of that district was discovered, every effort in their power was made to assist the distressed by the authorities and citizens of the State. The destruction of the crops had been so complete and the resources left the settlers were so slight that the demands for help were far in advance of the supplies that could be gathered by those who had taken the work of mercy in hand. They struggled bravely with it for a time, but were so entirely unable to meet the famine rushing in upon them that they were obliged to acknowledge an appeal to charity outside the State necessary. The first step taken in the way of assisting those who had lost all they possessed was the establishment of a relief society. It was called the Omaha Aid Society. On finding out the inability of this association to meet the urgency the Governor of the State called a convention and a new organization was established under the title of the Nebraska State Aid and Relief Society. General E. O. C. Ord, commanding the Department of the Platte, was requested to lend his assistance to the work, and he generously and promptly took the matter in hand. General Ord at once sent officers of the army to inspect

THE SUFFERING REGION

and report the result. Committees, composed of five citizens in each of the counties embraced in the belt, were appointed and through them the supplies obtained were distributed. The army agencies along the route of the Union Pacific Railway were made the depots for the issuing of the supplies and the headquarters for stores was established at Omaha. No expense of any kind was incurred—or has been up to the present time—and all that could be got was sent to the people as speedily as possible. To make everything reliable and ascertain that no inattention of favoritism should creep in, two inspectors were appointed to look after the details of the committee's labors. One of these inspectors was commissioned to the country north of the Platte River, the other to the district south of it. Their salaries were paid by the Union Pacific and the Burlington and Missouri railroads. While there was the remotest possibility of being able to carry the poor over the winter and until they could grow sufficient food for themselves, General Ord and the Society confined their solicitations for help to the limits of the State. The moment came at last when they felt compelled to appeal to the benevolence of the country, and they did not hesitate, in view of the terrible situation of so many souls, to make known the actual condition of affairs. General Brisbin, of Omaha, who had visited the plague stricken country, and had furnished General Ord with an elaborate report, was commissioned to travel through the Eastern States and acquaint the people with the distress of the settlers. General Brisbin has arrived in New York, and was visited yesterday at his hotel by a reporter of the HERALD. In describing the people and their situation he said:—

THESE PEOPLE

who are suffering so terribly now are the new settlers on the western boundary of the State. They have none of them been there more than two years. Many have been but one. The first year or two they can only grow a poor description of corn and potatoes. It is not until the third year, when the sods rot, that they can get wheat. Of course the corn and potatoes feed them until the wheat comes. Beside, in some cases they have a pig or get a little game, and so they struggle on up to the wheat crop time. This year the grasshoppers arrived, ate up all the corn and potatoes, leaving the people without anything. There was no chance for them to move or get away from it. They had no place to go to nor anything to go with. I went over the entire section of country and the scenes I witnessed would take a stout heart to bear. It was not like a man in a town or village, with his wife and children starving, who can ask assistance from a neighbor or take his rags to a pawn shop. They had no neighbors, no pawnshops and very few rags. Occasionally I met a man with a horse or pair of oxen, but that only made the case worse, for they were too valuable to destroy, and food was wanting for them as well as the children. Almost

THE FIRST CABIN

I entered when I commenced my inspection I found a gray-haired woman and her daughter, a young lady, at dinner, and all in the world these poor creatures had was a watermelon cut in two and some little pieces of black bread. There was only one pint of flour in the house, and not a mouthful of meat, potatoes, sugar, coffee or anything else. At Arrapahoe, as I went on, a little town in Furness county, I called at the house of a Mr. Harvey, and talked with a young girl whose mother I had heard was very badly off. She said, "Mother is a widow and has four children. Father has been dead ten years. My mother lives on a homestead of 160 acres near Arrapahoe. We put in ten or eleven acres of corn, but the grasshoppers eat it all up. We had a few potatoes—a bushel or two, perhaps. We live in a dug-out. Mother washes when she can get work to do. She gets seventy-five cents a week for washing. She is sickly. She needs shoes. She has now no work. We are very poor." Then the poor girl broke down under the load of poverty and pain, and I could get nothing more out of her. She was modest, gentle and sensitive, and seemed to feel deeply the unfortunate position in which her family was placed. Mr. Harvey informed Mr. Schuider that the mother of this young girl was in delicate health, and that there was literally nothing in the house. Mr. Alber said he thought this woman had no bed or furniture, and he doubted if they had food. While at Arrapahoe the keeper of a little store told me a story of want. He said, "The other day, as I was eating my dinner in the room behind the store, where my wife and I live, a little girl came into the store, and my wife invited her to come in and be seated until I had done. When I would wait on her. I noticed the child looked wistfully at the table, and, as I passed out, saw the tears were rolling down her cheeks. I asked her what was the matter, but she would not tell me. I told my wife to find out

WHAT AILED THE CHILD

and went out, closing the door behind me. The little girl then confessed to my wife she was hungry and said she had not tasted food for forty-eight hours, and that her mother and little sister were at home in the same condition. We gave her dinner and sent some food to her mother." I visited the family of the little girl just mentioned, and this is the story the mother told me:—"I have two children," she said, "both girls, the eldest aged five years and the youngest two years. My husband is a laborer, but finds it hard to get work now. He came here with some money, bought a lot, and commenced to build a house and a mill. The house is unfinished. I live in the school house, which a director has kindly allowed me to occupy until after my confinement. I have about fifty pounds of flour on hand and one-quarter of a pound of tea. We have no stock or fowls of any kind. My children have no stockings or shoes. I have had about $50 to live on since April last. I have one decent dress—a calico. We raised no crops; the grasshoppers eat up everything. I have no one to take care of me when I am sick. I wish I had some red flannel for the children. I have picked up some old scraps and rags and made clothing for my baby. I have less than ever before, but can get along if we only have enough to eat. By the roadside I saw a