



THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

MANY WORDS AND SOMETHING SAID

The Monroe Doctrine is Reaffirmed.

Neutrality in the Cuban Matter—Little Talk About the Tariff—Sound Financial Doctrine—Honest Money and Honest Debt-paying.

To the Congress of the United States:

The present assemblage of the legislative branch of our government occurs at a time when the interests of our people and the needs of the country give especial prominence to the condition of our foreign relations and the exigencies of our national finances.

OUR FOREIGN RELATIONS.

By amendatory tariff legislation in January last, the Argentine Republic recognizing the value of the large market opened to the free importation of its wools under our last tariff act, has admitted certain products of the United States to entry at reduced duties.

The missions boundary dispute between the Argentine Republic and Brazil referred to the president of the United States as arbitrator during the term of my predecessor and which was submitted to me for determination, resulted in an award in favor of Brazil upon the historical and documentary evidence presented.

Negotiations are progressing for a revival of the United States and Chilean claims commissions, whose work was abruptly terminated last year by the expiration of the stipulated time within which awards could be made.

The resumption of specie payments by Chile is a step of great interest and importance both in its direct consequences upon our own welfare and in vindicating the ascendancy of sound financial principles in one of the most influential of the South American republics.

The close of the momentous struggle between China and Japan, while relieving the diplomatic agents of this government from the delicate duty they undertook at the request of both countries, of rendering such service to the subjects of either belligerent within the territorial limits of the other as our neutral position permitted.

Our relations with the states of the Germany empire are, in some aspects, typical of a condition of things elsewhere found in countries whose productions and trade are similar to our own.

influential deterrent of any similar outbreaks.

The energetic steps we have thus taken are all the more likely to result in future safety to our citizens in China, because the imperial government is, I am persuaded, entirely convinced that we desire only the liberty and protection of our own citizens and redress for any wrongs they may have suffered and that we have no ulterior designs on objects, political or otherwise, China will not forget either our kindly service to her citizens during her late war nor the further fact, while furnishing all the facilities at our command to further the negotiation of a peace between her and Japan, we sought no advantages and interposed no counsel.

The governments of both China and Japan have in special dispatches transmitted through their respective diplomatic representatives expressed in a most pleasing manner their grateful appreciation of our assistance to their citizens during the unhappy struggle and of the value of our aid in paving the way to their resumption of peaceful relations.

The customary cordial relations between this country and France have been undisturbed, with the exception that a full explanation of the treatment of John L. Waller by the Expeditionary military authorities of France still remains to be given.

Mr. Waller, formerly United States consul to Tamatave, remained in Madagascar after his term of office expired, and was apparently successful in procuring business concessions from the Government of greater or less value.

After the occupation of Tamatave and the declaration of martial law by the French, he was arrested upon various charges, among them that of communicating military information to the enemies of France, was tried and convicted by a military tribunal, and sentenced to twenty years imprisonment.

Following the course justified by abundant precedents this government requested from that of France the record of the proceedings of the French tribunal which resulted in Mr. Waller's condemnation. This request has been complied with to the extent of sending a copy of the official record, from which appear the constitution and organization of the court, the charges as formulated, and the general course and result of the trial, and by which it is shown that the accused was tried in open court and was defended by counsel.

But the evidence adduced in support of the charges—which was not received by the French minister for foreign affairs till the first week in October—has thus far been withheld, the French government taking the ground that its production in response to our demand would establish a bad precedent.

The efforts of our ambassador to procure it, however, though impeded by recent changes in the French ministry, have not been relaxed, and it is confidently expected that some satisfactory solution of the matter will shortly be reached.

Meanwhile it appears that Mr. Waller's confinement has every alleviation which the state of his health and all the other circumstances of the case demand or permit.

degenerates into a vice to gain advantage or a contrivance to secure benefits with only the semblance of a return. In our dealings with other nations we ought to be open-handed and scrupulously fair.

These considerations should not, however, constrain us to submit to unfair discrimination nor to silently acquiesce in vexatious hindrances to the enjoyment of our share of the legitimate advantages of proper trade relations.

If an examination of the situation suggests such measures on our part as would involve restrictions similar to those from which we suffer, the way to such a course is easy.

It should, however, by no means be lightly entered upon, since the necessity for the inauguration of such a policy would be regretted by the best sentiment of our people, and because it naturally and logically might lead to consequences of the gravest character.

I take pleasure in calling your attention to the encomiums bestowed on these vessels of our new navy which took part in the notable voyage of the opening of the Kiel canal.

It was fitting that this extraordinary achievement should be celebrated in the presence of America's exposition of the latest developments of the world's naval energy.

Our relations with Great Britain, always intimate and important, have demanded during the past year even a greater share of consideration than is usual. Several vexatious questions were left undetermined by the decision of the Behring arbitration tribunal.

The application of the principles laid down on that august body has not been followed by the results they were intended to accomplish either because the principles themselves lacked in breadth and definiteness or because their execution has been more or less impeded.

Much correspondence has been exchanged between the two governments on the subject of preventing the extermination of seals. The insufficiency of the British patrol of Behring sea, under the regulations agreed on by the two governments, has been pointed out, and yet only two British ships have been on police duty during this season in those waters.

The need of a more effective enforcement of existing regulations, as well as the adoption of such additional regulations as experience has shown to be absolutely necessary to carry out the intent of the award, have been earnestly urged upon the British government, but thus far without effective results.

The understanding by which the United States was to pay, and Great Britain to receive, a lump sum of \$425,000 in full settlement of all British claims for damages arising from our seizure of British sealing vessels unauthorized under the award of the Paris tribunal of arbitration in 1886, has been the subject of the last congress, which declined to make the necessary appropriation.

monuments has yet been made. In the meantime the valley of the Yukon is becoming a highway through the hitherto unexplored wilds of Alaska, and abundant mineral wealth has been discovered in that region, especially at or near the junction of the boundary meridian with Yukon and its tributaries.

In these circumstances it is expedient, and indeed imperative, that the jurisdictional limits of the respective governments in this new region be speedily determined.

I call attention to the unsatisfactory delineation of the respective jurisdictions of the United States and the Dominion of Canada in the great lakes at the approaches to the narrow waters that connect them.

It being apparent that the boundary between Great Britain and the republic of Venezuela concerning the limits of British Guiana was approaching an acute stage, a definite statement of the interest and policy of the United States as regards the controversy seemed to be required both on its own account and in view of its relations with the friendly powers directly concerned.

In July last, therefore, a dispatch was addressed to our ambassador at London for communication to the British government in which the attitude of the United States was fully and distinctly set forth.

The general conclusions therein reached and formulated are in substance that the traditional and established policy of this government is firmly opposed to a forcible increase by any European power of its territorial possessions on this continent; that it is strongly supported in principle as it is strongly supported by numerous precedents; that as a consequence the United States is bound to protest against the enlargement of the area of British Guiana in derogation of the rights and against the will of Venezuela; that, considering the disparity in strength of Great Britain and Venezuela, the territorial dispute between them can be reasonably settled only by friendly and impartial arbitration.

The answer of the British government has not yet been received, but is expected shortly, when further communication on the subject will probably be made to the congress.

HAWAII.

Early in January last an uprising against the government of Hawaii was promptly suppressed. Martial law was forthwith proclaimed and numerous arrests were made of persons suspected of being in sympathy with the royalist party.

Notwithstanding that Great Britain originated the proposal to enforce international rules for the prevention of collisions at sea, based on the recommendations of the maritime conference of Washington, and concurred in suggesting March 1, 1886, as the date to be set by proclamation for carrying these rules into general effect, her majesty's government, having encountered opposition on the part of British shipping interests, announced its inability to accept that date, which was consequently cancelled.

The completion of the preliminary survey of that Alaskan boundary which follows the contour of the coast from the southernmost point of Prince of Wales island until it strikes the one hundred and forty-first meridian at or near the summit of Mount St. Elias awaits further necessary appropriation.

ence by honest effort, we can not regard such assemblages of distinctively alien laborers, hired out in mass to the profit of alien speculators and shipped hither and thither as the prospect of gain may dictate, otherwise than repugnant to the spirit of our civilization.

As a sequel to the failure to a scheme for the colonization in Mexico of negroes mostly immigrants from Alabama, under contract, a great number of these helpless and suffering people, starving and smitten with contagious disease, made their way or were assisted to the frontier, where in wretched plight, they were quarantined by the Texas authorities.

Learning of their destitute condition I directed rations to be temporarily furnished them through the war department. At the expiration of their quarantine they were conveyed by the railway companies at comparatively nominal rates to their homes in Alabama upon my assurance, in the absence of any fund available for the cost of their transportation, that I would recommend to congress an appropriation for its payment.

It should be remembered that the measures taken were dictated not only by sympathy and humanity, but by a conviction that it was not compatible with the dignity of this government that so large a body of our dependent citizens should be thrown for relief upon the charity of a neighboring state.

In last year's message I narrated at some length the jurisdictional questions then freshly arisen in the Mosquito Indian strip of Nicaragua.

RUSSIAN CONSULS.

Correspondence on foot touching the practice of Russian consuls within the jurisdiction of the United States to interrogate citizens as to their race and religious faith, and upon ascertainment thereof to deny to Jews authentication of passports or legal documents for use in Russia, inasmuch as such a proceeding imposes a disability—which in the case of a Russian citizen is a disability which may be found to properly affect the rights of our territorial jurisdiction, it has elicited fitting remonstrance, the result of which it is hoped will remove the cause of complaint.

SEALING VESSELS.

The pending claims of sealing vessels of the United States seized in Russian waters remain undisturbed. Our recent convention with Russia establishing a modus vivendi as to imperial jurisdiction in such cases has prevented further difficulty in this nature. The Russian government has welcomed in principle our suggestion for a modus vivendi to embrace Great Britain and Japan, looking to the better preservation of seal life in the North Pacific and Behring sea, and the extension of the protected area defined by the Paris Tribunal to all Pacific waters north of the thirty-fifth parallel.

THE CUBAN SITUATION.

Cuba is again gravely disturbed. An insurrection, in some respects more active than the last preceding revolt, now exists in a large part of the eastern interior of the island. Besides damaging the commercial exchanges of the island, of which our consulate has the prominent share, this flagrant condition of hostilities, by arousing sentimentality and inciting an adventurous spirit among our people, has entailed earnest effort on the part of this government to enforce obedience to our neutrality laws and to prevent the territory of the United States from being abused as a vantage ground from which to aid those in arms against Spanish sovereignty.

Whatever may be the traditional sympathy of our countrymen as individuals with a people who seem to be struggling for greater autonomy and greater freedom deepened as such sympathy must be in behalf of our neighbors, yet the plain duty of this government is to observe in good faith the recognized obligations of international relationship.

The performance of this duty should not be made more difficult by a disregard on the part of our citizens of the obligations growing out of their allegiance to their country, which should restrain them from violating as individuals the neutrality which is a condition of their relations to friendly sovereign states.

The new consulates at Erzerum and Harput, for which appropriation was made last session, have been provisionally filled by trusted employees of the department of state. These appointees, though now in Turkey, have not yet received their exequats.

THE CONSULAR SERVICE.

In view of the growth of our interests in foreign countries and the encouraging prospects for a general expansion of our commerce, the question of improvement in the consular service has increased in importance and urgency. Though there is no doubt that the great body of consular officers are rendering valuable service to the trade and industries of the country, the need of some plan of appointment and control which would tend to secure a higher average of efficiency cannot be denied.

of Germany was claimed under the most favored nation provision of our own convention and was promptly recognized.

The long standing demand of Antonio Mapiño Mora against Spain has at last been settled by the payment, on the 14th of September last, of the sum originally agreed upon in liquidation of the claim. Its distribution among the parties entitled to receive it has proceeded as rapidly as the rights of those claiming the fund could be safely determined.

The enforcement of differential duties against products of this country exported to Cuba and Puerto Rico prompted the immediate claim on our part to the benefit of the minimum tariff of Spain in return for the most favorable treatment permitted by our laws as regards the production of Spanish territories.

Vigorous protests against excessive fines imposed on our ships and merchandise by the customs officers of these islands for travel or trivial errors have resulted in the remission of such fines in instances where the equity of the complaint was apparent, though the vexatious practice has not been wholly discontinued.

AFFAIRS IN TURKEY.

Occurrences in Turkey have continued to excite concern. The reported massacres of Christians in Armenia and the development there and in other districts of a spirit of fanatic hostility to Christian influences naturally excited apprehension for the safety of the devoted men and women who, as dependents of the foreign missionary societies in the United States, reside in Turkey under the guarantee of law and usage and in the legitimate performance of their educational and religious mission. No efforts have been spared in their behalf, and their protection in person and property has been earnestly and vigorously enforced by every means within our power.

I am thoroughly convinced that in addition to their salaries our ambassadors and ministers at foreign courts should be provided by the government with official residences. The salaries of those officers are comparatively small and in most cases insufficient to pay, with other necessary expenses the cost of maintaining household establishments in keeping with their important and delicate functions.

FINANCE AND THE TARIFF.

As we turn from a review of our foreign relations to the contemplation of our national financial situation we are immediately aware that we approach a subject of domestic concern more important than any other that can engage our attention.

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The compulsory purchase and collage of silver by the government, unchecked and unregulated by business conditions and heedless of our currency needs, which for more than fifteen years diluted our circulating medium undetermined confidence abroad in our financial ability and at last culminated in distress and panic at home, has been recently stopped by the repeal of the laws which forced this reckless scheme upon the country.

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The currency dominated United States notes and commonly known as greenbacks was issued in large volume during the late civil war, and was intended originally to meet the exigencies of that period. It will be seen by a reference to the debate of congress at the time the laws were passed authorizing the issue of these notes that their advocates declared they were

the executive to consider what steps might properly be taken without additional legislation to answer the need of a better system of consular appointments.

The matter having been committed to the consideration of the secretary of state, in pursuance of his recommendation an executive order was issued on the 20th of September, 1895, by the terms of which it is provided that after that date any vacancy in a consulate or commercial agency with an annual salary or compensation from official fees of not more than \$2,500 or less than \$600 should be filled either by transfer or promotion from some other position under the department of state of a character tending to qualify the incumbent for the position to be filled, or by the appointment of a person not under the department of state, but having previously served thereunder and shown his capacity and fitness for consular duty, or by the appointment of a person who, having been selected by the president and sent to the board for examination, is found, upon such examination, to be qualified for the position.

Positions which pay less than \$1,000 being usually, on account of their small compensation, filled by selection from residents of the locality, it was not deemed practicable to put them under the new system. In execution of the executive order referred to, the secretary of state has designated as a board to conduct the prescribed examinations the third assistant secretary of state, the solicitor of the department of state and the chief of the consular bureau, and has specified the subjects to which such examinations shall relate.

It is not assumed that this system will prove a full measure of consular reform, and it is quite probable that actual experience will show particulars in which the order already issued may be amended and demonstrate that for the best results appropriate legislation by congress is imperatively required.

MORE STYLE NEEDED.

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