BURLINGTON FREE PRESS, FRIDAY MORNING, JANUARY 21, 1848.

of Mexico. The interests in favor of keeping us there will be much more influential then than now. The army itself will be larger. Those who live by the war —a large and powerful body—the numerous contractors, the officers, the merchants, the speculators in the lands and mines of Mexico, and all, engaged every way, directly or indirectly, in the progress of the war, and absorbing the whole expenditures, will be adverse to retiring, and will swell the cry in favor of continuing and extending conquest. The President talks, sir, of taking indemnity into his own hands, then; but, why not take indemnity now? We are much nearer indemnity now than we will be at the end of the next campaign, when we shall have sixty millions added to the expenditure of the last forty. What will you then have to indemnity you? Nothing but a Mexican population, on whom you are to impose taxation in all forms and shapes; and amongst which you will have to maintain an army of at least forty thousand men; according to the Senator from Mississippi, (Mr. Davis) —not a very large number, for he says, that the seventy-three thousand men now there are in danger. This then is no indemnity at all. You will never get enough in that way to meet your expenditure. It will all have to come out of the pockets of the people of the United States, after all the talk of indemnity, of pushing on this war vigorously to success. At the end of the next campaign, instead of indemnity, you will have a heavy pecuniary burden imposed upon the present and succeeding generation.

Well, Mr. President, we have now come to the solemn question proposed by these resolutions. I have shown where this line of policy will, in all probability, lead you—I may say, will inevitably lead you, unless some unexpected contingency should prevent. It will lead to the blotting out of the nationality of Mexico, and the throwing of eight or nine millions of people without a government on your hands. It will compel you, in all probability, to assume the government, for, I think, there will be very little prospect of your retiring. You must either hold the country as a province or incorporate it into your Union. Shall we do either? That's the question. Far from us be such an act, and for the reasons contained in the resolutions.

The first of these reasons is this: it would be inconsistent with the avowed object for which the war has been prosecuted. That needs no argument after what has been said. Since the commencement of the war till this moment, every man has disavowed the intention of conquest—of extinguishing the existence of Mexico as a people. It has been constantly proclaimed that the only object was indemnity. And yet, sir, as events are moving on, what we disavow may be accomplished, and what we have avowed may be defeated. Sir, this result will be a dark and lasting imputation on either the sincerity or the intelligence of this country; on its sincerity, because so opposite to your own avowals; on your intelligence, for the want of a clear foresight in so plain a case as not to discern the consequences.

Sir, we have heard how much glory our country has acquired in this war. I acknowledge it to the full as much, Mr. President, so far as military glory is concerned. The army has done nobly—chivalrously—they have conferred honor on the country, for which I sincerely thank them.

Mr. President, I believe all our thanks will be confined to our army. So far as I know in the civilized world, there is no approbation of the conduct of the civil portion of our power. On the contrary, every where the declaration is made, that we are an ambitious, unjust, hard people, more given to war than any people of modern times. Whether this be true or not, it is not for me to inquire. I am speaking now merely of the reputation we bear abroad. Every where, I believe, for as much as we have gained in military reputation abroad, I regret to perceive, we have lost in our political and civil reputation. Now sir, much as I regard military glory—much as I rejoice to behold our people in possession of the indomitable energy and courage which surmount all difficulties, and which raise them amongst the first military people of the age, I would be very sorry indeed that our government should lose any reputation for wisdom, moderation, discretion, justice, and those other high qualities which have distinguished us in the early stages of our history.

The next reason which my resolutions assign, is, that it is without example or precedent, either to hold Mexico as a province, or to incorporate her into our Union. No example of such a line of policy can be found. We have conquered many of the neighboring tribes of Indians, but we never thought of holding them in subjection—never of incorporating them into our Union. They have either been left as an independent people amongst us, or been driven into the forests.

I know farther, sir, that we have never dreamt of incorporating into our Union any but the Caucasian race—the free white race. To incorporate Mexico, would be the very first instance of the kind of incorporating an Indian race, for more than half of the Mexicans are Indians, and the other is composed chiefly of mixed tribes. I protest against such a union as that! Ours sir, is the government of the white man. The Greater misfortunes of Spanish America are to be traced to the fatal error of placing these colored races on an equality with the white race. That error degraded the social arrangement which formed the basis of society. The Portuguese and ourselves have escaped it. Portugal at least to some extent—and we are the only people on this continent which have made revolutions without being followed by anarchy. And yet it is proclaimed and talked about to erect these Mexicans into a territorial government, and place them on an equality with the people of the United States. I protest utterly against such a project.

Sir, it is a remarkable fact, that in the whole history of man, as far as my knowledge extends, there is no instance whatever of any civilized colored race having found equal to the establishment of free popular government, although by far the largest portion of the human family is composed of these races. And even in the savage state we scarcely find them any where with such government, except it be our noble savages—for noble I will call them. They for the most part had free institutions, but they are easily sustained amongst a savage people. Are we to overlook this fact? Are we to associate with ourselves as equals, companions, and fellow-citizens, the Indians and mixed race of Mexico? Sir, I should consider such a thing as fatal to our institutions.

The next two reasons which I assigned, were, that it would be in conflict with the genius and character of our institutions and subversive of our free government. I take these two together as they are so intimately connected; and now of the first—to hold Mexico in subjection.

Mr. President, there are some propositions too clear for argument; and before such a body as the Senate, I should consider it a loss of time to undertake to prove that to hold Mexico as a subjected province would be hostile to, and in conflict with, our free institutions, and in the end subversive of them. Sir, he who knows the American Constitution well;—he who has duly studied its character;—he who has looked at history and knows what has been the effect of components by free states, invariably will require no proof at my hands to show that it would be entirely hostile to the institutions of the country, to hold Mexico as a province.—There is not an example on record of any free state even having attempted the conquest of any territory approaching the extent of Mexico without disastrous consequences. The nation conquered have in time conquered the conquerors by destroying their liberty. That will be our case, sir. The conquest of Mexico would add so vast an amount to the patronage of this government, that it would absorb the whole power of the States in the Union. This Union would become imperial, and the States mere subordinate corporations. But the evil will not end there. The process will go on. The same process by which the power would be transferred from the State to the Union, will transfer the whole from this department of the government (I speak of the legislature) to the Executive. All the added power and added patronage which conquest will create, will pass to the Executive. In the end you put in the hands of the Executive the power of conquering you. You give to it, sir, such splendor, such ample means, that with the principle of prescription which unfortunately prevails in our country, that the struggle will be greater at every presidential election than our institutions can possibly endure. The end of it will be that that branch of the government will become all powerful and the result is inevitably—anarchy and despotism. It is as certain as that I am this day addressing the Senate.

Sir, let it not be said that Great Britain furnishes an example to the contrary—that she holds provinces of vast extent of population without materially impairing the liberty of the citizen, or exposing her to anarchy, confusion or corruption. It is so. But what is the explanation? Is all governments that ever existed affording any protection whatever to liberty, the English Government far transcends them all in that respect. She can bear more patronage in proportion to her population and wealth than any government of that form that ever existed, nay, to go farther, than can despotism in its most absolute form. I will not go into the philosophy of this. That would take me farther from the track than I desire. But I will say in a very few words, it results from the fact that her Executive and the House of Peers, the conservative branch of her government, are both hereditary. The Roman government may have exceeded and did exceed the British government in its power for conquest; but no people ever did exist, and probably never will exist, with such a capacity for conquest as that people. But the capacity of Rome to hold subjected provinces, was as nothing compared to that of Great Britain, and hence, as soon as the Roman power passed from Italy beyond the Adriatic on one side, and the Alps on the other, and the Mediterranean, their liberty fell prostrate—the Roman people became a rabble—corruption penetrated everywhere, and violence and anarchy ruled the day. Now, we see England with dependent provinces of vastly greater territorial extent, and probably not less in population—I have not examined—we see her going on without impairing personal liberty or exposing the government to violence or anarchy. Yet the English have not wholly escaped. Although they have retained their liberty and have not fallen into anarchy and despotism, yet we behold the population of England crushed to the earth by the superincumbent weight of debt. Reflecting on that government, I have often thought that there was only one way in which it could come to an end—that the weight of the superstructure would crush the foundation—that the wealth accumulated in part by these very conquests by the higher classes would crush the laboring masses below. But has she obtained indemnity from all her subjected provinces? On the contrary, instead of drawing the means of supporting herself from them, has she not been compelled to resort to the labor of her own population to hold them in subjection? And has she not thrown a burden upon them, which, with all their industry and skill—with all their vast accumulation of capital and power of machinery, they are incapable of bearing without being reduced to poverty? Take even her earliest and nearest conquest—the neighboring island of Ireland—is it not to this day a source of heavy expense, and a burthen to her, instead of a source of revenue?

But while the English government has such vast power of holding subjugated provinces in subjection without impairing her liberty—without the evils incident to it, our government of all free governments that ever existed, has the least capacity to bear patronage in proportion to its wealth and power. In this respect the genius of the two governments is precisely the opposite, however much alike in their exterior forms, and their laws and customs. The cause of such difference I cannot undertake to explain on the present occasion, but must content myself by saying that it results from its federal character and the nature of its conservative principles. Shall we, then, with these certain and inevitably consequences in a government better calculated to resist them than any other, adopt such a ruinous policy, and reject the lesson of experience? So much then, Mr. President, for holding Mexico as a province.

I come now to the proposition of incorporating her into our Union. Well, as far as law is concerned, that is easy. You can establish a territorial government for every state in Mexico, and there are some twenty of them. You can appoint governors, judges and magistrates. You can give the people a subordinate government, allowing them to legislate for themselves, whilst you defray the cost. So far as law goes the thing is done. There is no analogy between this and our territorial governments. Our territories are only an offset of our own people, or foreigners from the same regions from which we came. They are small in number. They are incapable of forming a government. It would be inconvenient for them to sustain a government, if it were formed; and they are very much obliged to the United States for undertaking the trouble, knowing that on the attainment of their majority—when they come to manhood—at twenty-one—they will be introduced to an equality with all the other members of the Union. It is entirely different with Mexico. You have no need of armies to keep your territories in subjection. But when you incorporate Mexico, you must have powerful armies to keep them in subjection. You may call it annexation; but it is a forced annexation, which is a contradiction in terms, according to my conception. You will be involved, in one word, in all the evils which I attribute to holding Mexico as a province. In fact it will be but a provincial government, under the name of a territorial government. How long will that last? How long will it be before Mexico will be capable of incorporation into our Union? Why, if we judge from the examples before us, it will be a very long time. Ireland has been held in subjection by England for seven or eight hundred years, and yet still remains hostile, although her people are of kindred race with the conquerors. A few French Canadians on this continent yet maintain the attitude of a hostile people; and never will the time come, in my opinion, Mr. President, that these Mexicans will be heartily reconciled to your authority. They have Castilian blood in their veins—the old Gothic, quite equal to the Anglo-Saxon in many respects—in some respects superior. On all nations of the earth, they are the most pertinacious—have the highest sense of nationality—hold out longest, and often even with the least prospects of effecting their object. On this subject also I have conversed with officers of the army, and they all entertain the same opinion; that these people are now hostile, and will continue so.

But, Mr. President, suppose all these difficulties removed. Suppose these people attached to our Union, and desirous of incorporating with us, ought we to bring them in? Are they fit to be connected with us? Are they fit for self-government and for governing you? Are you, any of you, willing that your States should be governed by these twenty odd Mexican States, with a population of about only one million of your blood, and two or three millions of mixed blood, better informed, all the rest pure Indians, a mixed blood equally ignorant and unfit for liberty, impure races, not as good as the Cherokees or Choctaws?

We make a great mistake, sir, when we suppose that all people are capable of self-government. We are anxious to force free government on all; and I see that it has been urged in a very respectable quarter, that it is the mission of this country to spread civil and religious liberty over all the world, and especially over this continent. It is a great mistake. None but people advanced to a very high state of moral and intellectual improvement are capable, in a civilized state, of maintaining free government; and amongst those who are so purified, very few indeed, have had the good fortune of forming a Constitution capable of endurance. It is a remarkable fact in the history of man, that scarcely ever have free popular institutions been formed by wisdom alone, that have endured.

It has been the work of fortunate circumstances or a combination of circumstances, a succession of fortunate incidents of some kind, that give to any people a free government. It is a very difficult task to make a Constitution to last, though it may be supposed by some that they can be made to order and furnished at the shortest notice. Sir, this admirable Constitution of our own was the result of a fortunate combination of circumstances. It was superior to the wisdom of the men who made it. It was the force of circumstances which induced them to adopt most of its wise provisions. Well, sir, of the few nations who have had the good fortune to adopt self-government, few have had the good fortune long to preserve that government; for it is harder to preserve than to form it. Few people, after years of prosperity, remember the tenure by which their liberty is held; and I fear, Senators, that is our own condition. I fear that we shall continue to involve ourselves until our own system becomes a ruin. Sir, there is no solicitude now for liberty. Who talks of liberty when any great question comes up? Here is a question of the first magnitude as to the conduct of this war; do you hear any body talk about its effect upon our liberties and our free institutions? No sir. That was not the case formerly. In the early stages of our government, the great anxiety was how to preserve liberty. The great anxiety now, is for the attainment of mere military glory. In the one we are forgetting the other. The maxim of former times was, that power is always stealing from the many to the few; the price of liberty was perpetual vigilance. They were constantly looking out and watching for danger. Then, when any great question came up, the first inquiry was, how it could affect our free institutions—how it could affect our liberty. Not so now. Is it because there has been any decay of the spirit of liberty among the people? Not at all. I believe the love of liberty was never more ardent, but they have forgotten the tenure of liberty by which alone it is preserved.

We think we may now indulge in every thing with impunity, as if we held our charter of liberty by "right divine"—from heaven itself. Under these impressions we plunge into war, we contract heavy debts, we increase the patronage of the Executive, and we even talk of a crusade to force our institutions, our liberty, upon all people. There is no species of extravagance which our people imagine will endanger their liberty in any degree. But it is a great and fatal mistake.—The day of retribution will come. It will come as certainly as I am now addressing the Senate, and when it does come, awful will be the reckoning; heavy the responsibility somewhere!

Mr. President, with these impressions I cannot approve of the policy recommended by the Executive, nor, with my present views, support it. The question is now, what shall be done?—It is a great and difficult question, and it is daily becoming more and more difficult. What is to be done? Sir, that question ought not to be for me to answer. I, who have used every effort in my power to prevent this war, and after its commencement have done every thing in my power to diminish the evil to the smallest possible amount. But I will not shrink from any responsibility whether it properly belongs to me or not. After saying that I cannot support the course recommended by the Executive, I will proceed to state that which I would propose as the best to be pursued. Well, then, I will say that there is not the smallest chance of our disentangling ourselves from this Mexican concern which threatens us so much—there has not been in my opinion the smallest chance, from the commencement of the war until this time, but by taking a defensive line, doing that now which the President recommends should be done finally after the conquest and taking indemnity into our own hands. To do this, depends on our own volition, and not on the fleeting consent of Mexico. Sir, if time had been allowed to the Senate when the Message of the President recommending war was before them, if time had been allowed to the Senate, I would have announced the course of policy which I thought right, but time was not permitted. My opinion was that we should have simply voted Taylor the means of defending himself. That ought to have been done. There then should have been a solemn report from the proper Committee, going into all the circumstances, showing that the republic of Mexico had not yet recognized these hostilities—recommending a provisional army to be directed to a proper point, giving time to the Mexican Congress and Mexican people to have considered whether they would avow or disavow the attacks upon us; and if no satisfaction were obtained, not to make war in this set form, but seize upon the portions of the country contiguous and most convenient to us, and then have assumed the defensive line. These are my views, but unfortunately, we were all acting here under an urgency without time to reflect. We were pushed on and told, if you do not act to-day nothing can be done.

Well now, sir, as to where the defensive line should be at the present time, I do not presume to offer an opinion. I suggested a line at the last session. I am not prepared to say what would be the proper one at the present time, but I do say that we must vacate the central parts of Mexico. We must fall back, if you choose to use that word, or take a line that shall cover amply territory for indemnity.

For my part, I am not for charging Mexico with the whole expense of the war; but I would take ample territory, and hold it subject to negotiation. Now, sir, I know it will be said that this will be as expensive as the war. I think I have said enough to show that it cannot be, that it will fall far short of it; but I will not repeat the argument. But admitting it should; admitting that by no means concludes the argument; for the sacrifice of men would be infinitely less, and, what is more important, you will thereby be able to disentangle yourselves. That is the only way by which it can be done. You are tied at present, as it were, to a corpse. My object is to get rid of it as soon as possible.

I look not to Mexico; I look to our own country and her institutions. I look to the liberty of this country and nothing else. Mr. President, if we but preserve our liberty by a proper course of moderation, acting justly towards our neighbor, and wisely in regard to ourselves—if we remain quiet, resting in idle and masterly inactivity, and let our destinies work out their own results, we shall do more for liberty, not only for ourselves but for the example of mankind, that can be done by a thousand victories.

Sir, I find I am becoming old; I almost feel that I live among strangers. If I have expressed anything that is uncongenial to the feelings of this body, put it down as proceeding from the old associations of thirty or thirty-five years ago, which are still clinging around me. Sir, this is not the first time that I have taken my stand against war. When Gen. Jackson recommended letters of marque and reprisal against France, I arose alone in the Senate and remonstrated against such injustice. And, in point of fact, the Treaty which was subsequently concluded with France, was ratified with the express understanding, which was known to our government when the Treaty was formed, that it would require a vote of the Chambers on the part of France to sustain it, as it would require a vote to sustain it on the part of this country; and that they were no further responsible than to use their best efforts to obtain that vote. And yet, though it was acknowledged that the Executive of France had done all in his power to obtain the vote, we were nearly pushed into a war. Nothing but the interposition of Great Britain prevented it. As for myself, standing on this side of the Chamber, I raised my voice singly against it.

Mr. President, in my opinion all parties are interested in giving this matter the only direction that can be given to it with any prospect of a favorable result. Let me say to the friends of the Administration, if you go on and some accident does not meet you—if you go on in the prosecution of this war from year to year, you will find that it will overthrow you. Do you not see that as far as the internal affairs of the government are concerned, you are reversing the policy of which you have heretofore professed to be the advocates. What party has been opposed to the recreation of a great national debt!—The Democratic or Republican party? Well, sir, this war is involving you in a greater debt than the opposite party could have done, perhaps, in any circumstances short of war. This very campaign, which you look upon so lightly, will be almost as great a charge upon the country as the debt of the Revolution. What party has always been against the extension of the patronage of the Executive? Well, sir, you are doing more towards the extension of that patronage, and above all towards the continuance of that extension, than has ever been done under our government. Well, sir, what party professes to be most in favor of a metallic currency? And do you not see that as your Treasury Notes and Stocks accumulate, you are in danger of being plunged again into the paper system to the utmost extent? What party has always been in favor of Free Trade? Do you not see that by accumulating charges and burdens upon the people by the debts which have now been contracted, that you never will during your time have an opportunity of making any considerable reduction in the Tariff?

Sir, I know what is at the bottom of the course of policy which is recommended to be pursued. It is that pride of opinion to which we are all subject. No doubt it was thought that that course of policy would lead to the consequences which were recommended for; but it has not. But, sir, the alternative is pressing. You will have but the choice between that and worse, in my opinion. It is magnanimous and honorable to retract when a course of policy which has been pursued turns out to be wrong. It would do great credit to the party in power to act now precisely as they would have acted if they had all the lights of experience at the commencement of this war which they now have. It would be doing a high act of patriotism, to sacrifice their feelings of individual pride to the good of the country.

Now let me say that in asserting that a defensive line was the only alternative to the plan recommended by the President, I have put out of the question the course which most of you advocate—taking no indemnity of territory; because, I believe that the voice of the country has decided irrevocably against it; and that to keep it as the conquest of Mexico would but render more certain the adoption of the policy recommended by the Executive, and in consequence the conquest of the whole country. Let me say further, to my friends on the other side of the Chamber, for I regard them as such—(it is our good fortune to differ in politics here, without permitting our personal feelings to be affected)—that they have contributed by their course to give the public opinion that strong and fixed determination, not to terminate the war without some suitable indemnity. If we had made the treaty spoken of in the bill recognizing the existence of war between the republic of Mexico and the United States. No one knows better than myself, that you voted for the bill with the view of furnishing immediate relief to Gen. Taylor and his army—and not in reference to the war—that you even protested and remonstrated against that interpretation being put upon your vote. But after the bill passed, and the war was authorized, most of you have continued to vote appropriations to prosecute the war with the object expressed of acquiring territory as an indemnity. Now, I must say, I cannot see how the two can be reconciled—how your vote to acquire territory can be justified, and at the same time your opposition to the acquisition of territory as means of indemnity, when it is acknowledged on all sides, that that is the only means by which it can be acquired. The people will find it hard to believe that it was necessary to vote so much money for the purpose of getting territory for indemnity, which you intend to throw away when you get it! But, whatever may be the causes which have led to this state of public opinion, it has, beyond all doubt, decided against any conclusion of this war that does not involve territorial indemnity to some extent. Hence, I repeat, the alternative whether this war shall go on and consummate itself, is between taking a defensive line and adopting the course pointed out by the Executive, and that the decision must be made now; for if it be passed over until another session, the end will be, I doubt not, the subjugation of the whole country, thereby involving us in all the difficulties and dangers which must result from it.

Now, I have delivered my opinion with that candor and frankness which, I hope, become my position on this floor. I shall now propose nothing, but if I find that I can be supported in these my views, I will undertake to raise a committee to deliberate, after consulting with those officers who are now fortunately in this city, upon the best defensive line that can be taken. If it should be fortunately adopted, we may not get peace immediately. The war may continue for some years, but we will accomplish that all-important consideration, the extrication of ourselves and the country from this entanglement with Mexico.

The state of my voice is such that it is not in my power to make to this House the observations which I should otherwise have felt it my duty to make upon this case. I will state, sir, that the reason why I have felt it my duty to take this course is, that I consider it a novel thing, and a thing affecting the rights of this House, and of the constituency of this House—the People of the United States. It denies, sir, as I understand it, the power, the constitutional power of the House to call for that information. I believe it is the first time in the history of this Union that it has been denied. In the case to which the President refers, when a call was made upon President Washington, there was, (which the message omits to state) an exception for cases which he might think not proper to be inquired into at the time.

Now, sir, the President has not added what was the action of the House upon that; and the action of the House was in direct opposition to the resistance of President Washington to their call. The House formally declared—and I wish the Journal might be looked to to see—the House formally declared, against President Washington, their right to call for such information. That was their action; and, as far as I know, although the very memory of Washington, by every body in this country, at this time, (and by none more than myself) is reverenced next to worship—the President was wrong in that particular instance, and went too far to deny the power of the House; and as to his reasons, I never thought they were sufficient in that case. And I have always been of the opinion, and most assuredly that has been the opinion of the Democratic party, to which I do not profess to belong. (A laugh.) They have unanimously disapproved of that act of President Washington, as interfering with the rights of this House, and of their constituents, the people of the United States.

I say I cannot enter into an argument upon this subject; but I consider it of such importance that I am certainly indisposed to lay this message upon the table. I desire it may be printed, that it may go to the whole country, that it may be decided upon by the people as well as by this House. I think this House ought to sustain, in the strongest manner, their right to call for information upon questions in which war and peace are concerned. They ought to maintain their right, and maintain it in a very distinct manner, against this assertion on the part of the President of the United States. Now, I should be perfectly satisfied to refer the message to the Committee on Foreign affairs, whatever my feelings may be in respect to their firmness in resisting this claim set up on the part of the President of the United States. If the Committee on Foreign Relations will take it, and will examine the constitution of the United States, its principles, the history of the administration of the Government from that time to the present, and will make a report upon it, I shall be satisfied. As to a select committee, I shall be perfectly satisfied that a select committee should be appointed by the Speaker, instead of referring it to the Committee on Foreign Affairs. And, as a mark of respect to the President of the United States, I should go for a select committee, provided I am not to be a member of it myself.

I therefore myself, in the first place, hope that a select committee, of which I shall not be a member, will be appointed; and if that is not in conformity with the opinion of a majority of this House, that it shall be referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs. As all the messages of the President are usually referred.

I should say much more, sir, if I had the power.

We shall lay before our readers next week, if possible, a full account of the discussion of the great principle involved in this refusal of Mr. Polk. If the President is an Autocrat, the sooner we know it the better.

Free Press,

BURLINGTON, Vt.

FRIDAY MORNING, JANUARY 21, 1848.

"IN THE DARK AND TROUBLED NIGHT THAT IS UPON US, THERE IS NO STAR ABOVE THE HORIZON TO GIVE US A GLEAM OF LIGHT, EXCEPTING THE INTELLIGENT, PATRIOTIC WHIG PARTY OF THE UNITED STATES."—*Daniel Webster.*

PROGRESS OF USURPATION.

Congress defied by President Polk.

On the 4th inst., the House of Representatives adopted a resolution calling on the President for information respecting the return of Generals Santa Anna and Parades to Mexico, together with "the instructions and orders issued to Mr. Slidell at any time prior or subsequent to his departure for Mexico as Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States to that Republic."

On Wednesday, the 12th inst., Mr. Polk sent a Message to the House with part of the information called for, and *refusing* to communicate the "instructions and orders to Mr. Slidell!" The following are the concluding paragraphs of the *Dictator's* Message, vetoing the resolution of the House of Representatives:—

I have heretofore communicated to Congress all the correspondence of the minister of the United States to Mexico, which, in the existing state of our relations with that republic, can, in my judgment, be at this time communicated without serious injury to the public interest.

Entertaining this conviction, and with a sincere desire to furnish any information which may be in possession of the Executive Department, and which either house of Congress may at any time request, I regard it to be my constitutional right, and my solemn duty, under the circumstances of this case, to decline a compliance with the request of the House contained in their resolution.

JAMES K. POLK.

Washington, Jan. 12, 1848.

It remains, of course, to be seen which is to rule in this country——the PEOPLE'S REPRESENTATIVES, or the President. Mr. Polk has plunged the nation into a bloody and profitless War, without authority and in contempt of the Representatives of the People of the United States, and now he refuses to acknowledge their right to call upon him for information respecting *the way he did it!*

This arrogant assumption of Mr. Polk stirred the blood of the "old man eloquent," JOHN QUINCY ADAMS, whose speech is thus reported.

Bishop Hughes at the New England Festival.

Our esteemed friends of the *Vermont Chronicle* take *decided* exception to our notions respecting the presence of Bishop Hughes at the New England Society's Dinner in New York, on the 22d ultimo, and refuse to "own up" to our representations touching the Pilgrims. For the *instruction* they vouchsafe to us in regard to what were and what were not the fruits of ascetic puritanism, we are of course obliged;—though it is possible we do not look at their view of the matter as being *quite* as clear as it undoubtedly appears to them. But let that pass. We yield to no man of our limited information in admiration and respect for the many noble qualities—the unconquerable love of Freedom, the inflexible resolution, the stern integrity of character and motives, the solemn regard for Law and Order, the resolute republicanism—of the Puritans. And the *Chronicle* will perhaps be surprised to learn that it is precisely because we admire and respect those qualities, so remarkably developed by these early pioneers of Liberty, that we should rejoice to see Romanist and Protestant, Jew and Mahometan, thrown in the way of doing honor to them! The Chronicle says:

Doubtless the members of the New England Society of New York are very respectable men; but we confess upon these occasions we have some misgivings that any proper appreciation, on their part, of the occasion, which by their course it would seem to be conducted as to strengthen in our hearts the principles and to cherish the spirit of the Pilgrims of 1620. Otherwise it is good for nothing. It is appropriately, then, a celebration by such as sincerely honor the character of those men, and earnestly desire that their principles and their spirit may be perpetuated among us. Nothing inconsistent with such a purpose ought to be admitted.—Festivals of angers are false to the object and dishonor the occasion, when, by the use of intoxicating drinks at the dinner table, they drive from it those ministers of the Gospel who are in our time the proper representatives of the devoted men who preached to our fathers two hundred years ago; and when, instead, they invite to the feast such as can have no sympathy in the spirit which belongs to the occasion.

At this celebration, there ought to be the freest utterance of the Pilgrim spirit and of the truths that the Pilgrims loved. But how can that be when Papists and High Churchmen, *by special invitation*, occupy prominent places among the guests? The managers are too courteous to invite the Wainwrights and the Hugheses on purpose to throw unwelcome truth in their faces.

All this would be well and cogent, and the Chronicle and ourselves would be at no loggerheads on the subject, if "the New England Society" were (what it certainly is *not*) an association of Presbyterian or Calvinistic Clergymen, and if the sole object of its organization were (as it certainly is *not*) to celebrate and memorize the particular *religious* faith of the Puritans. In that case, undoubtedly, "Papists and High-Churchmen" would receive no invitation to these annual Festivals. Our zealous friends of the Chronicle overlook the considerable fact, however, that the New England Societies, in New York, and elsewhere, are emphatically NOT *sectarian* associations. They number among their members, as descendants of the Puritans and admirers of their characters, men of every variety of Christian creed and worship; including "Papists and High-Churchmen"—men who find no difficulty in honoring their sturdy ancestors (not, by any means, as the Chronicle intimates, *exclusively* the "Pilgrims of Plymouth") for their sturdy and heroic virtues. It is not to be expected that the Puritans are to be honored *only* on account of their religious views and creed; and *if* not, then they are to be honored for the possession of qualities which, in their transmission, have elevated and benefitted our race, and for which *all* of our race can appropriately celebrate and honor their memories. The *Chronicle* may, if it chooses, magnify our Pilgrim ancestors for their *religious* institutions alone; *we* are glad that Bishop HUGHES so far appreciates their *civil* institutions as to magnify them for their "Schoolmasters."

☞ A friend brought to our office, on the morning of the 17th of January, 1848, a bouquet of *violets* which he had that day found in blossom in the open air. These beautiful and timid *scouts* from a sunnier clime are still upon our table, faded memorials of the strange mosaic of flowers and frost which has thus far made up our *Winter*.

Mr. Darby attributes the extraordinary fluctuations of temperature to which we have been subjected, to the influence of the Magnetic Telegraph in "bringing us so near to Washington."

The Rutland and Burlington Railroad.

We have been kindly furnished with the Report of the Directors of the Rutland and Burlington Railroad Company, submitted to the Stockholders at their Annual Meeting, at Rutland, on the 12th inst., which we subjoin. We congratulate the Stockholders and the public on the favorable exhibition it presents of the condition and prospects of this great work, whose early completion (of which there can be no reasonable doubt,) promises such beneficial results upon the prosperity of the rich section of our State which it will open to the Atlantic Markets, as well as upon that of the State at large.

We learn that the Board of Directors, and the Officers of the Company, were re-elected with entire unanimity, and that the work of construction will be prosecuted with increased activity and vigor.

The accompanying Report of Mr. SWITT, the Treasurer, presents the financial condition of the Company in a very satisfactory manner. It will be perceived that, adding the amount of stock (about $750,000) held by constructing, and other, contractors, on which assessments are of course not paid, the total amount falls but a few thousands short of the entire capital of the Company.

Believing Burlington to be deeply interested in the successful prosecution of this noble enterprise, we again congratulate our citizens in view of the subjoined clear and business-like presentation of its favorable condition and prospects.

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS,

Of the Rutland and Burlington Railroad Company, made to the Stockholders at their Annual Meeting held at Rutland, Jan. 12, 1848.

The act incorporating the Champlain and Connecticut river Railroad Company makes no provision for a detailed report, to the stockholders or even to the Legislature, of the proceedings of the corporation, their receipts and expenditures, except through a committee of the Legislature, specially appointed for that purpose. It is believed, nevertheless, that the present occasion may be fairly improved, to present to this large assemblage of Stockholders, a summary, at least, of the proceedings of their Directors during the past year, with a statement from the Treasurer of the corporation, showing its past receipts and disbursements, and our present pecuniary condition.

The undertaking in which we are engaged, gentlemen, is one of great interest and importance, not only to us, its stockholders, & the immediate region of country through which the road passes, but to the whole state of Vermont, to Boston, to New England, and to New York. A country fertile in the productions of agriculture, and rich in minerals to an unparalleled extent, is penetrated by this road, and rendered accessible at all seasons of the year. By it the markets of the Atlantic are brought to our doors, and over it, the trade and travel of the mighty West and Canada will find their outlet to all our great cities and towns.

It is not the purpose of the Directors to recapitulate the embarrassments and difficulties which beset this enterprise in its early stages. To *some* extent they might perhaps have been rationally anticipated, as incident to all railroad undertakings. But you cannot fail to remember how often and how seriously the existence of this project was threatened and perilled. To the *great merit* alone are we indebted for the cheering prospects now before us. Those prospects justify the anticipation of an early completion of our great work, a completion, too, according to our original design, connecting the river and the lake, and within the estimates furnished by our Chief Engineer, upon his preliminary survey.

It will be recollected that in January, 1847, the Directors accepted the proposals of a party, for the grading, masonry, bridging, superstructure and laying the iron rails, on the Bridgewater division of the road, extending from Burlington to Brandon, a distance of about 51 1-3 miles. The party alluded to failed to enter into a written contract though called upon for that purpose, or to commence the work as agreed—whereupon the Directors, regarding the matter as an abandonment, on or about the first of May, 1847, proceeded to relet that Division of the road, which they were enabled to do to a company of contractors on equally favorable terms, and the work was thereafter immediately commenced, and has been prosecuted since, with as much energy as seemed to be required to secure its completion within the season of 1848.

The grading and masonry on that part of the line extending from Bellows Falls up to, and including, the summit at Mount Holly, was also put under contract in January, 1847. On this division the work has been interrupted, and in one instance suspended for a few weeks, by the failure or abandonment of the contractors. This portion has been *relet*, and the whole is now in the hands of parties on whom the Directors confidently rely for as early a completion of the work as the nature of the country and the obstacles to be overcome, will justify or permit.

In June, 1847, the directors put under contract the balance of the whole line, being the Rutland division extending from the village of Brandon, the summit at Mount Holly, to the village of Brandon. Some of the contractors on this division also, have abandoned their work, and the same has been relet to others; with the exception of some few light sections which do not require immediate attention, and which can be safely postponed to the opening of another spring.

From the foregoing statement you will perceive that the work under contract, at different places, during the year of 1847, and *now is*, with a very slight and unimportant exception, under contract—The rates at which this work has been undertaken are generally very favorable, and the contractors are men of experience and ability.—That portion of the road between Burlington and Rutland, and between Bellows Falls and Ludlow, in all over 90 miles, will, it is confidently believed, be in readiness for the cars, by the first day of January, 1849, and the remainder by a somewhat later period during the same year.

It has thus far been the policy of the Board, to urge the work of grading only on sections where a large amount of excavation or embankment was to be encountered; sections less formidable, and requiring less time to complete, have been generally postponed—intending thereby to perfect, as near as possible at the same moment, long and uninterrupted portions of the line, without unnecessary loss or interest. The lighter sections will be commenced as early in the approaching spring, as the weather and season will permit.

A proposition from a contractor of great experience, to construct the bridges on the Bellows Falls, Mount Holly and Rutland divisions, has been made and accepted. These structures, so indispensable to the safe running of the road, and necessarily so expensive, have engaged the careful attention of the board, and they have sought the best lights of experience and science to guide them to a correct result. The "Howe plan" so called, has received their approbation, and been adopted.

On the 14th of Jan., 1847, the Directors entered into a contract with an extensive iron manufacturer of Boston, for the rails sufficient for the whole road—and on terms which, at the time, were regarded as highly favorable to the Corporation. He has recently been compelled to yield to a severe pressure in the money market. Previous to which, however, and with his concurrence and assent, he was released from the delivery of the first two thousand tons of these rails, and the same quantity has been contracted for, of English manufacture, and at rates more favorable than had been stipulated for in the original contract. Our interests with regard to the balance of the contract, are more especially confided to the Gentlemen of our Board resident at Boston, whose watchful care will be always directed to the subject, and through whose agency and instrumentality we have reason to hope for an early and satisfactory adjustment of the subject.

The board take much pleasure in being able to state that for the cast iron work required in the construction of the road, and for its car furniture, we shall not be obliged to depart from its line. The iron manufactured at Brandon and Pittsford from the brown hematite ore, has acquired, as it deserves, a high character for strength, tenacity, and solidity. By the manufacturers there, we are to be supplied with our rail chairs and all other necessary cast iron appendages. In this connection it is proper further to remark, that enterprising individuals have recently erected an extensive manufactory at Brandon, for the construction of rail road cars of all descriptions, with whom we have contracted for 190 freight cars, 40 gravel cars, and eight baggage cars. We shall be enabled, we trust, to procure from them any further quantity we may require, including perhaps passenger cars, of material, workmanship, style and finish equal to any now manufactured in the country.

The Directors have also contracted with the Taunton Locomotive Manufacturing Company, for eight Engines of 18 tons each for passenger service, and four Engines for freight service of twenty tons each. This contract, compared with present prices for such machines, is highly favorable for the Corporation, and we have the fullest confidence in the ability and disposition of the contractors to give them to us of the very best material and workmanship, and embracing all the improvements of the present day.

Contracts for a large portion of the materials to be used in the superstructure of the road, such as sleepers and ties, and for fencing lumber to a considerable extent, have been entered into.

The Directors have concluded an arrangement with the Cheshire rail road Company, by virtue of which the two corporations are to use, in common, the Depot grounds and Depot buildings at Bellows Falls, the common termination of both roads at Connecticut river. A large saving of expense, is by this measure secured to both corporations, and the greatest facility afforded for the interchange of business, on both lines of road.

On the subject of land required for Depots, and land for the road bed, the directors have to communicate that at Burlington, Vergennes, Middlebury, Brandon, Rutland and Bellows Falls, the land for Depot use has been principally secured. The quantity taken varies at the different localities, as in the judgment of the board the future wants of the Corporation may require. An opportunity was presented at Burlington for the purchase of a tract of land of about seventy acres, on terms considered so favorable, that it was embraced at once. Portions of this tract will not be required for immediate use, and should the Corporation so determine, might be sold either *now*, or probably at any future period, at a considerable advance upon its cost. It is rapidly increasing in value, and in connection with other lands owned by the corporation, giving us a Lake front of about 280 feet contiguous to the business section of the town and in immediate connection with our Depot buildings, cannot fail to increase in value for many years to come. These grounds afford ample room for the accommodation of all the roads which may ultimately terminate at Burlington, and it cannot be doubted that the wise and comprehensive policy which originated these great enterprises, will in the end connect them where the public convenience unites with the interest of each corporation to bring them all to a common termination.

The Depot grounds at Rutland have been laid out, and the grade and track adjusted with reference to a conn