

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

To the Senate and House of Representatives:—

In transmitting to you my fourth annual message, it is with thankfulness to the Giver of all good that the nation and we have been blessed for the last year with peace at home and abroad and a general prosperity vouchsafed to but few people.

The Boston Fire.

With the exception of the recent devastating fire, which swept from earth, with a breath as it were, millions of accumulated wealth in the city of Boston, there have been no overshadowing calamities within the year to record. It is gratifying to note how, like their fellow citizen of the city of Chicago, under similar circumstances a year earlier, the citizens of Boston are rallying under their misfortunes, and the prospect is that their energy and perseverance will overcome all obstacles and show the same prosperity soon, that they would had no disaster befallen them. Otherwise we have been free from pestilence, war and calamities, which often overtake nations, and as far as human judgment can penetrate the future, no cause seems to exist to threaten our present peace.

Geneva Arbitration.

When Congress adjourned in June last, a question had been raised by Great Britain and was then pending which for a time seriously imperilled the settlement by friendly arbitration of the differences existing between this government and that of Her Britannic Majesty. The Treaty of Washington had been referred to the Tribunal of Arbitration, which had met at Geneva, in Switzerland. The arbitrators, however, disposed of the question which had jeopardized the whole of the treaty and threatened to involve the two nations in unhappy relations towards each other, in a manner entirely satisfactory to this government, and in accordance with the views and the policy which it had maintained. The Tribunal, which had convened in Geneva in December, concluded its laborious session on the 4th day of September last, on which day, having availed itself of the discretionary power given to it by the treaty to award the sum in gross, it made its decision, whereby it awarded the sum of \$15,500,000 in gold as the indemnity to be paid by Great Britain to the United States for satisfaction of all claims referred to its consideration. This decision happily disposes of a long standing difference between the two governments, and in connection with another award made by the German Emperor under a reference to him by the same treaty leaves the two governments without a shadow upon the friendly relations which it is my sincere hope may forever remain equally unclouded. The report of the agent of the United States appointed to attend the Geneva Tribunal, accompanied by the protocols of the proceedings of the arbitrators, arguments of counsel of both governments, award of tribunal, and the opinion given by the several arbitrators, is transmitted herewith. I have caused to be communicated to the heads of the three friendly powers who compiled with the joint request made to them under the treaty, the thanks of this government for the appointment of the arbitrators made by them respecting it, and also my thanks to eminent personages named by them, and my appreciation of the dignity, patience, impartiality and great ability with which they discharged their arduous and high functions. Her Majesty's government has communicated to me its appreciation by Her Majesty of the ability and indefatigable industry displayed by Mr. Adams, the arbitrator named on the part of this government, during the protracted inquiries and discussions of the tribunal. I cordially unite with her Majesty in this appreciation. It is due to the agent of the United States before the tribunal to record my appreciation of the marked ability, the unwearied patience, and the prudence and discretion with which he conducted the very responsible and delicate duties committed to him, as it is also due to the learned and eminent counsel who attended the tribunal on the part of this government to express my sense of the talents and wisdom which they brought to bear on the argument and of the result so happily reached.

Indemnification Commissioners.

It will be the province of Congress to provide for the distribution among those

who may be entitled to it, of their respective shares of the money to be paid. Although it is not payable until a year from the date of award, it is deemed advisable that no time be lost in making proper examination of the several cases in which indemnification may be due. I consequently recommend the creation of a board of commissioners for the purpose.

San Juan.

By the thirty-fourth article of the treaty of Washington, the respective claims of the United States and of Great Britain, in their construction of the treaty of the fifteenth of June, 1846, defining the boundary line between their respective territories, were submitted to the arbitration and award of his Majesty, the Emperor of Germany, to decide which of the claims is most in accordance with the true interpretation of the treaty of 1846. His Majesty, the Emperor of Germany, having been pleased to undertake the arbitration, has the earnest thanks of this government and people of the United States for the labor, pains and care which he has devoted to the consideration of this long pending difference. I have caused an expression of my thanks to be committed to his Majesty. Mr. Bancroft, the representative of this government at Berlin, conducted the case and prepared the statement on the part of the United States with the ability that his past service justified the public in expecting at his hands. As a member of the Cabinet at the date of the treaty which has given rise to the discussion between the governments, as the minister to Great Britain when the construction now pronounced unfounded was first advanced, and as the agent and representative of the government to present the case and to receive the award, he has been associated with the question in all its phases, and in every stage has manifested a patriotic zeal and earnestness in the maintenance of the claim of the United States. He is entitled to much credit for the success which has attended the submission. After a patient investigation of the case and of the statement of each party, his Majesty, the Emperor of Germany, on the twenty-first day of October last, signed his award in writing, decreeing that the claim of the government of the United States, that the boundary line between the territories of her Britannic majesty and the United States should be drawn through the Haro Channel, is most in accordance with the true interpretation of the treaty concluded on the 5th of June, 1846, between the agent of her Britannic Majesty and that of the United States. Copies of the case presented on behalf of each government, and of the statement in reply of each, and a translation of the award are transmitted herewith. This award confirms the United States in their claims to the important archipelago of islands lying between the continent and Van Couver's Island, which for the twenty-six years, ever since the ratification of the treaty with Great Britain has been contested, and leaves the United States, for the first time in the history of the United States as a nation, without a question of disputed boundary between our territory and the possessions of Great Britain on this continent. It is my grateful duty to acknowledge the prompt and spontaneous action of her Majesty's government in giving effect to the award. In anticipation of any request from this government and before the reception in the award signed by the Emperor, her Majesty had given instruction for the removal of her troops which had been stationed there and for the cessation of all exercise or claim of jurisdiction, so as to leave the United States in conclusive possession of the lately disputed territory. I am grateful to be able to announce that the orders for the removal of the troops have been executed and the military joint occupation of San Juan has ceased. The islands are now in the exclusive possession of the United States.

Boundary Commission.

It has become necessary to complete the survey and determination of that portion of the boundary line through the Haro Channel, upon which the commission which determined the remaining part of the line were unable to agree. I recommend the appointment of a commission to act jointly with one which may be named by her Majesty for that purpose.

Alaska Boundary Commission.

The experience of the difficulties attending the determination of our admitted line of boundary after the occupation of the territory and its settlement by those owing allegiance to the respective governments, points to the importance of establishing, by natural objects

or other measurements, the actual line between the territory acquired by purchase from Russia and the adjoining possessions of her Britannic Majesty. The region is now so sparsely occupied that no conflicting interests of individuals or of jurisdiction, are likely to interfere to the delay or embarrassment of the actual location of the line. If deferred until population shall enter and occupy the territory, some trivial contest of neighbors may again array the two governments in antagonism. I therefore recommend the appointment of a commission to act jointly with one that may be appointed on the part of Great Britain to determine the line between our territory of Alaska and of the coterminous possessions of Great Britain.

British Fisheries, etc.

In my last annual message, I recommended the legislation necessary on the part of the United States to bring into operation the articles of the Treaty of Washington of May, 1871, relating to fisheries, and to other matters touching the relations of the United States towards the British North American possessions, to become operative so soon as the proper legislation should be had on the part of Great Britain and its possessions. That legislation on the part of Great Britain and its possessions had not then been had, and during the session of Congress a question was raised, which for a time raised a doubt whether any action by Congress in the direction indicated would become important, a question which has since been disposed of, and I have received notice that the Imperial Parliament and the legislature of the Provincial government have passed laws to carry the provisions of the treaty on the matters referred to into operation. I therefore recommend your early adoption of legislation in the same direction, to carry out the part of this government.

Northern Boundary.

The joint commission for determining the boundary line between the United States and the British possessions between Lake of the Woods and the Rocky Mountains has organized and entered upon its work. It is desirable that the force be increased in order that the completion of the survey and the determination of the boundary line may be sooner attended to, and to this end I recommend that a sufficient appropriation be made.

European Relations.

With France, our earliest ally, Russia the constant and steady friend of the United States, Germany, with whose government and people we have so many causes of friendship and so many common sympathies, and the other powers of Europe, our relations are maintained on the most friendly terms. Since my last annual message exchange has been made of the ratification of a treaty with the Austro-Hungarian empire relating to naturalization, also of a treaty with the German Empire respecting consuls and trade marks, also of a treaty with Sweden and Norway relating to naturalization, all of which treaties have been duly proclaimed.

International Statistical Congress.

Congress, at its last session, having made an appropriation to defray the expenses of commissioners on the part of the United States to the International Statistical Congress at St. Petersburg, the persons appointed in that character proceeded to their destination and attended the session of the Congress. The report shall in due season be laid before you. This congress meets at intervals of about three years and has held its sessions in several of the countries of Europe. I submit to your consideration the propriety of extending an invitation to the Congress to hold its next meeting in the United States. The Centennial Celebration, to be held in 1876, would afford an appropriate occasion for such meeting.

Vienna Exposition.

Preparations are making for the International Exposition to be held during the next year in Vienna and on a scale of very great magnitude. The tendency of these expositions is in the direction of advanced civilization and the elevation of industry, of labor, and the increase of human happiness, as well as of a greater intercourse and good will among nations. This Exposition is to be the first which will have been held in Eastern Europe. It is believed that American inventors and manufacturers will be ready to avail themselves of the opportunity for the presentation of their productions, if encouraged by proper

aid and protection. At the last session of Congress authority was given for the appointment of one or more agents to represent this government at the Exposition. The authority thus given has been exercised, but in the absence of any appropriation there is danger that the important benefits which the Exposition offers will in a large degree be lost to the citizens of the United States. I commend the subject strongly to your consideration, and recommend that an adequate appropriation be made for the purpose. To further aid the American exhibitors at the Vienna Exposition, I would recommend, in addition to an appropriation of money, that the secretary of the navy be authorized to fit up two naval vessels to transport, between our Atlantic cities and Trieste, or the most convenient port, to Vienna, their articles for exhibition.

Mexico.

Since your last session the President of the Mexican republic, distinguished by his high character, and by his services to his country, has died. His temporary successor has now been elected, with great unanimity by the people—a proof of confidence on their part in his patriotism and honor, which it is believed will be confirmed by the results of his administration. It is particularly desirable that nothing should be left undone by the government of either republic to strengthen their relations as neighbors and friends. It is much to be regretted that many lawless acts continue to disturb the quiet of the settlements on the border between our territory and that of Mexico, and that complaints of wrong to American citizens in various parts of the country are made. The revolutionary conduct in which the neighboring republic has so long been involved has in some degree contributed to this disturbance. It is to be hoped that, with a more settled rule of order through the republic, which may be expected from the present government, the acts of which just complaint is made will cease. The proceedings of the commission under the convention with Mexico, of the 4th of July, 1868, claims on the subject, to have unfortunately been checked by an obstacle for the removal of which measures have been taken by the two governments, which, it is believed will prove successful. The commissioners appointed pursuant to the joint resolution of Congress, of the 7th of May last, to inquire into the depredations on the Texas frontier, have diligently made investigations on that subject; their report upon the subject will be communicated to you. Their researches were necessarily incomplete, partly on account of the limited appropriation made. The Congress of Mexico, on the part of that government, has appointed a similar commission to investigate these outrages. It is not announced officially, but the press of that country states that the fullest investigation is desired, and therefore that the co-operation of all parties concerned is invited to secure that end. I hereby recommend that a special appropriation be made at the earliest day practicable, to enable the commissioners on the part of the United States to return to their labors without delay.

Cuba.

It is with regret that I have again to announce the continuance of the disturbed condition of the island of Cuba. No advance toward the pacification of the discontented portion of the population has been made, while the insurrection has gained no advantages, and exhibits no more of the elements of power, or prospects of ultimate success, than were exhibited a year ago. Spain, on the other hand, has not succeeded in its repression, and the parties stand apparently in the same relative attitude, which they have occupied for a long time past. This contest has now lasted for more than four years. Were it seen at a distance from our neighborhood, we might be indifferent to its result, although humanity could not be unmoved by many of its incidents wherever they might occur. It is, however, at our door. I cannot doubt that the continued maintenance of slavery in Cuba is among the strongest inducements to the continuance of this strife. A terrible wrong is the natural cause of a terrible evil. The abolition of slavery and the introduction of other reforms in the administration of the government in Cuba could not possibly but advance the restoration of peace and order, and it is especially to be hoped that the present liberal government of Spain will voluntarily adopt this view. The law of emancipation