

PRESIDENT HARRISON'S MESSAGE.

INTRODUCTION.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 2, 1889.

To the Senate and House of Representatives:

There are few transactions in the administration of the government, which are even temporarily held in the confidence of those charged with the conduct of the public business. Every step taken is under the observation of an intelligent and watchful people. The state of the Union is known from day to day, and suggestions as to needed legislation find an earlier voice than that which speaks in these annual communications of the President to Congress.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS.

Good will and cordiality have characterized our relations and correspondence with other governments, and the year just closed leaves few international questions of importance remaining unadjusted. No obstacle is believed to exist that can long postpone the consideration and adjustment of the still-pending questions upon satisfactory and honorable terms. The dealings of this government with other states have been, and should always be, marked by frankness and sincerity. Our purposes are avowed and our methods free from intrigue. This course has borne rich fruit in the past, and it is our duty, as a nation, to preserve the heritage of good repute which a century of right doing with foreign governments has secured to us. It is a matter of high significance and no less of congratulation that the first year of the second century of our constitutional existence finds as honored guests within our borders, the representatives of all the independent States of North and South America, met together in earnest conference touching the best methods of perpetuating and expanding the relations of mutual interest and friendliness extended among them. That the opportunity thus afforded for promoting closer international relations and the increased prosperity of the States represented will be used for the mutual good of all, I cannot permit myself to doubt. Our people will mark it with interest and confidence, the result to flow from so auspicious a meeting of allied and, in large part, identical interests.

The recommendations of this international conference of the enlightened statesmen will have the attention of Congress and its co-operation in the removal of unnecessary barriers to the beneficial intercourse between the nations of America; but while the commercial results, which it is hoped will follow this conference, are worthy of pursuit and of the great interest they have exerted, it is believed that the crowning benefit will be found in the better securities which may be devised for the maintenance between the American nations and the settlement of all contentions by methods that a Christian civilization can approve. While viewing with interest our national resources and products, the delegates will, I am

sure, find a higher satisfaction in the evidences of unselfish friendship which everywhere attend the intercourse with our people.

Another international conference, having great possibilities for good, has lately assembled, and is now in session in this Capital. An invitation was extended by this government, under the act of July 9, 1888, to all maritime nations to send delegates to confer touching the revision and amendment of the rules and regulations governing vessels, and to adopt a uniform system of maritime signals. The response to the invitation has been very general and very cordial. Delegates from twenty-six nations are present in the conference and they have entered upon their useful work with great zeal and with an ardent appreciation of its importance. So far as the agreement to be reached may require legislation to give it effect, the co-operation of Congress is confidently relied upon. It is an interesting and unprecedented fact that the two international conferences have brought here the accredited representatives of thirty-three nations. Bolivia, Ecuador and Honduras are now represented by resident envoys of the plenipotentiary grade. These states of the American system now maintain diplomatic representation at this capital.

In this connection it may be noted that all the nations of the western hemisphere with one exception send to Washington envoys extraordinary and ministers plenipotentiary, being the highest grade accorded to this government. The United States, on the contrary, send envoys of a lower grade to some of our sister republics. Our representative in Paraguay and Nicaragua is a minister resident, while to Bolivia we send a minister resident and consul general. In view of the importance of our relations with the States, of the American system our diplomatic agents in those countries should be of the uniform rank of envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary. Certain missions were so elevated by the last Congress with happy effect, and I recommend the completion of the reform thus begun, with the inclusion also of Hawaii and Hayti, in view of their relations to the American system of States. I also recommend that timely provision be made for extending to Hawaii an invitation to be represented in the international conference now sitting at this capital.

THE CHINESE.

Our relations with China have the attentive consideration which their magnitude and interests demand. The failure of the treaty negotiated under the administration of my predecessor, for the further and more complete restriction of Chinese labor immigration and with it the legislation of the last session of Congress dependent thereon, leave some questions open which Congress should now approach in that wise and just spirit which should characterize the relations of two great and friendly

powers. While our supreme interests demand this exclusion of a laboring element which experience has shown to be incompatible with our social life, all steps to compass our imperative needs, should be accompanied with a recognition of the claim of those strangers not lawfully among us to humane and just treatment. The accession of the young emperor of China marks, we may hope, an era of progress and prosperity for the great country over which he is called to rule.

THE SAMOAN ISLANDS.

The present state of affairs in respect to the Samoan Islands is encouraging. The conference which was held in this city in the summer of 1887, between the representatives of the United States, Germany and Great Britain has been adjourned because of the persistent divergence of views which were developed in its deliberations. The subsequent course of events in the Islands give rise to questions of a serious character. On the 4th of February the German minister at this capital, in behalf of his government, proposed resumption of the conference at Berlin. This proposition was accepted, as Congress in February last was informed.

Pursuant to the understanding thus reached, commissioners were appointed by and with the advice and consent of the Senate who proceeded to Berlin, where the conference was renewed. The deliberations extended through several weeks and resulted in the conclusion of a treaty which will be submitted to the Senate for its approval. I trust that the efforts which have been made to effect an adjustment of this question will be productive of the permanent establishment of law and order in Samoa upon a basis of the maintenance of the rights and interests of the natives. The questions which have arisen during the past few years between Great Britain and the United States are in abeyance, or in course of adjustment.

THE FISHERIES.

On the part of the government of the Dominion of Canada an effect has been apparent during the season just ended to administer the laws and regulations applicable to the fisheries with as little occasion for friction as possible, and the temperate representations of this government in respect of cases of undue hardship, or of harsh interpretations, have been in most cases met with measures of transitory relief. It is trusted that the attainment of our just rights under existing treaties, and in virtue of the concurrent legislation of the two contiguous countries, will not be long deferred, and that all existing causes of difference may be equitably adjusted. I recommend that provision be made by an international agreement for a visible marking of the water boundary between the United States and Canada in the narrow channels that join the great lakes. The conventional line therein traced by the northwestern boundary survey years ago is not in all cases readily ascer-