

insured the prompt end of the French intervention in Mexico, it would not have been justified in taking that step.

Senator Patterson's Bill, reported favorably and without amendment by the Joint Committee on Retrenchment, on May 16, 1870,<sup>1</sup> passed the Senate without amendment, on June 9, 1870. In the House of

<sup>1</sup> Forty-first Congress, 2d Session. Senate Report No. 166. In the Senate of the United States, May 16, 1870. Ordered to be printed. Mr. Patterson made the following report. (To accompany Bill S. No. 783.)

"The Joint Select Committee on Retrenchment, to whom was referred Senate bill No. 783, 'to repeal all existing laws authorizing the transportation and exportation of goods, wares, and merchandise in bond to Mexico overland, or by inland waters, and for other purposes,' having considered the same, respectfully submit the following report:

"The object of the bill is to protect, so far as it can be done by legislation on our part, the revenue of the United States and the interests of our frontier bordering on the Rio Grande from the losses and injuries resulting from the facilities for smuggling afforded by the laws which it is proposed to repeal, and by the existence of the *Zona Libre*, or Free Belt, on the Mexican side of the Rio Grande.

"Prior to 1858 the American towns enjoyed greater commercial advantages and were much more thrifty and populous than their Mexican neighbors on the opposite side of the river.

"By the act of August 30, 1852, the transportation to Mexico of goods in bond was permitted by certain routes specified in the act, and by such others as the Secretary of the Treasury might prescribe. This enabled American merchants to store larger quantities of goods in our bonded warehouses, until a favorable opportunity arrived to withdraw them for consumption or for exportation in bond to Mexico.

"It is simply an impossibility to prevent smuggling on such a line as that formed by the Rio Grande, so long as a sufficient inducement to smuggle exists, and doubtless, at that time, there was considerable smuggling from the American side of the river, to the detriment of the revenue of Mexico and the legitimate commerce of her merchants, who were unable to compete successfully with those whose goods had paid only the lower rate of duty then required at the American ports, or having been exported from the United States in bond and smuggled into Mexico, had escaped payment of duties to either nation.

"On the 28th day of December, 1857, the legislature of the State of Tamaulipas passed an act creating the *Zona Libre*, which was promulgated March 17, 1858, by decree of Ramon Guerra, then provisional governor of Tamaulipas. The immense amount of smuggling on the Rio Grande, and the necessity for the repeal of our laws authorizing the exportation of goods in bond to Mexico, are mainly in consequence of that act.

"As the *Zona Libre* promises to be a matter of considerable interest to the country, we give the decree, establishing it in full in the appendix to this report; also the testimony of competent witnesses showing its effects on our revenue and the prosperity of the frontier.

"The object of the act is clearly shown in the preamble, where it is recited 'that the villages on the northern frontier are found in a really ruinous state,' and that the decree is issued 'that they may not be entirely depopulated by emigration to the neighboring country.'

"By the first article of the decree foreign goods are admitted to Matamoros and other towns in the State of Tamaulipas on the Rio Grande, free of duty, except such

Representatives it was referred to the Committee on Commerce, but it was not reported by that Committee, and consequently failed.

Senator Reagan, from Texas, following in the footsteps of Senator as might be imposed for local purposes, which were mainly municipal and trifling in amount.

"Article second invites merchants established on the American bank of the river to transfer their business and effects to the other side, and grants special facilities and privileges for doing so. The other articles are mainly occupied with the regulations for the transfer of merchandise from the *Zona Libre* to the interior of Mexico.

"That the result of this decree was not unanticipated by its authors is clearly shown in Article eighth, in which the inhabitants are invoked 'to impede, by every means in their power, the conversion of this benefit granted to them into a shameless contraband traffic.'

"The purpose of the act was evidently to build up the Mexican towns at the expense of their American neighbors, which was to be accomplished by furnishing to smugglers, for hundreds of miles along a frontier that it is impossible to guard, a safe and convenient place of deposit for goods which they received free of duty, until a convenient opportunity should occur to smuggle them into the United States. The inevitable result was the destruction of the commerce and prosperity of the American towns, and great frauds, estimated at from \$2,000,000 to \$6,000,000 per annum, on the revenue of the United States.

"The general government of Mexico hesitated to approve an act so hostile to the interests of a friendly nation; and it was not until July 30, 1861, when Texas was in the possession of the so-called Confederate States, to whom the *Zona Libre* would be of great advantage, that it received the sanction of President Juarez.

"During the war the towns of the *Zona Libre* furnished free ports of entry for the Confederates, through which they exported their cotton, and received in return large supplies of arms and other munitions of war. The Mexican Government, while professing friendship for the United States, sympathized with the rebels, and aided them by every means in its power. It modified its customs regulations so as to facilitate the exportation of cotton and the return of war material; and while the Confederate ports were blockaded by our cruisers, permitted merchandise and munitions of war, imported into the *Zona Libre*, to be transferred to the Confederacy at one-fourth the rate of duty required on the same articles when shipped to other countries, or even taken to other places in Mexico. Under the guise of friendship and neutrality the Mexican Government did us more harm during the late war than it could have done if openly hostile; for in that case we could have easily blockaded the mouth of the Rio Grande, and have completely cut off that great source of Confederate supplies.

"Since the close of the war the *Zona Libre* has served as a base from which smuggling into the United States can be safely carried on. The American towns have decayed, and the Mexican towns have flourished in proportion, so that instead of being in a 'really ruinous state,' and liable to be 'entirely depopulated by emigration to the neighboring country,' as they were in 1858, they contained in 1868 a population more than three times as large as that of their American neighbors, that ten years before were threatening to absorb them. Honest merchants, unable to compete with the smugglers, have been compelled to abandon the country or to engage in illicit trade themselves, and the whole community on both sides of the river has become so thoroughly demoralized that smuggling is generally considered a legitimate and honorable business. The desperate characters whom this condition of things has attracted or created, plunder private citizens as well as defraud the government, and frequently make raids into Texas and drive large herds of cattle across the river into Mexico. It

Patterson, introduced in the Senate of the United States, on January 6, 1890, a Bill to prevent the transportation of merchandise in bond is estimated by well-informed men that the loss by these raids is sometimes as high as two hundred thousand head a year.

"The prosperity of the whole frontier is paralyzed by the existence of the *Zona Libre*. The revenue of Mexico suffers as well as our own. By the decree of Ramon Guerra, only goods consumed in the *Zona Libre* were exempted from duty; but, although the importations exceed many times the amount that can be consumed by the population of that territory, the custom-houses collect barely enough to pay their own expenses.

"The Secretary of the Treasury of Mexico, in his Report, published in the fall of 1869, says:

"Another of the causes which have contributed most powerfully to diminish the product of the public rents, and especially that of importation duties, has been the institution of the Free Zone, enjoyed by the frontier of Tamaulipas. The establishment of this institution, owing in the beginning to the desire of favoring the frontier population of Tamaulipas, constitutes an exception which can with difficulty be sustained according to good economical principles, and which has given and will still give margin for abuses and frauds of importance by which suffer greatly the commerce of good faith and the Federal exchequer."

"Soon after the restoration of order, the attention of the Mexican Government was called to the injuries resulting to both countries from the existence of the *Zona Libre*, and to the unfriendly spirit shown by enacting for the territory bordering on our frontier different customs regulations from those which existed in other parts of the country, by which the enforcement of our laws and the prevention of frauds on our revenue were made impossible. The President and heads of the executive departments admitted the justice of our complaints, and gave reason to hope that the decree establishing the *Zona Libre* would be abrogated at the next session of Congress. No action was taken by the Mexican Congress until December last, when, instead of abrogating the decree, they extended it so as to include the States of Nuevo Leon and Coahuila.

"The following extract from an article which appeared in *La Cronica*, March 18, 1870, and which it is understood was written by a distinguished member of the Mexican Congress, will show the spirit in which this extension was made and the manner in which the *Zona Libre* is regarded by the enlightened statesmen of Mexico:

"The newspapers of the United States are full of complaints against the institution of the Free Zone on our northern frontier. The evils resulting therefrom to the treasury and the commerce of their country are serious, and they denounce the measure as contrary to the reciprocity which should exist between the two countries. For ourselves, from the time the establishment of the Free Zone was discussed in Congress, it never seemed to us a measure favorable to the interests of Mexico, and we believed further that it would tend to destroy the relations of friendship existing between the two nations.

"We remember that Congress was deluded by the assurance that the institution of the Free Zone injured the commerce of the United States, and for this reason favored the interests of Mexico. We admit the former proposition, but are far from expecting that the latter will prove true. We do believe, after having studied the question, that the Free Zone injures both nations; the United States, because all that frontier being a free port, the merchants of the American side will come to our territory to store their goods, and watch for an opportunity to introduce them in a clandestine manner into Texas. Thus Mexico will be in the position of a person who injures himself and at the same time injures his neighbor.

through the ports and territory of the United States into the Republic of Mexico, and to restore that privilege whenever the *Zona Libre* along the boundary line between the two countries shall be

"It was said in Congress that Mexico was free to dictate her own laws. Nobody can doubt that she has this right, but neither can we disregard the obligations imposed upon nations by natural law not to make themselves bad neighbors, one to the other."

"With a knowledge of the course pursued by Mexico during the war and of the feeling toward the United States which now animates the majority of her Congress, it is useless to expect anything from her friendship or her justice.

"We must depend wholly on ourselves and must protect our revenue by the best means in our power. This can be partially effected by the passage of the proposed Bill. Large quantities of merchandise are transported in bond from other parts of the United States, mainly from Indianola, Galveston, and Corpus Christi, to the bank of the Rio Grande, and ostensibly crossed over into Mexico. Of this the certificate of an American consul, or, where there is no consul, that of two merchants, is considered sufficient evidence, and on the return of such a certificate the bond is cancelled. Where nearly all the inhabitants are engaged in smuggling, such certificates are not difficult to obtain. No inconsiderable portion of those goods ever cross the river, but after proceeding for a few miles in the direction of the place to which they are professedly destined, they are carried into the *chaparral*, taken from the original packages, and thereafter transported with perfect impunity into the interior. After the requisite time the certificate that they have been landed in Mexico is returned, signed, as required, by two merchants, and the bond is cancelled. Sometimes the goods are actually carried across the river, but the greater portion soon find their way back into the United States without the payment of duties.

"The Northern States of Mexico are mainly dependent for their supplies on goods transported in bond across a portion of our territory.

"The Secretary of the Treasury has lately issued orders discontinuing routes designated by the Treasury Department pursuant to the provisions of the Act of August 30, 1852. By the passage of the proposed bill the other routes authorized by that act will be closed, and the transit trade in bond, with all the smuggling resulting therefrom, entirely stopped.

"The cost of supplies for the Northern States of Mexico will be increased by the expense of transportation over long, difficult, and unsafe routes, or, if received by the same routes as at present, by the addition of the United States duty, which must then be paid, so that it will be for the interest of the people of those States to join with the party already opposed to the *Zona Libre* in demanding its abolishment.

"The passage of the proposed bill will prevent smuggling, so far as it is perpetrated under cover of our laws authorizing the exportation of goods in bond, but it will not prevent the smuggling into the United States of goods originally imported into Mexico, and will therefore prove only a partial remedy. No effectual prevention of smuggling across the Rio Grande can be devised, except such as will require the concurrent action of Mexico.

"The State Department has been in correspondence with the Mexican Government for two years past in relation to the *Zona Libre*, and, although the President and executive officers of that Government have expressed their sense of its injurious effects on both countries, and their desire for its abolishment, the only practical result has been, as was before stated, its extension by Congress over two more States.

"The hope of successful negotiations seems to have been exhausted. In viola-

abolished,<sup>1</sup> which was referred to the Committee on Commerce, and reported adversely on June 25, 1890, by Mr. Cullom of that Committee, and after being debated was recommitted on July 1, 1890. Senator Reagan was not satisfied with that decision, and on the same day, July 1, 1890, he presented substantially the same Bill with only a few verbal alterations, as an amendment to Senate Bill 1642,<sup>2</sup> which was referred

tion of her own Constitution, which prohibits the enactment of revenue laws unequal in their effect, Mexico still persists in maintaining along our frontier a belt of territory to which goods are admitted free, while imports to all other portions of the country are required to pay a heavy duty. Unfriendly is the mildest term by which such conduct can be characterized. A due consideration for the protection of our own interests may render other measures requisite to induce Mexico to regard the comity of nations, and observe toward us such a course of conduct as is essential to the maintenance of friendly relations between neighboring countries. In so delicate and important a matter, the Committee offer no suggestions, but simply report the facts connected with the existence of the *Zona Libre* for the consideration of Congress, and recommend the passage of the proposed Bill without amendment."

<sup>1</sup> Fifty-first Congress, 1st Session (S. 1642). In the Senate of the United States, January 6, 1890. Mr. Reagan introduced the following Bill, which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, June 25, 1890. Reported by Mr. Cullom adversely.

"A Bill to prevent the transportation of merchandise in bond through the ports and territory of the United States into the Republic of Mexico, and to restore that privilege whenever the *Zona Libre* along the boundary between the two countries shall be abolished.

"Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That after thirty days from the passage of this act it shall be unlawful for any person, firm, or corporation to transport any merchandise in bond through the ports or territory of the United States into the territory of the Republic of Mexico; and any person, firm, or corporation violating the provisions of this section shall be liable to a fine of not less than one thousand dollars, and to imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year.

"Sec. 2. That if the Republic of Mexico shall at any time abolish said *Zona Libre*, and shall give notice of that fact to the President of the United States, he shall, upon the receipt of such notice, by proclamation restore the right to transport merchandise through the ports and territory of the United States in bond into the territory of the Republic of Mexico as now permitted by law."

<sup>2</sup> Fifty-first Congress, 1st Session. (S. 1642.) In the Senate of the United States, July 1, 1890. Referred to the Committee on Commerce and ordered to be printed.

#### AMENDMENT

Intended to be proposed by Mr. Reagan to the Bill (S. 1642) to prevent the transportation of merchandise in bond through the ports and territory of the United States into the Republic of Mexico, and to restore that privilege whenever the *Zona Libre* along the boundary between the two countries shall be abolished, viz., strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

"That after thirty days from the passage of this act it shall be unlawful for any person, firm, or corporation to transport any merchandise in bond through the ports or territory of the United States into the *Zona Libre* or Free Zone of the Republic of Mexico; and any person, firm, or corporation violating the provisions of this section

to the Committee on Commerce, but that Committee did not take any further action on the subject, and the matter rested there.

A similar measure finally passed Congress on February 27, 1895, and became the joint resolution signed by the President March 1, 1895, and of which I will presently speak.

*Marauding on the Frontier.*—The close connection that marauding on the frontier had with the Free-Zone question from 1872 to 1879, makes it necessary to say a few words about this incident.

The unsettled condition of the frontier at the time caused marauders to prey upon both sides of the border, Texas often being the victim; and for this the Mexican Government was not responsible, but on the contrary exerted itself as far as it could to prevent and punish such offenders. There were at the time also Indian raids, made especially by the Indians living in the United States, which at times were given permission to leave their reservations and hunt in Mexico, where they committed terrible crimes, from which sometimes the Texas settlements suffered, and all this contributed to establish a condition of unrest on the frontier. Members of Congress from Texas thought very likely the Mexican Government was somewhat responsible for such occurrences, and they exerted themselves to place the responsibility upon Mexico.

Mr. John Hancock, a Member of Congress from Texas, succeeded in having a joint<sup>1</sup> resolution passed by Congress, which was approved

shall be liable to a fine of not less than one thousand dollars and to imprisonment to a term not exceeding one year. But this act shall not be construed to prohibit the transportation of such merchandise into any part of the territory of Mexico where duties on imports are required to be paid by that country; and the Secretary of the Treasury shall make such rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry into effect the provisions of this act.

"Sec. 2. That if the Republic of Mexico shall at any time abolish said *Zona Libre*, and shall give notice of that fact to the President of the United States, he shall, upon the receipt of said notice, by proclamation, restore the right to transport merchandise through the ports and territory of the United States in bond into any port of the territory of the Republic of Mexico as now permitted by law."

<sup>1</sup> [RESOLUTION NOT OF GENERAL NATURE—No. 4.]

JOINT RESOLUTION appointing commissioners to inquire into depredations on the frontiers of the State of Texas.

Whereas there are complaints of many depredations having been committed for several years past upon the frontiers of the State of Texas, by bands of Indians and Mexicans who crossed the Rio Grande River into the State of Texas, murdering the inhabitants or carrying them into captivity, and destroying or carrying away the property of the citizens of said State; as also that bands of Indians have committed and continue to commit like depredations on the property, lives, and liberty of the citizens along the northern and northwestern frontiers of said State: Therefore,

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the President of the United States be, and he is

on May 7, 1872, to appoint a Special Commission of three persons to inquire into depredations by bands of Indians and Mexicans who crossed the Rio Grande into the State of Texas, and in pursuance of that resolution President Grant appointed Messrs. Thomas P. Robb, Richard H. Savage, and Thomas O. Osborn as commissioners to investigate such depredations. Mexico, on her part, appointed a similar commission for the purpose of ascertaining the marauding which had taken place in her territory.

The United States Commission presented in 1872 a preliminary report, which was submitted to Congress by President Grant with his Message of December 16, 1872. In that report the Commissioners said, referring to the Free Zone, as follows :

"The harassing question of the *Zona Libre*, it does not fall within the province of the Commissioners to examine, but they feel called to notice the extension of this Zone in opposition to the most friendly remonstrances of the United States, as another evidence of the spirit which has characterized the policy of the Mexican Government in its dealings with the United States for a series of years."

What has already been said about the extension of the Free Zone, shows how greatly misinformed were the United States Commissioners on the subject.

The final report of the Commission made on June 30, 1873, to the Secretary of State containing no proposal on the Free Zone, was communicated by President Grant to Congress with his Message of May 26, 1874.

President Grant, in his Annual Message of December 7, 1874, said in reference to the marauding on the frontier :

"... Marauding on the frontier, between Mexico and Texas, still frequently takes place despite the vigilance of the civil and military authorities in that quarter.

hereby, authorized and empowered to appoint three persons to act as commissioners to inquire into the extent and character of said depredations, by whom committed, their residence, or country inhabited by them, the persons murdered or carried into captivity, the character and value of the property destroyed or carried away, from what portions of said State, and to whom the same belonged.

SEC. 2. That it shall be the duty of said commissioners, or a majority of them, as soon as practicable, to proceed to the frontiers of said State and take the testimony, under oath, of such witnesses as may appear before them, after having given notice for ten days previous, by publication in the nearest newspaper, of the time and place of their meeting, of all such depredations, when, where, by, and upon whom committed, and shall make up and transmit to the President full reports of their said investigations.

SEC. 3. That said commissioners shall be entitled to and receive as compensation for their services, the sum of ten dollars per day each, and their travelling expenses to each, for and during the time they shall be engaged in said service; and the sum of six thousand dollars, or so much thereof as may be necessary, be, and the same is hereby appropriated, to pay the expenses of said investigation and said commissioners.

Approved, May 7, 1872.

... It is hoped that the efforts of this Government will be seconded by those of Mexico to the effectual suppression of these acts of wrong.

Which shows that in President Grant's opinion the Mexican frontier had also suffered by the marauding.

From 1876 to 1878 the relations between Mexico and the United States were in a critical condition, owing especially to the efforts of Mr. Gustav Schleicher, a Member of Congress from the Sixth District of Texas, born in Darmstadt, Germany, and who had served in the House of Representatives and Senate of the Texas Legislature, having been elected to the Forty-fourth Congress and re-elected to the Forty-fifth and Forty-sixth Congresses of the United States, although he died before the beginning of his last term. Guided either by a great zeal to serve the interests of his State, or because he desired to precipitate some trouble with Mexico, he exerted himself in an extraordinary manner to make it appear that Mexico was giving great cause of offense to the United States, and that this country had to take the necessary means, even at the cost of war, to stop such imaginary aggressions.

On January 6, 1876, the House of Representatives passed a resolution introduced by Mr. Schleicher, to the effect :

"That the portion of the President's Message which refers to the inroads, robberies, and murders along the Mexican border in Texas be referred to a Special Committee of five members, with instructions to inquire into the causes and the nature and extent of these depredations, and the measures that might prevent their continuance, with power to send for persons and papers, and to report at as early a date as possible."

As is usual in such cases, Mr. Schleicher was appointed Chairman of that Special Committee, which gave him, of course, a commanding position in the same.

On February 9, 1876, the Special Committee appointed in conformity with the resolution approved by the House on January 6th submitted its report,<sup>1</sup> which concerned especially the raids on the frontier.

On the 1st of November, 1877, the House of Representatives passed a resolution introduced by Mr. Schleicher, asking the President to communicate to the House any information in his possession relative to the Mexican border in Texas, and any recent violations of the territory of the United States by incursions by Mexicans, and in answer to that resolution President Hayes sent to the House, with his message of November 12, 1877, reports of the Secretaries of State and of War, of the same date, with their accompanying papers. This Message was referred by the House to the Committee of Foreign Affairs, and on December 10th of the same year a resolution presented by Mr. Schleicher was adopted by the House of Representatives, referring to

<sup>1</sup> Forty-third Congress, 1st Session. House of Representatives Ex. Doc. No. 257.

the same Committee so much of the Annual Message of the President of the United States to the two Houses of Congress at that session, together with the accompanying documents, as related to the difficulties on the Rio Grande border.

The report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives of the Forty-fifth Congress, 2d Session, presented on April 25, 1878, by Mr. Schleicher, accompanying a resolution<sup>1</sup> which was equivalent to a declaration of war against Mexico, was based, among other imaginary insults, on the supposition that the Free Zone in Mexico was very injurious to the United States, and its establishment almost an act of hostility on the part of Mexico.

Mr. Schleicher died at Washington on January 10, 1879, and this incident ended with him, his death having coincided with the consolidation of peace in Mexico.

*Joint Resolution of March 1, 1895.*—When some of the most prominent men of the United States misunderstood the scope and purpose of the Free Zone, it is not strange that some of the inhabitants of the Texas border should have done so also, and should, for that reason, have shown a strong dislike and opposition to it. Some citizens of Texas, living on the frontier, and prejudiced against the Free Zone, presented a petition, on January 24, 1895, to the Texas Legislature, which was afterwards approved by that body, in the shape of a resolution calling upon

<sup>1</sup>Forty-ninth Congress, 1st Session, House of Representatives. (Report No. 2615.)

JOINT RESOLUTION.

Be it resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled:

1. That experience has fully demonstrated the necessity, under existing conditions, for the presence of an adequate military force on the Mexican border in Texas, as the only guarantee of the lives and property of our citizens against the cattle-thieves, robbers, and murderers who cross from the Mexican side of the Rio Grande; and that the President is therefore requested to keep on that border, from the mouth of the Rio Grande to El Paso, a military force of not less than five thousand men, of which at least three thousand shall be cavalry.

2. That the orders of the President, issued by the Secretary of War June 1, 1877, authorizing the crossing of the border by our troops in certain cases, are necessary for an efficient defense of the lives and property of our citizens, and should not be withdrawn or modified until treaty stipulations shall have been agreed to by Mexico that will secure an equally efficient protection.

3. That the following should be secured by treaty stipulations:

First. Indemnity for injuries to the persons and losses to the property of citizens of the United States for which the Government of Mexico shall be found liable.

Second. The abolition of the Free Zone.

Third. Such provisions as will hereafter secure on the border the speedy trial and punishment of criminals, residents, or citizens of Mexico, as well as others, in the courts within whose jurisdiction the crimes have been committed.

Fourth. The exemption of American citizens residing in Mexico from forced loans and all other illegal exactions.

the Members of Congress from that State to urge upon Mexico to abolish the Free Zone, and, in case of a refusal, then for the United States to close its bonded warehouse against all goods entering Mexico through any of our ports. Mr. Jeremiah V. Cockrell, a member of Congress from the 13th District of Texas, undertook with more zeal than discretion to carry out the wishes of the Texas Legislature, and on January 17, 1895, he introduced a joint resolution<sup>1</sup> with a long preamble, asserting that the Free Zone was detrimental to the interests of American merchants doing business near the said Zone, by reason of their inability to compete with the untaxed importations of foreign countries; that it was depriving this Government of much revenue by reason of the increasing evil of smuggling on the frontier of the Rio Grande, where an increased force of customs inspectors adequate to prevent this contraband trade would entail an enormous expense, and that all the free importations landed on the Free Zone caused loss of revenue to this Government.

<sup>1</sup>Fifty-third Congress, 3d Session (House of Representatives, 260). In the House of Representatives, January 17, 1895. Referred to the Committee on Ways and Means and ordered to be printed. Mr. Cockrell introduced the following joint resolution:

“Joint resolution in reference to the Free Zone along the northern frontier of Mexico and adjacent to the United States.

“Whereas, the so-called ‘Free Zone’ along the northern frontier of Mexico and adjacent to the United States, in which all foreign goods are admitted free of duty by the Mexican Government, has had for years past a detrimental effect on the interests of American merchants doing business near the said Zone, by reason of their inability to compete with the untaxed importations from China, Japan, France, Italy, Germany, England, and all Europe; and

“Whereas, The said Free Zone has for years and is daily depriving the Government of much revenue by reason of the increased and growing evil of smuggling on that frontier of the Rio Grande where an increased force of customs inspectors adequate to prevent this contraband trade would entail an enormous expense not commensurate with the revenues there collected; and

“Whereas, All the free importations that are landed on that Zone, which cause the loss of revenue to this Government and the humiliation of daily violations of its customs laws, which it is impossible to correct, are carried in bond through this country and delivered in said Zone. Therefore, be it

“Resolved, by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Secretary of the Treasury be, and is hereby, directed to suspend, so long as the Mexican Free-Zone law exists, obedience to the laws that permit merchandise in bond to be landed thereon, as the only means this Government has to prevent loss of revenue and to protect the honest importers of the United States from the unjust discrimination which the Free Zone of Mexico occasions against them, without, however, impairing, hindering, or impeding the *bona fide* importations into the interior of Mexico beyond the Free-Zone frontier, or in any manner disturbing the commercial relations of the two countries, excepting so far as the Free Zone of Mexico is concerned, which has proven to be inimical to the interests of the United States, and after long toleration has justified this course.