

DESIRE OF MEXICO FOR INCREASED COMMUNICATION WITH THE
UNITED STATES.

52. It is a very significant fact that Mexico in her present exhausted condition, disturbed and torn asunder as she now is by intestine feuds and civil war, should yet be so thoroughly impressed with the idea of the great national benefit that is to inure to her from the successful establishment of this postal line of steamers, that she has promptly stepped forward and agreed to pay the sum of \$120,000 per annum, for the mail advantages of this line alone.

Can the United States Government, therefore, in any view of the subject, do less than meet Mexico on half-way ground and consent on her part to pay the moderate sum of \$200,000 per annum, required as her proportion.

This indeed is a trifling amount, when compared with the magnitude of the object to be gained, and especially so when we consider the advantages to be derived by the United States over Mexico. It is not reasonable or just, to expect that private enterprise and capital will be embarked in an untried field like that now proposed, without some aid and encouragement from the government, and therefore the only point to consider is, whether such aid will tend to the promotion of the interests of the public at large.

REASONS WHY THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT SHOULD ALSO
SUPPORT THE PROPOSED LINE.

53. We have shown how other nations find their advantage in affording such aid, and to a much greater extent than is necessary for the United States with reference to communication with Mexico, and that from the character of the people with which we have to deal, and the almost unlimited resources of their country, equally satisfactory results must attend the adoption by us of the policy which has proved so successful with them.

But there is, however, a sufficient and immediate consideration in favor of the Government lending its aid and assistance towards the proposed line, to be found in the fact that the Custom-House revenue to be derived from the increased trade which the line will build up, will exceed, by probably six or eight fold the amount required to be disbursed as mail pay; to say nothing of the revenue from postage that will accrue to the Post-Office Department, and which no doubt will eventually more than support the line.

The average rate of duties imposed by the existing Tariff of the United States, is sixteen per cent. on the foreign cost of imported merchandise; therefore, if the establishment of the proposed line of Steamers increased the imports from the Gulf Ports only two millions of dollars per annum, it would add \$320,000 per annum to the national revenue, or \$120,000 per annum more than the sum to be paid to the proposed line. But instead of two millions, who can reasonably doubt the in-

crease will amount in a very short period to four, six, or eight millions of dollars per annum, which would still not be equal to our legitimate share of this trade, and thus give at the last-named sum, an increased revenue of \$1,280,000 per annum, or a net gain to the revenues of the general Government, over the outlay for the support of the line, of \$1,080,000 per annum.

54. Besides these reasons there is another in the fact that the want of the facilities now proposed to be established has actually entailed upon the government during the past year alone, probably a greater actual outlay than even the entire sum now sought to be obtained. Communication with Mexico has been so entirely interrupted that one of the first-class steamers of our limited navy has been detailed to do service as a dispatch boat, simply to supply the deficiencies which our entire want of a postal system has involved us in. Our relations with Mexico have been critical, and the course of events there has involved issues of the utmost importance to us, yet we have had more frequent and easier communication with Constantinople; and had not the government detailed the Brooklyn for this special service, it would have had to wait the chance opportunities afforded by irregular sailing vessels.

IEWS OF MEMBERS OF CONGRESS.

55. That these views are participated in by many of our ablest statesmen, and that the necessity for this particular service in the Gulf of Mexico is felt to be so

urgent as to admit of no further delay in securing its effective establishment at any reasonable cost, the following extracts from the speeches of leading senators in Congress at the close of the last session, when the bill providing for the establishment of the proposed line was under consideration, will clearly show.

The shortness of the session, and unavoidable delays, prevented the bill from being finally brought up until a very late moment, but the remarks elicited even in the haste and excitement of the closing hours of Congress, were none the less pertinent, able and convincing.

REMARKS OF SENATOR WARD OF TEXAS.

56. By authority of the Committee on the Post-Office and Post Roads, to whom the bill had been referred, it was approved as an amendment to the civil appropriation bill, by Mr. Ward of that committee, who said: "It is not my purpose at this late hour of the session to detain the business of the Senate by a lengthy discussion on this amendment. I shall therefore dispense with many of the arguments which I would otherwise have used on this question, and whilst I acknowledge that the other Steam Service embraced in this bill is right and proper, yet I consider none of them of more importance in their consequences and results, than the one now under consideration.

I will merely call the attention of Senators to our present relations with Mexico, and what they might be under the provisions of this amendment.

It will be recollected that, at present we have but a single temporary mail service in the Gulf of Mexico,* being only twice a month from a single port. By the arrangement proposed by this amendment, we shall have weekly trips, touching at all the important points on the Gulf of Mexico. I have no doubt, Mr. President, that the postages alone will in a few years make this line self-sustaining, to say nothing of the increase of revenue from commerce, and the political influence so much to be desired. If, sir, we can even regain the commerce which we have lost by our neglect and indifference towards Mexico, it will increase our revenue far beyond any expenses incurred by this service. In a political point of view, I will allude to the course we are and have been pursuing, by sending ministers and chargés abroad to negotiate treaties of amity and commerce with distant powers, at great expense, and totally neglecting to cultivate the necessary friendship and mutual intercourse with our neighbor republic, and lie quietly by and permit other governments to come to our doors and divert the commerce from us, as well as the affections of those people, which we have it in our power to avert by renewing our commerce with them. If we should refuse this overture on the part of Mexico, it may direct their attention and affections from us to some other power that will give them more consideration.

The proposition for postal and commercial intercourse came from Mexico, in the shape of a contract made with

* Since suspended.

American citizens, in which she agrees to pay a liberal proportion of the expenses in carrying out the enterprise, which contract was submitted to the United States legation in that country, and acknowledged by all the authorities there. Now, Mr. President, if it be our object to cultivate friendly and profitable relations with Mexico, I cannot see how we can refuse this proposition, when the amount involved is insignificant compared to the ultimate results, both in a commercial and political view of the question."

REMARKS OF SENATOR FITZPATRICK OF ALABAMA.

57. "I desire to say a few words in reference to this amendment, which is in the words of the bill I had the honor to introduce at the commencement of the session. That bill has undergone the scrutiny of the committee on the post-office and post roads, and comes from them with the recommendation that it be attached to this bill (the civil appropriation bill) as an amendment.

It was designed to go on the Ocean Steamer bill; but we all know that that bill has failed, and this is the only chance to establish a postal arrangement in a section of country that has been too long neglected. It also comes endorsed by a very strong and powerful recommendation from the Postmaster-General. There are many features of this proposition which should commend it to the consideration of the Senate. The proposed postal arrangement will be a powerful auxiliary to commerce,

and I am astonished that the matter has been so long overlooked and passed by without the notice of the Congress of the United States. We have established foreign mail service with the continent of Europe and many distant countries. Here is an attempt to connect ourselves with our neighbors, to open friendly relations with the Republic of Mexico, containing twenty-two states, six territories and the district of Mexico, embracing a population of 8,283,088 souls. The landed estate of those states is estimated at the sum of \$720,000,000, and the town property at \$635,000,000, making a total of \$1,355,000,000. The foreign imports into that country amount to \$26,000,000. I ask the attention of the Senate to the countries from which these imports come. Great Britain leads the list with \$12,500,000, the United States \$4,500,000, about one-third of Great Britain; France, \$4,500,000, Germany, \$1,860,000, and so on. Here is a population right at our own doors that receive one-half of their imports from England; and what is the reason of this? Simply because the government of England keeps up a regular line of steamers, and virtually bribes that trade into her own ports, and so deprives us of all the exports of Mexico, amounting to about \$28,000,000. But a small proportion of that commerce comes to our country. Are not these facts sufficient to justify us in appealing to Congress to make a proper postal arrangement with Mexico, to see if we cannot invite more of this trade and commerce to our country?

In my judgment there has not been a better object demanding the attention of Congress during the present session than the commerce with these interesting people.

They desire to trade with us if we will give them an opportunity. They have not been able to do so heretofore, because the postal arrangements of England and other countries have deprived us of their commerce. The expense is but a drop in the bucket compared with the commerce that will come into this country if we establish the means to bring it here: and so far from its being a drain upon the Treasury, I feel perfectly assured that if the facilities are afforded which I trust this provision will offer, for every dollar we pay out of the Treasury, we shall get ten in return. What is the small amount required, to us, where a Government crippled and weak like that of Mexico proposes to pay \$120,000 itself? I think the propriety of this measure is so palpable, and should so appeal to the enlightened views of the Senate, that there cannot be a doubt as to the proper cause to be pursued: and I trust the amendment will be adopted. I could offer many statistics to the Senate to illustrate and enforce the propriety of this measure, but I am satisfied from the impatience I see around me, that it is out of place, and out of taste, to occupy the Senate at this late hour, and therefore will not proceed further."

REMARKS OF SENATOR SHIELDS OF MINNESOTA.

58. "I agree with the honorable Senator from Alabama, that this is no time to discuss any question, owing to the impatience of the body, and the near approach of the end of the session: but I cannot let this amendment pass without expressing my approval of it. Perhaps in

some respects this arises from my knowledge of the points on the Gulf, and what I consider to be the very great neglect of this country in not having attended to something of this kind long ago.

This proposition, if I understand it right, provides that these vessels shall touch at every Port on the Gulf of Mexico. The line is to be a joint line between this country and Mexico, and in my opinion it will be a much better mode of benefiting that country and connecting it with the United States, than some plans which have been proposed at this session. It is a peace measure, it is a commercial measure. Mexico will be a good market for our coarse fabrics, and a variety of articles that are made in our country, and my opinion is, that if this line be established, it will do more to improve the revenue of this country than all the lines we have established in other directions together.

I cannot debate this question now; there is no time to enter into details. I could however, if it were necessary, convince the most skeptical in the Senate that an American line touching at Matamoras, Tampico, Vera Cruz and other points on the Gulf of Mexico, bringing their productions to this country, and taking ours to them, would make Mexico the best market we can have on this continent. Why it has been so long neglected I cannot tell—why such a proposition was not made long ago, when I know, and every man acquainted with that country knows, that the very articles the people there most need, are articles that can be most cheaply furnished by this country. For want of these facilities they have been obliged to go to Europe for them.

British steamers touch at these points and give them the facilities. We have neglected to cultivate our nearest neighbor, while we have been hunting all over the world for markets. I saw that, I felt that while I was in Mexico, and I felt the influence of the British steamer touching at those points in the Gulf, while I was there, and I could not let this occasion pass without expressing that feeling now in the Senate. I will not say that this line will accomplish all that the honorable Senators desire, but it is the first measure, in my humble judgment, that has been introduced since I came into the Congress of the United States, to initiate the proper policy with Mexico. I hope we shall follow up this peaceful policy by cultivating kind feelings with Mexico, and by getting their productions which we need, and giving them in return what they need.

The Mexican Government has offered such advantages in connection with this line, that it ought not to be neglected. It will give us the preference over the European lines. It will make Mexico our partner in this line, and make them also responsible for managing it. It strikes me that no proposition has come into the Senate at this session that can compare with this.

From my knowledge of that country, its people and its productions, and its exports, my opinion is, that the establishment of this line will reimburse our Treasury tenfold what it will cost the Government: but I will not waste time at this late hour."

REMARKS OF SENATOR WILSON OF MASSACHUSETTS.

59. "I concur entirely in the remarks made by the Senator from Minnesota. I have devoted, during the present session, some little time and attention to the subject of our connections with the countries south of us on the continent: and it seems to me the part of wisdom for the government of the United States to devote all its power and all its energies to the opening of communications with the countries south of us on this continent.

The Senator from Georgia (Mr. Toombs) said the other day in the Cuban debate, that our India was south of us on this continent. That is so.

We hear a great deal of talk about the balance of trade being against us in Europe. That is a mistake.

The balance of trade is in our favor on the continent of Europe: but we have a balance of trade against us of from thirty to forty million dollars annually, south of us on this continent.

During the last ten years we had a balance of trade against us in Cuba and Brazil alone, of \$225,000,000,—\$22,500,000,—annually.

I shall vote for this proposition as a measure that is to connect us more closely with Mexico.

I shall vote for all measures tending to connect us with all the nations south of us on this continent. I shall vote for all measures that have a tendency to take off restrictions on trade, to liberalize our commercial connections, and prepare that portion of our continent for intimate commercial, and perhaps in time, political relations with us."

REMARKS OF SENATOR BENJAMIN OF LOUISIANA.

60. "In regard to the merits of this proposition, it is quite too late in the session for any of us to talk about it as a general subject, or do any more than throw out a few suggestions.

This line that is proposed by the committee on the Post Office and Post Roads, is eminently advantageous as a national line, for national political purposes connected with our foreign relations.

It is not a mere postal line: but there is another view of the subject which ought to be taken into consideration, not only in relation to this particular line, but to all the ocean mail lines of the country. It is this: that independently of their service to the country in carrying the communications between our merchants and those of foreign nations, they create for this country a pre-eminent moral power, a commercial power, a power over public opinion in the countries with which these steamers connect us, and which gives us a great advantage in our foreign intercourse with them. Now take the Republic of Mexico: we have no connection with it; and our commerce there has dwindled down to nothing, and Great Britain has got it all. Great Britain, at a distance of nearly four thousand miles, across a stormy ocean, has monopolized the commerce of this sister Republic that touches us, simply because her Government maintains steam lines in connection with Mexico, and our Government refuses to do it.

We had a mail line last year to Bremen. The Sen-

ator from Vermont, (Mr. Collamer,) suggests to me that during the few years that line was in existence, our importations from the ports to which it ran, were increased from three or four, to nineteen millions of dollars per annum.

We changed our policy: the service was subverted: the importations are dropping off, and they are dwindling away to what they were before.

Now, sir, I do not pretend to say that we ought to send our lines of Steamers to all quarters of the world with Government subsidy, merely for the sake of increasing our political influence: but there are points where our interests are so closely connected with those of foreign nations that it may be a matter of judicious economy to protect those interests, by moderate expenditures in time of peace, rather than establishing armaments and protecting those interests by the arm of power.

I think this is one of those cases. In our European connections, perhaps, we are not benefited so much politically, as we should be by a connection with our sister republics; but so far as connection with the ports upon the Gulf is concerned, it is obvious that if we are to have any control on the political future of Mexico we must connect ourselves with them in some way. Now we have no connection. Their commerce has gone across the ocean, although we can furnish them with what they require at much lower rates. We have what they want, and they have what we want. Their productions are such as are not raised in our country: their mines give us the silver we require for our daily uses in the transaction of commerce: but all this is going across the

ocean, going into the lap of Great Britain, because she thinks proper to subsidize mail steam lines and we have none. We have had one steamer running across to Vera Cruz in monthly trips, two or three months of the year, and then stopping so that communication is cut off.

In this particular instance now under consideration, the Republic of Mexico has given a grant to an American citizen of a steam line: and it has agreed to give him \$120,000 towards the mail subsidy necessary for keeping it up, if the government of the United States will give such further sum as may be necessary. This is rather in the nature of a postal treaty: still it is a legitimate subject of legislation. I shall vote for it as a political measure, connected with our foreign relations: not as a purely postal route."

CONTEST BETWEEN SENATE AND HOUSE, AND LOSS OF
APPROPRIATION BILL.

61. The amendment as introduced by Mr. Ward passed the Senate by an almost unanimous vote—with a singular unanimity, in fact, and only failed in the House in common with various other amendments properly belonging to the postal service, in the contest which ensued during the last hours of the session between the Senate and the House upon the appropriation bills, and in which that for the Post-Office Department was entirely lost.

The feeling that was drawn out, however, in both Houses, evinced an almost unanimous disposition to no