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Mr. Webster's Speech
ON THE WAR WITH MEXICO.

Delivered in the U. S. S., March 23, '48.

(Concluded.)

But, sir, I come to the all absorbing question, more particularly, of the creation of new States. When I came into the councils of the country, Louisiana had been obtained under the treaty with France and shortly afterwards Florida was obtained under the treaty with Spain. These two countries were known to us. They lay upon our frontiers. They commanded the outlets of the great river. As I have had occasion to say, and shall now only repeat, without argument, in the first of these instances, the President of the United States, Mr. Jefferson, supposed the acquisition to be unconstitutional; he acted upon that supposition. Mr. Madison was then Secretary of State He proposed that a proposition for an amendment of the constitution should be submitted, in order to bring Louisiana into the Union. He drew up the proposition, and it was submitted to Mr. Adams. Mr. Madison did not go upon the general idea that new States might be admitted. He did not proceed upon the motion of a general amendment of the constitution in this respect, but the amendment of the constitution which he proposed and submitted to Mr. Adams, was article 13th, amendatory of the constitution—"The province of Louisiana is hereby declared to be a part and parcel of the United States."

Public opinion, owing to the great importance of this acquisition, took a turn favorable to the affirmation of the power, without any new constitutional provision. The power was acquiesced in. Louisiana became a part of the Union; and following the example of Louisiana, Florida was admitted. Now, sir; I consider these transactions as past, settled, legatized.—There they stand. They are part of our political history. They are facts against which it would be idle at this day to contend. My first agency in these matters was upon the proposition for admitting Texas into the Union. That I thought it my duty to oppose upon the general ground of opposing all annexating of new States; and I may add, and ought to add, in justice, because there was a proposition then before the country, as to Southern States, having a slave population, being represented in the Congress of the United States, upon the ground of inequality.—It happened to me, sir, to be called on to address a political meeting in New York, in 1837-'38, after their cognition of Texan independence. I may state now, sir, what I have often stated before, that no man from the first has been a better wisher—a more sincere well-wisher—to the people and government of Texas than myself. I looked upon the achievement of their independence at the battle of San Jacinto as quite extraordinary—almost a marvellous incident in the affairs of mankind—I was among the first to be disposed to acknowledge her independence, but from the first, and from the first down to this moment, I have opposed as far as I was able the annexation of new States to this Union. I stated my reasons on the occasion to which I referred. I have them in a short abstract before me, but it is hardly worth while that I should trouble the Senate with reading them.

For a few years I held a position in the Executive department of the government. I left the department of State in 1843, in May. Within a month after another most worthy and respectable gentleman—who came a very untimely end—had taken my place, I had occasion to know, not officially, but from circumstances, that the annexation of Texas to the United States was taken up by Mr. Tyler's Administration as an administration measure, pushed, pressed, insisted on, and I believe that the honorable gentleman to whom I have referred, and for whose memory I entertain much respect, (Mr. Upshur,) had something like a passion for the accomplishment of this purpose. And I am afraid that the President of the United States at that time suffered his ardent feelings not a little to control his more prudent judgment. At any rate, I saw in 1843 that annexation had become a purpose. I was not in Congress, nor in public life, but seeing this state of things I thought it my duty to admonish, as far as I could, the country of the existence of this purpose. There are gentleman—many of them at the North—others now in this capital, who know that in the summer of 1843, being fully persuaded that this purppse of annexing Texas had been taken up with zeal and determination by the Executive Government of the United States, I thought it my duty, and asked their concurrence in an attempt to let this purpose be known to the country. I conferred with gentleman of distinction and eminence; I proposed some means of exciting public attention to the question of annexation before it should become a party question; for I had learned that when a matter becomes a party matter, it is in vain to argue against it or argue upon it. But the optimists, the quietists then, who said all things are well and let all things alone, discouraged, discountenanced, repressed, any such effort. They said the North would take care of itself, the country would take care of itself; that it would not sustain Tyler's project of annexation; when the time came the power of the North, which was felt in the House of Representatives, would be sufficient to resist the measure. And I could now refer to paragraphs and articles in the most respectable journals at the North, in which the attempt was made to produce an impression that there was no danger that we should have an addition of new States; that we need not alarm ourselves about it. I was not in Congress when the resolution providing for the annexation of Texas was passed. I only know that up to a very short period before the passage of that resolution the general impression was, in the country where I belonged, that no such resolution could pass. But I have found, sir, in the course of thirty years experience, that whatever measure the Executive Government embraces and pushes is quite likely to succeed. There is a giving way somewhere. If the Executive Government acts with uniformity, steadiness, entire unity of purpose, sooner or later it is quite apt enough, according to my construction of history, too apt to effect its purpose.

Just before the commencement of the present Administration the resolutions for the annexation of Texas passed Congress. Texas complied with the provisions of these resolutions, and she was here, or the case was here on the 22d of December, 1845, for her final admission into the Union as one of these States. I took occasion then to state that I hoped I had shown all proper regard for Texas; that I had been certainly opposed to annexation; that if I should go over the whole matter again I should have nothing new to add; that I had acted all along under the unanimous declaration of all parties, and of the Legislature of Massachusetts; that I thought there must be some limit to the extent of our territories; and that I wished that this country should exhibit to the world the example of a powerful republic without the greediness and hunger of empire. And I added that, while I held with as much faithfulness as any citizen of the country to all the original arrangements and compromises of the constitution under which we live, I never could, and I never should, bring myself to be in favor of the admission of any States in the Union as slaveholding States, and I might have added, any States at all. Now, as I have said, in all this I acted under the resolutions of the State of Massachusetts, certainly concurrent with my own judgment, so often repeated, and reaffirmed by the unanimous consent of all men of all parties, that I could not well go through the series of pointing out not only the impolicy, but the unconstitutionality of such annexation. A case presented is this. If a State proposes to come into the Union, and to come in as a slave State, then there is an augmentation of the inequality in the representation of the people which already exists—an inequality already existing, with which I do not quarrel, and which I never will attempt to alter, but shall preserve as long as I have a vote to give or any voice in this Government, because it is a part of the original compact. Let it stand.

But then, there is another consideration of vastly more general importance even than that: more general, because it affects all the States, free and slaveholding; and it is that, if States formed out of territories thus thinly populated, come into the Union, they necessarily, inevitably break up the relation existing between the two branches of the Government, and destroy its balance. They break up the intended relation between the Senate and the House of Representatives. If you bring in new States, any State that comes in must have two Senators. She may come in with fifty or sixty thousand people and more. You may have from a particular State more Senators than you have Representatives. Can anything occur to disfigure and derange the form of Government under which we live more signally than that? Here would be a Senate bearing no proportion to the people, out of all relation to them, by the addition of new States; from some of them only one Representative, perhaps, and two Senators; whereas the larger States may have ten, fifteen, or even thirty representatives, and but two Senators. The Senate, added to, augmented by these new Senators coming from States where there are few people, becomes an odious oligarchy. It holds power without any adequate constituency. Sir, it is but "borough-mongering" upon a large scale. Now, I do not depend upon theory. I ask the Senate and the country to look at facts: to see where we were when we made our departure three years ago, and where we now are; and I leave it to the imagination to conjecture where we shall be.

We admitted Texas—one State for the present—but, sir, if you refer to the resolutions providing for the annexation of Texas, you find a provision that it shall be in the power of Congress hereafter to make four new States out of Texan territory.—Present and prospectively, five new States—ten Senators—may come into the Union out of Texas. Three years ago we did this; we now propose to make two States Undoubtedly, if we take, as the President recommends, New Mexico and California, there must then be four new Senators. We shall then have provided in these territories out of the United States along our southern borders for the creation of States enough into send fourteen Senators in this chamber. Now, what will be the relation between these Senators and the people they represent, or the States from which they come? I do not understand that there is any very accurate census of Texas. It is generally supposed to contain a hundred and fifty thousand persons. I doubt whether it is above one hundred thousand.

Mr. MANGUM. It contains one hundred and forty-nine thousand.

Mr. WEBSTER. My honorable friend on my left says a hundred and forty nine thousand. I put it down, then, one hundred and fifty thousand. Well, sir, Texas is not destined probably to be a country of dense population. We will suppose it to have near one hundred and fifty thousand population by the best accounts, and I have given over all that I can find. New Mexico may have sixty or seventy thousand inhabitants, such as they are! Say seventy thousand. In California they are not supposed to be above twenty five thousand men; but undoubtedly, if this territory should become ours, persons from Oregon and from our Western States will find their way to San Franciso, where there is some good land, and we may suppose they will shortly amount to sixty or seventy thousand. We will put them down at seventy thousand. Then the whole territory in this estimate which is as large as any man puts it at, will contain two hundred and ninety thousand persons, and they will send us, whenever we ask for them, fourteen Senators; a population less than that of the State of Vermont, and not the eighth part of that of New York! Fourteen Senators; and no more people than Vermont, and no more people than New Hampshire, and not so many people as the good State of New Jersey! But then, sir, Texas claims to the line of the Rio Grande, and, if it be her true line, why then of course she absorbs a considerable part, nay, the greater part of the population of what is now called New Mexico. I do not argue the question of the true southern or western line of Texas; I only say that it is apparent to every body who will look at the map and learn any thing of the matter, that New Mexico cannot be divided by this river, the Rio Grande, which is a shallow, fordable, insignificant stream, creaping along through a narrow valley, at the base of enormous moutains. New Mexico must remain together: it must be a State with its seventy thousand people; and so it will be, and so will be California. But suppose Texas to remain a unit, & but one State for the present, still we have three States: Texas New Mexico, and California. We have six Senators, then, for less than three hundred thousand people. We have as many Senators for three hundred thousand people in that region as we have for New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio, with four or five millions of people; and that is what we call an equal representation! Is not this enormous? Have gentlemen considered this? Have they looked at it? Are they willing to look it in the face, and then say they embrace it? I trust in God the people will look at it and consider it? And now let me add that this disproportion can never be diminished it must remain forever. How are you going to diminish it? Why, here is Texas with a hundred and forty-nine thousand people with one State. Suppose that population should flow into Texas, where will it go? Not to any dense point, but to be spread over all that region, in places remote from the Gulf, in places remote from what is now the capitol of Texas; and therefore, as soon as there are in other portions of Texas people enough, within our common construction of the constitution and our practice in respect to the admission of States, my honorable friend from Texas will have a new State, and I have no doubt he has chalked it out already.—Well, then as to New Mexico, there can be no more people there.

The man is ignorant, stupid, who has looked at the map of New Mexico and read the accounts of it, who supposes there can be any more people there than there is now; some sixty or seventy thousand. It is an old settled country—the people living along in the bottom of this valley on the two sides of a little stream; a garter of land only on one side and the other, filled by coarse landholders and miserable peons. It can sustain—not only under their cultivation, but under any cultivation that our American race should ever submit it to—no more people than are there now. There will then be two Senators for sixty thousand inhabitants in New Mexico to the end of our lives and to the end of the lives of our children. And then, sir, how is it with California?—We propose to take California from the forty-second degree north latitude down to the thirty-second degree; we propose to take ten degrees of latitude along the coast of the Pacific. All along that great distance there are are settlements, and villages, and forts; back, it is all wilderness and barrenness and Indian country. But if about San Franciso, and perhaps down to Monterey or a little to the north; there shall be enough to make up one State, why the people five hundred miles off in time to come will have another State, and then this disproportion of Senators to the people will go on, and must go on, and we cannot prevent it. I say, sir, that according to my conscientious convictions, we are now fixing upon the constitution of the United States and upon our form of Government a monstrosity—a disfiguration—an enormity. Sir, I hardly dare trust myself. I do not know that I may not be under some delusion.—I do not know that my head is not turned. It may be that it is the weakness of mine eyes that forms this monstrous apparition. But if I may trust myself—if I may persuade myself that I am in my right mind, then it does appear to me, that we, in this Senate, have been acting, and are acting, and are likely to be acting hereafter, a part which will certainly form a remarkable epoch in the history of our Government I hold it to be enormous—flagrant—and an outrage upon all the principles of a popular representative government and upon the elementary provisions of the constitution under which we live and which we have sworn to support—But then, sir, what frees the case from this enormity? Why, it is that we stipulate only that these new States shall be brought in at a suitable time. Now, what is to constitute the suitableness of time! Who is to judge of it? I tell you, sir, that the suitable time will come whenever the preponderance of party power here makes it necessary to bring in new States. The time will depend on the state of our politics here and not upon the condition of these States elsewhere. Be assured, sir, there will be a suitable time whenever strength, or party power, or votes are wanting in this Senate. We have some little experience of this. Texas came in in suitable time. Very suitable! Texas was finally admitted in December, 1846. My friend near me here, (Mr. Rusk,) for whom I have great regard, whose acquaintance I have cultivated with much pleasure took his seat here, with his colleague, in March, 1845. In July, 1846, these two Texan votes turned the balance in the Senate and overthrew the tariff of 1842, in my judgment, the best system of revenue that was ever established in this country. Gentlemen of different opinions think otherwise. They think it was fortunate—They think the Texan votes came in in suitable time; and they will take care that New Mexican votes shall come in in suitable time also. I understand it perfectly well. It is a difference of opinion between myself and them.—To their policy, to their object, to their purpose, the time was suitable, and the aid was efficient and decisive. Sir, in 1850 perhaps similar questions may be agitated here—they are not likely to be before—but agitated they will be then, unless some change in the course of the administration of the Government take place; and, according to my apprehension, looking to general results as flowing from our established system of commerce and revenue in 1850, two years from this time, we may probably be engaged in a new revision of our system; in the work of establishing, if we can, a tariff of specific duties; in the work of protecting, if we can, the domestic industry of this country, and in the work of preventing to some extent, if we can, the overwhelming flood of importations. Suppose this to be the case, and suppose that our opponents require additional strength, that will be exactly the suitable time for two Senators from New Mexico to make their appearance here.

But again, we hear other halcyon, soothing, quieting tones, which quiet none of my alarms, assuage none of my fears, commend me to my nightly rest with no more resignation. It is said we may trust the popular branch of the Legislature—we may look to the House of Representatives, the great majority of whom are from the North and Middle States; and we may trust them that these new States are not admitted sooner than they should be, or admitted for any party purpose. I am compelled by experience to distrust all such reliance If we cannot rely on ourselves, when we have a clear and unquestioned constitutional authority competent to carry us through, I beg to know how we are to rely on others? Have we more repect for the patriotism, the firmness of others than our own? Besides experience shows us that things of this sort may be sprung upon Congress and upon the people. It was so in the case of Texas. It was so in the 28th Congress. The members of the 28th Congress were not chosen with the view to decide the question of annexation or no annexation. They came here upon other grounds, political and party grounds supported by their friends on one side and the other, for reasons not connected with this question. What then? Why the administration sprung the question upon Congress. It obtained a snap judgment, and carried the measure of annexation.—That can be proved by many facts. I will state one. There were four gentlemen in the House of Representives from Connecticut elected before this question arose—belonging to the Democratic party. They had not been here long before they entered into the spirit of annexation; and when this became known, remonstrances—public, private, and legislative—were uttered in sounds which any one could have heard who could hear thunder. Did it move these gentlemen? Not at all.—Every one of them voted for annexation.—The election came round a few months afterwards, and they were all turned out; but what did those care for that who had the benefit of their votes? Such agencies, or if it be proper to call them instrumentalities, maintain respect no longer than they continue to be useful.

Sir, we take New Mexico and California. Who is weak enough to think that there is an end? Why, do we not hear it avowed every day that it is proper for us also to take Sonora and Tamaulipas, and other provinces or states of Northern Mexico? Who thinks that the hunger for dominion will stop here of itself? Somebody has said that this acquisition is so mean and lean and unsatisfactory that we shall seek no further. In my judgment, sir, you may believe that, if you can believe that a rapacious animal that has made one unproductive foray won't try for a better! But, further, there are some things that we can argue against with temper, and submit to, if overruled, without mortification. There are other things that seem to affect one's consciousness of being a reasonable man, and evince a disposition to impose upon his common sense. And of this class of topics or pretensions I have never heard of any thing, and cannot conceive of anything more ridiculous in itself, more absurd and more affrontive to all sober judgment, than the cry that we are getting indemnity. Indemnity by the acquisition of New Mexico and California! I hold them not to be worth a dollar, and we pay for them a vast sum of money. We have expended, as every body knows, large treasures in the prosecution of the war, and now what is there to constitute indemnity? What do gentleman mean by it? Let us see how this matter stands. We get a country.—We get a country in the first instance, either by cession or acknowledgement of boundary—I care not which way you state it—the country between the Nueces and the Rio Grande. What this country is appears from a publication of an honorable gentleman in the other House, in which he quotes an account given by Major Gaines He says that the country is worth nothing; that he would not hazard the life of a single individual for every foot of land from San Patricio to the valley of the Rio Grande. This gentleman has been there lately, and is well acquainted with the condition of the country. So far then as that part of our acquisition is concerned, I take it for granted it is not worth a dollar!

Now of New Mexico. Of that, forty-nine fiftieths at least is a mere barren waste of desert plain or mountain. There is no wood, no timber—little faggots to light a fire carried thirty or forty miles on mules. There is no natural fall of rains, as in temperate climates. The place and scene are Asiatic—enormously high mountains, running up some to the height of ten thousand feet, with very narrow valleys at their bases, through which streams sometimes trickle along; a garter winds along, through the thread of which runs the Rio Grande from afar in the Rocky Mountains, down to the latitude of about thirty-three degrees, some three or four hundred miles. There these sixty thousand persons are. In the mountains, on the right and the left, are streams whose natural tendencies would be as lateral streams to flow into the Rio Grande, and in certain seasons of the year, when the rains have been abundant in the mountains, some of them do actually reach the Rio Grande, but the greater part of them always, and all of them for a greater part of the year, never reach an outlet to the sea. They are absorbed in the sandy and desert plains of the country. There is no culture any where, save that which can be obtained by artificial watering or irrigation. You can have this along the narrow valley of the Rio Grande, in the gorges of the mountains, where the streams are; but you cannot have it down along the course of the streams that lose themselves in the sands.

Now, sir, there is no public domain in New Mexico; there is not a foot of land to be sold by the Government; there is not an acre that will become ours when the country becomes ours—not an acre. But, more than this, the country is full of people, such as they are. There is not the least thing in it to invite the settlement of our planters or farmers. There will go, I dare say, speculators, traders, some of them adventurers, tired of the good country in the valley of the Mississippi, who desire to wander, but I undertake to say there will not be two hundred farmers or planters from the United States in New Mexico in the next fifty years. They cannot live there. Do you suppose they are going to cultivate lands which cannot be made productive in the slightest degree without irrigation? The people that are there produce little and live upon little. I believe the characteristic of our farmers throughout this country is to produce a good deal and consume a good deal. Again, New Mexico is not like Texas. I had hoped and still hope that Texas is to be filled up by a population like ourselves—not by the Spanish race, not by peons, not by coarse, ignorant, vulgar landlords, with tribes of slaves around him, predial and otherwise.

Mr. RUSK. Will the honorable Senator allow me one word? I did not like to interrupt the Senator when he was reading an account of the country lying in the valley of the Nueces. When that country comes to be known, it will be found as valuable as any portion of Texas. From its source to its mouth, the valley of the Rio Grande will be found to be the same thing. I did not choose to interrupt the hon Senator, but we do not claim it as indemnity, believing it to be our just and equitable right. So far as Mexican population is concerned, there is a good deal of it now in Texas, highly respectable, and amongst them those who have distinguished themselves as patriots, men of intelligence and of worth. These are coming over and settling in Texas, encouraged by the prospects of peace.

Mr. WEBSTER. I take what I say in regard to the valley of the Rio Grande from the statement of Major Gaines. I am glad to hear that there is a part of it fit for the foot of civilized man. I am glad to hear, also, that there are some of the inhabitants of New Mexico who are not so besotted with their miserable condition as not to make some effort to get out of the country, and to come into a better.

Sir, I would, if I had time, call the attention of the Senate to a very instructive speech that was made in the other House by Mr. Smith, of Connecticut. He seems to have examined all our authorities, conversed with all our travellers, corresponded with all our agents. His speech contains all their communications, and I commend it to every man in the United States who wishes to know what we are about to acquire by the acquisition of New Mexico. New Mexico is secluded, isolated—a place by itself—in the middle of the mountains, five hundred miles, I believe, from Texas.

[Mr. RUSK. Five hundred miles from the settled portions of Texas.]

Mr. WEBSTER. Further from any where else! It does not belong any where. It has no belongings about it. Sir, at this moment it is absolutely more retired and shut out from communication with the civilized world than the Sandwich Islands, or most of the Islands in the Pacific ocean. It presses hard on Typee, and the people are infinitely less elevated in mind and condition than the people of the Sandwich Islands; far less worthy of our association; far less fit to send their Senators here than are the inhabitants of the Sandwich Islands; far less worthy are they than the better classes of Indians in our neighborhood. Commend me to the Cherokees, the Choctaws, if you please—to speak of the Pawnees, the Blackfeet, the Snake Indians, and the Flatheads—any thing except the ——— Indians, and I am satisfied with them, instead of the people of New Mexico. They have no notion of our institutions, or of any free institutions.—They have no notion of popular government. Not the slightest—not the slightest on earth. And the question is asked, what will be their constitution? It is farcical to talk of such a people making a constitution. They do not know the meaning of the term. They do not know its import; they know nothing at all about it. And I can tell you, sir, that when we have made it a territory, and wish to make it a State, such a constitution as the Executive power of this Government thinks fit to send to them will be sent and adopted.—The constitution of our fellow citizens of New Mexico will be framed in the city of Washington Now, what says Col. Hardin in regard to New Mexico, that most lamented and distinguished officer, whom I well knew as a member of the other House, and whose death I did most deeply deplore? He gives a description of New Mexico, and speaks of the people of that country in these terms:

"The people are on a par with their land. One in two hundred or five hundred is rich and lives like a nabob; the rest are peons or servants sold for debt, who work for their masters, and are as subservient as the slaves of the South, and look like Indians and indeed are not more capable of self-government. One man, Jacobus Sanchez, owns three-fourths of all the land our column has passed over in Mexico. We are told we have seen the best part of Northern Mexico; if so, the whole of it is not worth much."

I need not read the whole extract. He speaks of all Northern Mexico, and New Mexico is not the better part of it. Sir, there is a recent traveller, who is not unfriendly to the United States, if I may judge from his works, for he commends us everywhere. He is an Englishman, and his name is Ruxton. I believe his work is in the library, and I suppose that gentlemen have seen it. He gives an account of the morals and manners of these people; and, Mr. President and Senators, I will take leave to introduce you to these, your soon-to-be respected fellow citizens of New Mexico:

"It is remarkable that, although existing from the earliest times of the colonization of New Mexico, a period of two centuries, in a state of continual hostility with the numerous savage tribes of Indians who surrounded their territory, and in constant insecurity of life and property from their attacks; being also far removed from the enervating influences of large cities and in their isolated situation entirely dependent on their own resources, the inhabitants are totally destitute of those qualities which, for the above reasons, we might naturally have expected to distinguish them, and are as deficient in energy of character and physical courage as they are in all the moral and intellectual qualities In their social state but one degree removed from the veriest savages, they might take lessons even from these in morality and the conventional decencies of life. Imposing no restraint on their passions, a shameless and universal concubinage exists, and a total disregard of moral laws to which it would be impossible to find a parallel in any country calling itself civilized. A want of honorable principle and consummate duplicity and treachery characterize all their dealings. Liars by nature they are treacherous and faithless to their friends, cowardly and cring-

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