

NAVIGATION LAWS, AND TARIFF ON BRITISH PRODUCTIONS.

MESSAGE

FROM

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

TRANSMITTING

A correspondence between the Department of State and the British Minister at Washington, relative to the navigation laws; and also a letter from the latter, in view of a probable increase of the duty on iron by the United States government.

MARCH 5, 1850.

Ordered to be printed.

To the Senate of the United States:

I herewith transmit to Congress copies of a recent correspondence between the Department of State and the British minister at Washington, relating to subjects which seem to require the consideration of the legislative rather than the executive branch of the government.

Z. TAYLOR.

WASHINGTON, March 4, 1850.

BRITISH LEGATION,
Washington, January 1, 1850.

SIR: Her Majesty's government saw with great satisfaction the decree published by the President of the United States, conceding to British vessels in American ports the same privileges and advantages which are granted to American vessels in British ports by the recent modification of the British navigation laws; and I was happy to assure you that the vessels of the United States would not be excluded by any order in council from the full benefit of that change of system which Great Britain has adopted.

There are, however, two or three matters to which I must call your attention, believing that the real object and spirit of your standing regulations is to confer on the vessels of foreign powers those advantages which such foreign powers may confer upon the vessels of the United States. As the coasting trade of the United Kingdom is still strictly re-

served to British vessels, I would not, of course, propose to the United States government that British vessels should be admitted to trade to and fro between the several ports on the eastern coast of the United States, because such trade, being strictly a coasting trade, is, it may be presumed, confined to United States vessels. But the trade between the ports on the east and those on the west coast of the United States, involving, as it does, the necessity of passing through seas and along coasts far beyond the territorial jurisdiction of the United States, resembles in its nature and character the trade carried on between the United Kingdom and the transmarine possessions of the British crown; into which trade the new act authorizes the admission of the vessels of all countries which may be disposed to meet the concessions of Great Britain in a spirit of fair reciprocity. And her Majesty's government conceive that, if the United States vessels are to be admitted to this privilege, the United States government may be fairly expected in return to admit British vessels to trade between the Atlantic and Pacific ports of the United States. Moreover, you will be aware that American vessels becoming the property of British subjects are now admissible to the advantages of British register; and I therefore deem it no more than reasonable and fair to expect that measures will be adopted by the United States government for making British vessels becoming the property of American citizens admissible to the advantages of an American register. It will give me much pleasure to be able to satisfy her Majesty's government promptly on these particulars.

I avail myself of this occasion to renew to you the assurance of my highest consideration.

H. L. BULWER.

Hon. J. M. CLAYTON, &c., &c., &c.

BRITISH LEGATION,

Washington, January 3, 1850.

SIR: It having been represented to her Majesty's government that there is some idea on the part of the government of the United States to increase the duties upon British iron imported into the United States, I have been instructed by her Majesty's government to express to the United States government the hope of her Majesty's government that no addition will be made to the duties imposed by the present tariff of the United States; which already weigh heavily on British productions; and I cannot but observe, for my own part, that an augmentation of the duties on British produce or manufactures, made at a moment when the British government has, by a series of measures, been facilitating the commerce between the two countries, would produce a very disagreeable effect on public opinion in England.

I avail myself of this opportunity to renew to you the assurance of my most distinguished consideration.

HENRY L. BULWER.

Hon. JOHN M. CLAYTON, &c., &c., &c.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,

Washington, January 14, 1850.

SIR: I was honored by the receipt of your note of the 1st instant, assuring me that the vessels of the United States would not be excluded by any order in council from the full benefit of that change of system which Great Britain has adopted by the recent modification of her navigation laws, and expressing the great satisfaction of her Majesty's government with the decision of the President of the United States conceding to British vessels in American ports the same privileges and advantages which are now granted to American vessels in British ports.

The questions whether British vessels shall be admitted to trade, as you propose, between the Atlantic and Pacific ports of the United States, and whether vessels of British build shall be admitted to the advantages of an American register, are considered by the President as the proper subjects for legislative consideration, and will be submitted to the judgment of Congress.

I avail myself of this occasion to renew to you the assurance of my distinguished consideration.

JOHN M. CLAYTON.

Rt. Hon. Sir H. L. BULWER, &c., &c., &c.

