

RESOLUTIONS OF THE LEGISLATURE OF RHODE ISLAND,

In relation to the war with Mexico.

FEBRUARY 29, 1848.

Ordered to lie on the table, and be printed.

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS.

In General Assembly, January Session, A. D. 1848.

Resolved, That the opinion heretofore expressed by the General Assembly of this State, that hostilities with the republic of Mexico might have been avoided with honor, by a moderate and constitutional course of proceeding on the part of the President of the United States, has been strengthened and vindicated by every fact developed in relation to the acquisition of Texas, and to the subsequent operations of the forces of the United States in the neighborhood of the Rio Grande.

Resolved, That the order given by the President, January 13th, 1846, for the advance of the army from its position at Corpus Christi to the eastern bank of the Rio Grande, issued during the session of Congress, without its knowledge, which resulted in the expulsion of the Mexican forces from the territory occupied by them eastward of that river, was a useless and unconstitutional precipitation of the wasteful and lamentable contest with Mexico in which we are involved; and as a manifest usurpation of the power of Congress to declare war, merited an impeachment of the President rather than the acquiescence and sanction it received by the subsequent proceedings of Congress.

Resolved, That the existence of certain unascertained demands on the republic of Mexico, held by citizens of the United States, and of other ascertained and partially satisfied claims by such citizens on the same government, was, under the circumstances attending them, no sufficient or proper cause for an act of war; and if offered as a plea for its justification towards Mexico, must place the conduct of our government in a painful and degrading contrast to its uniform action on such demands when preferred by our citizens against France, Spain, and Great Britain, and other leading and powerful States of Europe, with which we have negotiated their settlement.

Resolved, That the conquest and occupation of Mexico, under the pretext of procuring an indemnity by treaty with that power for the claims

before mentioned, is a dangerous and unprecedented measure, subversive of our government and free institutions, whether the immense territory so conquered and occupied be held as a tributary province, or be attempted to be incorporated as a portion of the States of this Union.

Resolved, That any increase of the army of the United States, or appropriation of money for that purpose, is greatly to be deprecated, as furnishing grounds for the belief that Congress coincides with the President in the policy and justice of such conquest and occupation, for the purpose of indemnity; that in the opinion of this assembly, on the contrary, it would redound to the honor and true glory of this country to manifest a spirit of moderation and equity towards a sister republic, prostrated by internal convulsions and the calamity of a foreign war, which disable her for any effective resistance to demands however extortionate, and may compel even the sacrifice of her nationality to a disciplined and superior force.

Resolved, That, discarding all purposes of conquest and occupation, or of extorting from Mexico a territorial indemnity for claims ascertained or unadjusted, it is expedient that measures be taken to re-establish the relations of peace and amity between the United States and that republic, by such a treaty of indemnity and limits as will secure an equitable boundary between the contracting parties, and a just indemnity to the United States for all claims ascertained or unadjusted previous to said order of January 13th, 1846.

Resolved, That our Senators and Representatives in Congress be requested to use their best exertions to procure the adoption in their respective Houses of such acts and declarations promotive of peace, as the exigency of the occasion in their judgment may demand.

Resolved, That his excellency the governor communicate copies of these resolutions to each of our Senators and Representatives, with the request that they be laid before their respective Houses; and copies also to the executive department of the several States.

True copy—witness :

HENRY BOWEN,

Secretary.

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS.

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT,

Providence, February 22, 1848.

SIR : In compliance with a resolution of the General Assembly of this State, I have the honor to forward to you the accompanying document.

With much respect, your obedient servant,

ELISHA HARRIS.

HON. JOHN H. CLARKE, *Senator.*