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THE CLAYTON-BULWER TREATY.

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DECEMBER 11, 1900.—Ordered to be printed.

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Mr. BARD presented the following:

**THE CLAYTON-BULWER TREATY—MR. DOUGLAS'S VIEWS—THE AMERICAN DOCTRINE AS DEFINED BY HIM IN 1859—A FORCIBLE PRESENTATION OF THE CASE SUBSTANTIALLY AS NOW PUT FORWARD BY SECRETARY BLAINE.**

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WASHINGTON, D. C., *December 17, 1881.*

STILSON HUTCHINS, *Editor of the Post:*

In the summer of 1859 my brother-in-law, Senator Douglas, of Illinois, remained in Washington. As I loved him dearly and was then a member of his household, and the opportunity was favorable and might not occur again in his lifetime, I became exceedingly anxious to obtain from him a statement of his own political faith, with the general views of a Democratic statesman and acknowledged party leader upon all great constitutional, political, and party questions.

With his cordial approval and consent we passed an hour or more together and alone for many consecutive nights. Our conversations were rarely interrupted, and frequently lasted until late hours. With the text of the Constitution before us, and such other pertinent topics as I chose to add, in the form of questions prepared by me, we finally completed a comprehensive review of all the most important constitutional and party questions from the formation and adoption of the Constitution down to that time.

Mr. Douglas became as deeply interested as myself, and always paused long enough to enable me to obtain in writing every word he said and exactly as he said it.

Among the topics discussed were the Clayton and Bulwer treaty and the Monroe doctrine. I am persuaded that his views and opinions upon these subjects will now be of great importance and value to his countrymen, and equally interesting to statesmen and diplomatists of all parties, while at the same time they will enable men of the simplest understanding to fully comprehend the great questions involved. They will also conclusively demonstrate that the policy of President Arthur, as aided by his Secretaries of State, is likely to meet with strong and universal Democratic support, as it has hitherto had strong Democratic advocacy, in all matters wherein his Administration shall seek to promote the honor, dignity, and welfare of the country by the

maintenance of a brave, manly, sound, and truly American foreign policy.

I inclose memoranda of what Mr. Douglas said upon the subject referred to. The speech to which he alludes was delivered in the Senate March 10 and 17, 1853, and, together with those of Senators Clayton, Cass, and Soulé, is readily accessible in the Record of Congressional Debates.

I am, sir, yours, truly,

J. MADISON CUTTS.

[It is to be understood that the following is Mr. Douglas's exact language, and dictated with a view of subsequent publication.—J. M. C.]

CENTRAL AMERICA—THE CLAYTON AND BULWER TREATY.

The oldest possession which Great Britain claims in Central America is that which is known as the "Belize Settlement," dividing Nicaragua and Honduras on the one side and the Mexican State of Yucatan on the other.

More than a century ago some British merchants sent out ships and cut and loaded them with logwood at the Belize, which at that time belonged to Spain. In making a treaty of peace between Spain and England a clause was inserted continuing the permission to cut logwood, without conveying any right of soil or dominion to England. Under the permission to cut logwood, England founded a settlement at the Belize, with no fixed or definite boundaries; and she has enlarged and extended it from time to time and organized it into a colony, without paying any attention to the territorial rights or boundaries of the adjoining States.

About the same time England pretended to have made a treaty with a small tribe of Indians called the Mosquitos, upon the coast of Central America, and to have guaranteed to the Indians the protection of the British Government. Some years ago, perhaps twenty, the British Government sent an agent to the Mosquito coast and found an Indian boy—part Indian and part mulatto—who was said to have been the son of a Mosquito Indian chief, and took him over to Jamaica and had him crowned as the king of the Mosquitoes, took him back again to his own country, and put him in nominal possession of his alleged inheritance, but, in fact, under the direction and control of a British consul on that coast. This Mosquito country was within the chartered limits of the State of Nicaragua, and consequently the Indian tribes, the Mosquitos included, were subjects of the State of Nicaragua and incapable of establishing a government independent of that State.

This was the condition of affairs in Central America when the war between the United States and Mexico was brought to a close. It was understood, and in fact not denied, that Great Britain used her entire powers of diplomacy to encourage Mexico and to defeat any treaty of peace by which the United States would acquire any Mexican territory. *On the day that it became known at Vera Cruz that a treaty of peace had been signed by which California and New Mexico were transferred to the United States, the British fleet set sail from Vera Cruz and proceeded directly to the mouth of the San Juan River, in Central America, and took possession of the town of San Juan, at the mouth of the river, changed its name to Greytown, and established British authority there in the name of the Mosquito king, to be exercised by the British consul, and, in fact, converted it into a British*

dependency. The United States protested against this act as being an aggression upon the territorial rights of Nicaragua and as being prompted by hostile motives toward the United States, it having for its object to close up the only channel through which the United States could establish and maintain communication between the Atlantic States and our newly acquired possessions on the Pacific.

The controversy growing out of this seizure of that transit route led to the Clayton and Bulwer treaty. It is proper, however, to remark that during the last years of Mr. Polk's Administration he had appointed Judge Hise, of Kentucky, minister to the Central American States, and that Judge Hise had negotiated a treaty on the part of the United States with the State of Nicaragua by which the United States were invested with the exclusive right of constructing a ship canal between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, through the San Juan River and Lake Nicaragua, together with the right of establishing towns and free ports at each end of the canal, and of fortifying the same and placing the whole line of the canal and its banks, from ocean to ocean, under the *exclusive protection* of the United States. This Hise treaty was signed in Central America while Mr. Polk was President, but did not reach the United States until after the inauguration of General Taylor, and after the appointment of Mr. Clayton as Secretary of State.

Mr. Clayton refused to accept this treaty and sent an agent to Central America to have it canceled and a new treaty made by which the said canal should be placed under the *joint protection* of Great Britain and the United States. Mr. Clayton then negotiated with Sir Henry Bulwer the Clayton treaty, by which his scheme of a joint protection to the transit route was recognized and a provision inserted by which Great Britain and the United States pledged their faith, each to the other, that *neither of them would ever colonize, annex, fortify, or exercise exclusive dominion over any portion of Central America.* After the terms of this treaty were agreed to by Clayton and Bulwer Mr. Clayton refused to sign it until he could procure from two-thirds of the Senators a private pledge that they would ratify it, which being done, he signed the treaty and sent it to the Senate for ratification.

Mr. Douglas was the only man in the Senate who made any active opposition to the ratification of the treaty. He opposed it upon the ground that he wanted no partnerships with Great Britain in respect to the transit route; that such a partnership would be productive of constant misunderstandings and disputes, instead of being a bond of peace; and he urged that the Senate reject the treaty and call upon the Executive to send to the Senate the Hise treaty, that it might be ratified, with such amendments as the Senate might see fit to make, in order that we should have the *exclusive control over the transit route and might open it to the world on such terms as were compatible with American interests.* Mr. Douglas especially opposed the treaty upon the ground that he would never enter into any compact with Great Britain or any other European power in respect to the American continent, by which the faith of the nation should be pledged for all time to come *never to annex or colonize such portions of the continent as our interests and safety would inevitably compel us to annex at some future day.* He did not desire to annex the country then, but insisted that the time would come when we would be compelled to exercise jurisdiction over that transit route. All objection, however, to the treaty proved useless, as nearly the whole Senate had been committed to it

privately, in advance, and when the vote was taken there were but 8 votes recorded in the negative.

The treaty had been no sooner ratified than Great Britain *did claim* that her protectorate was still in existence, recognized and acknowledged by the United States, and she has from that day to this persisted in this claim to a protectorate.

All this occurred in secret session in 1850, and within the next three years I tried often to get the Senate to remove the *injunction of secrecy* so that I might publish my views. In 1853, three years afterwards, the English extended their influence and took possession of Ruatan. Cass, in the Senate, began to get frightened. All that I had predicted had come to pass. Cass made a speech denouncing Clayton and the treaty. This was occurring about the time when Clayton was retiring from the office of Secretary of State. Soulé entered into the discussion, and in the course of their speeches both he and Cass, forgetting that the injunction of secrecy had not been removed, quoted what had occurred during the secret session of 1850 or thereabouts. Nobody interrupted them, and I thought now is the time to get my speech and my views before the public. So I went to a Senator and said to him: "Look here, Soulé and Cass are quoting what occurred in secret session; suppose you move the Senate to go into secret session, and have the injunction removed so that they can do so." The Senator started up mischievously; Soulé apologized, said he was not aware that the injunction had not been removed; the Senate went into secret session and the injunction was removed.

Clayton retired from the office of Secretary of State, went back to Delaware, and said Cass had been abusing and slandering him, and that it was necessary for him to reply in order to vindicate himself, promising to annihilate Cass. He was reelected to the Senate, and could have annihilated Cass, for the latter had taken the wrong ground and Clayton was very powerful in debate.

Cass vanished—said his wife was sick, and that he had to go home to Detroit. Clayton came on, ready with a speech which would have just fitted Cass, and asked where he was. He was told Cass's wife was sick and that he had gone home, and then, turning to me, said: "No matter; what he had to say could equally be addressed to me as Cass's follower." When Clayton got through I made my speech, which used him up. I stated all that I had previously said in the secret session when the treaty was ratified, and a good deal more. The speech made a great impression upon the country and gained me great fame and reputation, *and the treaty has been odious ever since.*

#### THE MONROE DOCTRINE.

What is known as the "Monroe doctrine" had its origin and name in a recommendation of President Monroe, in one of his messages to Congress, at a time when Spain was making arrangements to reconquer and subdue her various colonies in America which had revolted and established their independence in 1819, 1820, and 1821. It was apprehended by the American Government that the despotic powers of Europe, after the overthrow of Napoleon and the reestablishment of the despotic sway in Europe, would lend their aid to conquer and subject these Spanish colonies, which had then become independent States, and that while a portion of them would, in this event, be restored to Spain, the others might be divided among

the various powers of Europe. In view of this probable result, President Monroe declared, in his message to Congress, with a view of its being taken as notice to all Europe, that no portion of the American continent was hereafter to be deemed open to European colonization, and the United States would consider any such attempt as imposing upon them the obligation to take such steps as were necessary to prevent it. This declaration assumed the name of the Monroe Doctrine; and it has frequently been appealed to by American statesmen as a rule *to be inflexibly adhered to* whenever any European power has threatened or attempted to extend its dominions upon the American continent—North, South, or Central America. This doctrine did not contemplate any interference on the part of the United States with the existing rights or colonial possessions of any European power, *but was a protest against the extension of their power and policy in the future.*

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