

WHARTON TO FORSYTH.^a

WHARTON TO HOUSTON.

No. 6.

WASHINGTON CITY

2nd. Feb. 1837.

SIR,

Not having heard of the appointment of a successor in the department of State to the lamented General Austin, I take the liberty of addressing this despatch to you, as well as my last by the hands of Maj. Patton. In my last, I stated that there would be no action by Congress on the subject of our recognition, until the arrival of Judge Ellis late Charge d' Affaires from this Government to Mexico, who had received his passports and was hourly expected here. The result has shown the correctness of my anticipations. Although the question has been frequently and warmly urged by our friends, the committee on foreign affairs have refused to report, and Congress of course has not acted up to this period, for they will not act without a report from the committee. Fortunately for us, Judge Ellis has arrived and if Congress is disposed to do us justice, his information will warrant an immediate recognition of our independence. Judge Ellis states that Mexico presents a most deplorable picture of anarchy, revolution and bankruptcy and that the threatened invasion is totally impracticable; 1st. from the inability to raise troops; 2dly. from the want of means to sustain them after they are raised.

Let it be recollected that the delay in recognising, recommended by the President in his special message was predicated upon the impending invasion, and we would naturally suppose that cessante causa, cessat effectus, and that there was nothing to prevent an immediate recognition at this moment:—nor is there in the estimation of the President or of any one else, disposed to take a just view of the subject. The President is entirely undisguised and explicit in his views for he told me to see the Chairman of the Committee on foreign relations, which I have done and to tell him that Judge Ellis, if called before the Committee, would convince them in five minutes of the utter impossibility of the new invasion. Yet, my dear Sir, after all this, Congress will not act without another message from the President, which he is not disposed to give: 1st. because he deems it unnecessary, 2dly. he says that the call for it by Congress is with a view to screen themselves from proper responsibility, and he is unwilling to gratify them. I will now tell you the whole secret of the reluctance of Congress to act on this matter. I have made it my business to unravel the mystery and I know that I have succeeded. Some of the members have openly avowed to me their reasons for wishing

^a January 24, 1837. See Wharton to Rusk, February 16, 1837.

to postpone our recognition until the next Congress. It all proceeds from the Van Buren party. They are afraid that the subject of annexation will be pressed immediately after recognition;—that annexation or no annexation will be made the test of the elections for Congress during the ensuing summer;—that the North will be opposed and the South in favour of annexation, and that Mr. Van Buren will of course have the support of either the South or North in mass accordingly as he favours or opposes annexation. The fear then of throwing Mr. Van Buren into a minority in the next Congress induces his friends to desire a postponement of recognition at present, thereby keeping down the exciting question of annexation at the next elections and giving Mr. Van Buren more time to manage his cards and consolidate his strength. All of Mr. Van Buren's friends are not operated upon in this way, but a sufficient number are to prevent the favourable action of Congress at this session, without a new message or other impulse is given by the President. Be it understood also that many of those same individuals are in favour both of annexation and recognition, but they wish Mr. Van Buren to have his own time and select his own mode of bringing them about, and in their devotion to him, they prefer that Texas should in the mean time suffer by the delay of her recognition, rather than jeopardise his popularity. There can be no mistake in regard to the correctness of the above news. All that remains for me is to operate with the President, and to get him to quicken the action of Congress by another message. This I shall night and day endeavor to effect by using every argument that can operate upon his pride and his sense of justice. At an interview last evening, he told me to feel easy on the subject, that all would go right. He told me moreover that he was preparing a message to Congress, in which he intended to recommend the granting of letters of marque against Mexico and that his government would not longer submit to her injustice and outrages. It is the opinion of Ellis and of the President that Santa Anna will be reinstated in power. In which event the President said that there would be no more difficulty either between this country and Mexico or Mexico and Texas. He said that he had conversed freely with Santa Anna in regard to extending the at present open south western line so as to include Texas and that their views and wishes were in entire accordance. I have not failed to notify this Government that Texas protested against being concluded by any treaty between this Govt. and Mexico without her full assent. The President in answer assured me that he would perish before he would be guilty of any injustice to Texas or endeavour to bind her without her assent.

In my last by Maj. Patton, I requested that you would give me leave to return home after the rising of Congress on the ground that

Mr. Van Buren would not take the responsibility of doing any thing in the recess of Congress. Even if a treaty of Amity and Commerce were made after this session, it could not be ratified until the next Congress. I therefore repeat my request for leave to return home. I assure you I will not leave while there is a possibility of doing any good and I will return or fulfill any other duties in which I can be of service, if you desire it; for I hold myself ready to discharge the labours of any office however humble until peace is secured to our Country.

I have the honor to be with the
highest consideration Yrs. etc

(Signed) W. H. WHARTON

By F. CATLETT, *Sec. of Legation.*

His Excellency,
SAM HOUSTON,
President of Texas.

WHARTON TO HOUSTON.^a

(No. 7.)

WASHINGTON [CITY,] 5th Feb'y 1837

SIR,

Since my last nothing very important or definite has transpired, but appreciating your desire of being often apprised of the position and prospects of our Texas affairs, I will let no opportunity pass unimproved. A somewhat favourable development took place in the House of Representatives on thursday last. The motion of Mr. Boyd of K'y. to instruct the Committee on Foreign Affairs to report a resolution, recognizing the independence of Texas, was first in order. Mr. Cambreling moved to suspend the rules for the purpose of taking up the appropriation, which he said would consume very little time, and he added, moreover, that the Country was suffering hourly and greatly for the want of action on this bill. Notwithstanding the force of these remarks, and notwithstanding every member was convinced of the truth of them, yet seventy four sturdy friends of Texas refused to suspend the rules or to give any thing precedence of the motion to recognise our independence, and two thirds not being in favor of suspending, Mr. Cambreling's motion was lost. All of the 74. are considered our devoted friends and I know of many equally devoted friends both of recognition and annexation who voted with Cambreling on account of the great importance of immediate action on the appropriation bill. After this, the House adjourned. Friday and Saturday being private bill days, Mr. Boyd's motion did not come up. Nor will it be reached on monday, that

^a L. S.

being Petition and Memorial day. It will however be first in order on tuesday, and I anticipate an interesting discussion and a favourable decision. The reasons, assigned in my last, as inducing Mr. Van Buren's friends to desire postponement, cannot be urged in debate, and I am of the opinion, that, when the subject is agitated, they will not oppose our recognition, for that would be to proclaim their leader the enemy of Texas, in which light he is not willing to be viewed, especially as the friends of our much mistreated country are so numerous and respectable and zealous in all parts of the United States. Senator Preston has just assured me that the Senate will take up the subject in a few days. That body is considered more certainly friendly to us than the lower House. I repeat it now that the views of the President are known to be favourable: discussion is all that is necessary. Our claims to immediate recognition are so palpable and paramount that no prominent politician of the South or West, or of the dominant party in any quarter, dare openly oppose it, however much he may secretly desire to prevent the agitation of the question altogether at this session of Congress. Moreover there is one consolation which I fondly clasp to my bosom as the pillar of my hope and support amid all the coldness, illiberality and injustice, with which we have been treated, which is that if Genl. Jackson finds that Congress will not act without another message from him, I am more deceived in him than I ever was in mortal man, if he does not under these circumstances send another message to Congress and have us formally recognized before he quits the Presidential Chair. Time will soon develop the truth or falsity of my hopes and calculations. The news from Vera Cruz up to the 9th. Jan'y is favourable for us. There is but little doubt of the reinstation [sic] of Santa Anna in power and of the utter impracticability of the threatened invasion.

When I wrote you last, I confidently expected to have an operation for the cataract, immediately performed on Mrs. Wharton's eye, so as to be ready to start home in March, provided you gave me leave to return. Since then I have consulted Dr. Smith of Baltimore, who, to my infinite sorrow, informs me, that an operation would be entirely useless, the sight having been destroyed by paralysis of the optic nerve before the appearance of this cataract. Under these circumstances, he says an operation would not restore her vision at all, and would at the same time greatly endanger her other eye. He says moreover that it is indispensably necessary that Mrs. Wharton should spend the summer at the Saratoga and White Sulphur Springs. Perhaps her life may depend upon it. I cannot therefore, to my inexpressible regret, spend the summer in Texas, even if I obtain your leave. I might possibly leave here in March and attend our Congress in May and return in time for the Springs.

I think it might be of service for me to be at our next Congress. I could tell more orally in one day about our hopes and prospects in this quarter than I could by writing for six months. Do with me as you please however. I assure you of one thing, the Govt. shall not be charged with my expenses when I am absent, or when I am not exclusively and devotedly attending to its business. If you will leave me a little discretion about my movements, I call God to witness, that, without reference to my private business, I will come or stay, as may in my judgment best advance the interests and honour of Texas.

The President has not yet sent in his message, recommending the granting of letters of Marque against Mexico. I anticipate his doing so tomorrow, for he informed me that his mind was unequivocally made up on the subject. I do not think that Congress will concur in his recommendation. Pity and contempt for the imbecility of Mexico will induce many to differ with the President. Moreover the commercial interest will in mass object, from a fear of having the ocean crowded with privateers of other countries, sailing under Mexican colors and commissions. The contest in this case would be very unequal; Mexico having no commerce to be preyed upon, while that of the United States whitens every sea. My own opinion is that the evils, resulting from a temporary suspension of commerce with Mexico, would be more than counterbalanced by its superior security in future. Again, the conclusion of the war would afford a favourable opportunity of extending by treaty the at present open South Western boundary of this Government to the Rio del Norte, with the assent of Mexico and of Texas.

I have the honour to be with the highest consideration,
Yours etc.

WM. H. WHARTON

WHARTON AND HUNT TO JACKSON.^a

WHARTON AND HUNT TO PAGEOT.^b

WHARTON AND HUNT TO FOX.^b

PAGEOT TO WHARTON AND HUNT.^c

^a Washington, February 8, 1837. See Wharton and Hunt to Rusk, February 20, 1836.

^b February 8, 1837. See Wharton and Hunt to Rusk, February 20, 1837.

^c February 11, 1837. See Wharton and Hunt to Rusk, February 20, 1837.