

WASHINGTON

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WASHINGTON, April 12, 1893.

The Cuban Question Before the Cabinet—Spanish Insolence to be Rebuked—Conservative Views of Secretary Fish—Recognition of Cuban Independence Favored by the Rest of the Cabinet.

The Cuban question has been very much discussed here to-day, and from all that can be learned from official quarters it seems not at all improbable that trouble will grow out of the late infraction of international law by the officers of Fernando Catolica in the seizure of two passengers from an American brig. It is well known here that the Cabinet is not a unit on the question of Cuban recognition. The matter was seriously considered at the Cabinet meeting on Friday last; but, though no decision was arrived at, the views of each member, except perhaps Rawlins, became known. Secretary Fish expressed very conservative views. He felt as much sympathy for the struggling Cubans as any man, and earnestly hoped that their efforts to achieve independence might be crowned with success; but at the same time he deprecated any official *pronunciamiento* on the part of the administration in favor of one side or the other. He thought it should be the policy of the United States to remain perfectly neutral, and to adhere rigidly to the old doctrine of non-intervention. In his opinion Cuba's destiny was annexation, which would come at no distant day without any action on the part of this government. "Let her alone," said Fish; "give her a chance single handed to work out her own destiny and she will gravitate towards the republican Union in spite of every obstacle. Spain will soon tire of resisting the mandates of fate. Proud though she be, the old Castilian monarchy will find that she cannot afford to continue her efforts to crush out the free aspirations of the republican sentiment of Cuba. It is enterprise too costly and must be abandoned, sooner or later. But let the United States interfere, and Spain will not only exhaust her own resources to prevent our acquisition of the island, but she will draw to her assistance the combined strength of England and France, and we will have to combat a coalition representing the most powerful military and naval forces in Europe. Why tempt this contest unnecessarily? Why drag the republic into a formidable war, when it has but just emerged from the most formidable civil strife in the annals of history? What we need now is peace—peace, unless preserved at the sacrifice of honor, a sacrifice which is not even in question in the present condition of affairs." Such are the views of Premier Fish, who belongs to the old conservative school, and who is hardly equal to the live issues of the hour. Grant has great confidence in his Secretary of State; and, though his private views are believed not the same, still it is feared the foreign policy of the administration will be shaped and guided by Mr. Fish. It is gratifying to learn that other members of the Cabinet are diametrically opposed to the moderate policy counselled by the Secretary of State. Some of them urge prompt and vigorous action, and want the President to proclaim a bold and manly policy in regard to Cuba. Borie and Cresswell are said to be quite enthusiastic in their advocacy of Cuban recognition. They believe we have had enough of truckling and subserviency to monarchical interests under the specious pretext of the sacredness of international law, and that the time has come when we ought to take a fresh start, not only reannouncing the Monroe doctrine, but proclaiming to the world our intention to sweep from the continent the last vestige of monarchical domination. Since the news of the insult to the American flag involved in the seizure of passengers from our American brig, the feelings of Borie and Cresswell, and perhaps other members of the Cabinet, have been turned more strongly in the channel of Cuban sympathy, and a more vigorous policy has been urged upon General Grant. Leading Senators and Representatives, among the latter General Banks, have waited upon the President and Secretary Fish, and counselled an immediate demand of a satisfactory explanation from Spanish authorities. But Fish still hugs conservatism to his bosom, and repeats his timid warnings about the dangers of a war with Spain, England and France. He states that he has as yet received no official information concerning the alleged outrage, and that in the absence of such knowledge he cannot with propriety act.

In striking contrast with this slow coach policy of Fish is the practical course of Vice Admiral Porter. He would not wait for his subordinates to send along their despatches whenever it might suit their convenience, but immediately telegraphed to Admiral Hoff to make a report of the facts connected with the supposed outrage and to promptly adopt such measures as the national honor might demand. In the first place, Porter don't hesitate to proclaim on which side are his sympathies, and in the second place, he believes a national insult should be avenged without the intervention of red tape. The Vice Admiral, if he had his way, would not only order his subordinates to give the proud Spaniard Jeasle if he has insulted our flag, but, insult or no insult, would let filibusters go away unmolested to the aid and deliverance of the Cubans. Porter thinks the Cubans ought to be recognized, holding that they are now in a better condition than the South was when Europe accorded her belligerent rights.