

The Cabinet Meeting on Tuesday—What Does It Mean?

We learn by telegram from Washington that a Cabinet meeting will be held on Tuesday next, at which nearly all the members are expected to be present, and when the most important subject for consideration will be the Cuban question and our relations with Spain with regard to it. Considering that the President and the members of the Cabinet are away from the seat of government in different directions, taking, as the rest of the world takes at this season, some recreation, there is reason to believe this sudden return and holding a full Cabinet council has some unusual significance. The question naturally arises, what does it mean? What new movement about Cuba and Spain? It is said the call for the meeting has special reference to this subject.

The removal of Admiral Hoff from the command of the United States squadron in the Gulf and around Cuba immediately after the seizure of the Spanish gunboats which were under construction in this country indicates a change of policy relative to Cuba. We do not know what the nature of the instructions to Admiral Hoff were since he was put in command of the Gulf squadron, and he may have been only doing his duty under them; but we do know that our fleet was doing service for Spain more than protecting American citizens or American interests. If there be a change of policy, therefore, on the part of the government about Cuba, as there seems to be, it is consistent and proper that another officer should be placed in command of the Gulf squadron. The most suitable man, probably, for that important post just now is Admiral Porter. In connection with these movements we may notice the language of the Secretary of State in his address at Newburg on Saturday, implying that he was prepared to recognize and follow public sentiment. Mr. Fish said, "if the people of my own State and of the United States will be pleased to bear with my infirmities I shall in all things defer to their better judgment, and believe that their judgment has confirmed them in the right." It is not known certainly whether the Secretary had or had not in his mind Cuba and the fact that public sentiment is strongly in favor of the Cuban cause; but as this is the most prominent subject now engaging the public mind it is reasonable to suppose he had. At any rate he emphatically recognized the justice and right of popular opinion and his duty to conform to it. In a word, the Secretary proclaims his faith in the old doctrine of *vox populi vox Dei*. If by his infirmities he means his shortcomings heretofore on the question of Cuba, the people will be prepared to forgive him, as he desires, should he from this time forth follow public sentiment and conform to the public will.

Looking at the action of the government in seizing the Spanish gunboats we cannot doubt that it is to be followed up by more decided and vigorous measures with a view to aid, indirectly at least, the Cuban patriots, so as to secure ultimately the independence and annexation of Cuba. The pretext for seizing these gunboats is good enough for all diplomatic purposes, but there must have been another motive or *arrière pensée* for the action. We do not suppose the Peruvian Minister was much afraid of these vessels going round Cape Horn to attack his country or that the administration really apprehended such a contingency; but it was fair enough to seize them on this pretext and will answer all the purposes of diplomatic palaver. However, the American people understand that it is a movement in favor of Cuba, and so it will be understood by Spain and the world. The administration, then, is committed to the cause of Cuba. It cannot go back without humiliation and the contempt of the world. It must go forward; for if by any chance the Cubans should fail to secure their independence through the timidity or inaction of the United States, after our government has taken this step, we should be laughed at for our weakness by all nations.

It is said that the Cabinet council to be held on Tuesday will also discuss the question as to what further instructions should be sent to our Minister at Madrid. If the recent news from Spain can be relied upon, to the effect that the Spanish government had set its face

against parting with Cuba on any conditions, further instructions on this matter to General Sickles would be useless. We hope, however, the government of Spain is not so blind to what is transpiring in Cuba and to the impossibility of holding that island much longer. Cuba can never more be useful to Spain as a colony if even the insurrection could be put down, which is not at all likely; while as an independent State or as a portion of the United States she might have a considerable trade with the island. The United States have been far more valuable to England in this respect than they would have been as colonies. But, however wise or unwise Spain may be with regard to Cuba and to the efforts of the United States to stop bloodshed and the ruin of the island, our government has but one course to follow, and that is to act in accordance with the almost unanimous sentiment of the country. Cuba must be free, and, if necessary, through the action of this republic. Spain would not be so insane as to go to war with us, and would yield to necessity if the government should follow up boldly its present course. On this question the administration can make itself popular, as all parties are for Cuba. The press of Europe even acknowledge that the independence or acquisition of the island through the interposition of the United States is the only solution of the difficulty. Will the Cabinet council on Tuesday decide to go forward in this matter or to stand still? That is the question. We think it will see that its duty and interest lie in acting in conformity with public sentiment.
