

CANOVAS TO AMERICANS THROUGH THE JOURNAL.

SPAIN MEANS TO FIGHT ON.

She Is Ready to Grant Local Self-Government to Cuba, but Only When the Insurgents Are Completely Subdued.

War with the United States Is Not Courted, Declares Spain's Prime Minister, but His Country Will Resist with All Her Power Any Aggression on the Part of Uncle Sam.



PRIME MINISTER CANOVAS DEL CASTILLO.

SENATORS for FREE CUBA.

Unanimous Action by Committee.

Declaration That We Recognize the Island's Independence.

This Step, It Is Believed, Will Lead to a War with Spain.

Washington, Dec. 18.—In the face of the earnest plea of the Administration for non-action, the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations this morning took the first radical step with respect to Cuban affairs by unanimously ordering a favorable report to be made to the Senate Monday on Senator Cameron's resolution recognizing the independence of the Republic of Cuba. As amended slightly the resolution reported reads as follows:

Resolved, That the independence of the Republic of Cuba be and the same is hereby acknowledged by the United States of America.

Section 2.—That the United States will use its friendly offices with the Government of Spain to bring to a close the war between Spain and Cuba.

While there is a difference of opinion as to what the result of the passage by Congress of such a resolution may be, the belief of many well-informed Senators is that Spain can only look upon the action of Congress as a threat, operating as an ultimatum, and that it must inevitably lead to war between this country and Spain. Although the resolution itself is not a census

By James Creelman.

Madrid, Dec. 18.—Prime Minister Canovas del Castillo, of Spain, gave me a formal audience to-day at the request of the American Minister, and in the presence of his secretary, Viscount Truete, made a solemn declaration of the policy of his Government toward Cuba.

It is a complete and emphatic answer to the threats of American intervention. The importance of this statement to the American people by the actual head of the Spanish Government can hardly be exaggerated.

Canovas is not only the Prime Minister, but is the supreme political and moral leader of his people. He is the lion of Spain. His voice is now the voice of the nation. It was he who seated the present Spanish dynasty on the throne and his hand wrote the present constitution.

He looked like an old lion to-day, as he sat in his splendid office under Velasquez's immortal portraits of Philip V. and Louis XIV. as boys, his dark eyes flashing under his massive forehead and shaggy brows of white hair.

No one could have looked upon that strong, venerable face and have heard that hard, steel voice to-day without knowing that Spain is ready to meet her fate, whatever it may be.

I told Minister Canovas in plain language what the situation was in America, and assured him that the American people would never consent to the destruction of the Cuban cause, or the unconditional victory



JAMES CREELMAN.

THE JOURNAL'S SPECIAL COMMISSIONER IN SPAIN. At the close of the audience I submitted Canovas's words to him in writing, and he approved them.

Senor Canovas to the People of the United States Through the New York Journal.

Madrid, Dec. 18.

ALTHOUGH the official and complete text of President Cleveland's message to Congress has not reached me, the impression of the Government of Spain is that the general tone of the President's language is favorable and



friendly to Spain.

I desire to say in the strongest possible manner that Spain is ready to grant local self-government to the Island of Cuba as soon as the Spanish arms have triumphed over the insurgent forces sufficiently to make it clear to the world that the monarchy is granting the reform of its own free will and is not yielding either to domestic or to foreign threats.

This Government is ready to grant even more liberal measures of home rule for Cuba than were contemplated in the scheme formulated by the Cortes, to which the word of the Queen Regent and the honor of the Government are pledged, but Spain will not, under any circumstances, grant to Cuba autonomy after the fashion of Canada.

All essential prerogatives of sovereignty and powers of government in that colony will continue to be exercised here in Spain. This Government will not yield an inch to force or to threats of force. No concession of any kind will be made until the insurrection in Cuba has been brought under control and until Spain can give what she refuses to allow any one to take, either by armed insurrection or by treasonable intrigues with other nations.

I cannot undertake to discuss the domestic politics of the United States, but I firmly believe that a majority of the Americans who are assisting this deplorable agitation are opposed to the independence of Cuba, and are at heart in favor of annexation. The commercial relations between the island and the American mainland are of great importance, but Cuba as a Spanish colony is a much better and more acceptable neighbor than she could be were the impossible programme of independence achieved.

Independent Cuba would mean a republic dominated by negroes, not such negroes as are to be found in the United States, but African negroes, African in every sense. Independent Cuba would mean civil war between whites and blacks; it would fifty years of anarchy; it would mean destruction of the island and its commerce.

Such a republic would be a menace to the peace of the United States. It would be worse than Hayti, far worse. The United States has everything to lose and nothing to gain by the independence of Cuba.

Spain cannot undertake to be guided in her domestic affairs by any other Government, nor can she allow any foreign agitation to influence her in dealing with her rebellious colony. This Government seeks peace, but will not shrink from war in any matter touching her honor. If the United States forces war upon Spain we are ready to defend ourselves, but we are determined that Spain shall be the nation attacked, and not herself the aggressor.

I den that either the Government or the people of Spain desire war with the United States. If war comes it will not be through our fault. The Cuban question is a question of territorial integrity, and the crown of Spain will defend its domain at all times.

President Cleveland has officially tendered the good offices of his Government to procure peace upon the basis of Cuban autonomy. Spain has made the only reply that could be made to such an offer under existing circumstances. I declare that a generous measure of local self-government will be established in Cuba when the military situation in that island is such that the Spanish Government can freely exercise at its own discretion without giving any opportunity for the accusation that it acts upon compulsion. We will not swerve in the slightest degree from that policy, no matter what may come.

We believe that the campaign in Cuba is progressing favorably for our arms. The death of Maceo is a substantial victory, for it removes from the insurgent forces the most valiant and aggressive captain and the leader of that party which is most bitterly opposed to reconciliation with the mother country upon any terms. The negro insurgents, who are in the majority, have lost their one able man. It is true that Maximo Gomez still remains in command of the rebellion, but he is a white man and a foreigner, and cannot exercise the influence possessed by Maceo.

Spain is strong enough to carry on the campaigns in Cuba and the Phillipine Islands until peace is restored no matter how long the struggle may last. This nation is united; the Queen, the Government, and the people have but one mind—they are determined to continue the wars until insurrections are crushed. The recent war loan was doubly subscribed by our own people, and our soldiers go to the field with the greatest enthusiasm.

Spain will defend herself at all hazards. She seeks no foreign war, but she fears not war. The question of the comparative strength of nations does not enter into the matter at all.

I repeat that no greater calamity could befall the United States than the independence of Cuba. At the close of the last Cuban war American commerce with the island increased threefold almost immediately.

Spain is willing to see that the United States gains everything possible by legitimate commerce with Cuba. Should the American Government desire to renew the reciprocity treaty, which proved to be of such great advantage to both countries, Spain would consider the negotiations favorably, but every American must see that the honor of Spain compels her to restore order in her own territory.

