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ADDRESS

BY THE

Chicago Congregational Ministers' Union

TO

HON. JOHN SHERMAN,
SECRETARY OF STATE,

Urging the Annexation of Hawaii, and Giving Reasons
Therefor.

[The following address was adopted and forwarded to Secretary Sherman in March
last, prior to the negotiation of the Treaty of Annexation.]

HON. JOHN SHERMAN,
Secretary of State.

HONORED SIR: The Chicago Congregational Ministers' Union, with a membership of more than one hundred, at its meeting in the Sherman House, Chicago, Monday, March 15th, adopted the following paper, prepared, at their request, by Rev. Dr. Eli Corwin, who was for ten years pastor of a foreign residents' church on the Hawaiian Islands and was for a time President of Oahu College, at Honolulu.

Disclaiming any desire officiously to meddle with state affairs, or to dictate the foreign policy of an Administration in whose wisdom and statesmanship we have the fullest confidence, we respectfully represent that the present condition of affairs in the Hawaiian Republic renders it important that the Islands, so long desiring closer relations with us, should speedily be annexed to the United States on terms mutually advantageous to both republics.

We think this desirable for the following reasons:

First. Because a chronic unrest among the poorer natives and among the worst class of foreign residents is adapted to create distrust of the permanence of free institutions, and may encourage a spirit of faction and lead to attempts at counter revolution. This unrest would soon disappear if annexation were a fact accomplished.

Second. Because the Islands have been developed, physically, financially, socially, and spiritually, chiefly by the American residents. A nation

which we have created most numerically prevails in this direction. The Hawaiian people have in the lifetime of a single generation, risen from a state of barbarism to that of a civilized people, and have taken their place among the civilized and Christianized nations of the earth, almost

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in same
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solely through the labors and the beneficent influence of the American missionaries and the American religious community on the Islands.

Fourth. The Americans have been the champions of civil and religious liberty for the native Hawaiians and have been most influential in securing all the civil rights enjoyed by those who little more than half a century ago were degraded serfs, having no title to the land upon which they lived or to the fruits of their toil, extorted from them by the kings and chiefs, who ruled them with a heartless tyranny.

Fifth. The future of the Islands as to political stability, financial prosperity, security of life and property, educational advancement, social culture and moral progress depended upon the supplanting of a thoroughly corrupt monarchy which had so often broken its promises to the nation, violating the most solemn official oaths, seeking to replenish the treasury by licensing gambling and the death-dealing opium traffic, and in many ways favoring a retrogression towards the morally loathsome old heathen customs and the horrid orgies of the old heathen worship. Hence the revolution which resulted in the establishing of the Hawaiian Republic was more than justifiable.—It was an absolute necessity.

Sixth. Since a clear prevision of this as the ultimate destiny of the islands has prompted all our great statesmen, without distinction of party, to guard the independence of the group till it should be ripe for annexation, now that the long cherished and eagerly coveted fruit is ready to fall it has seemed to us a strange paralysis of statesmanship not to reach out our hand to take it.

Seventh. The contiguity of these Islands to our western coast; the intimacy and growing importance of our commercial relations; their position as the half-way house at the grand crossing of the highways of our trans-Pacific commerce; our need of them as a coaling and naval station which we cannot afford to have under the control of a maritime rival; their importance as a base of operations in conducting a war, whether with a European, a South American, or an Asiatic power, and our need of them as a central position from which to do our share in policing the Pacific in time of peace, guarding our growing trade from the piracy which already watches for such a prize—these all urge us to risk no further delay, for which a too late repentance can make no amends.

Eighth. As so long the honored Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, we cannot doubt that these urgent reasons for annexation are all familiar to you. But to us, as Christian ministers, a still stronger argument for immediate action is the fact that these gems of the Pacific seas, these emeralds in a coral setting, are so eagerly coveted by Japan, ambitious to become the greatest of insular empires, holding sway over all the islands of the North Pacific. In fact the Japanese on the Hawaiian Islands already outnumber the men from any other foreign nation.

At this strategic point, where we pass from the limits of Occidental civilization to the borders of the semi-barbarous Orient, there is a clashing of forces in which American and Asiatic ideas are contending for the mastery. How can Christian America be indifferent to the issue?

Signed on behalf of the Chicago Ministers' Union:

FRANK T. LEE,
President.

E. E. GIBBELL,
Secretary.

CHICAGO, ILL., March 15, 1897.