

Republican extra—St. Louis, March 5, 5 P. M. President Taylor's inaugural address. Washington, Monday, March 5, 1839 [i. e. 1849] [St. Louis, 1849].

REPUBLICAN EXTRA—St. Louis, March 5, 5, P.M.

PRESIDENT TAYLOR'S INAUGURAL ADDRESS.

Washington, Monday, March 5, 1839.

This day, at 12 o'clock, Zachary Taylor, President of the United States, delivered to the Senate and Members of the House of Representatives of the United States, and thousands of American citizens, in front of the Capitol, the following Inaugural Address:

Elected by the American people to the highest office known to our laws, I appear here to take the oath prescribed by the Constitution, and, in compliance with a time honored custom, to address those who are now assembled. The confidence and respect shown by my countrymen, in calling me to be the Chief Magistrate of the Republic of the United States, holding a high rank among the nations of the earth, have inspired me with feelings of the most profound gratitude; but when I reflect that the office which their partiality has bestowed, imposes the discharge of the most onerous duties and involves the weightiest obligations, I am conscious that the position which I have been called to fill, though sufficient to satisfy the loftiest ambition, is surrounded by fearful responsibilities. Happily, however, in the performance of my new duties, I shall not be without the co-operation of the Legislative and Judicial branches of the Government, which present prominent examples of distinguished civil attainments and matured experience; and it shall be my endeavor to call to my assistance in the Executive Department, individuals whose talents, integrity and purity of character, will furnish ample guarantees for the faithful and honorable discharge of the trusts to be committed to their charge. With such aids, and an honest purpose to do what is right, I hope to execute diligently, impartially, and for the best interests of the country, the manifold duties devolving upon me. In the discharge of these duties, my guide will be THE CONSTITUTION, which I this day swear to preserve, protect and defend. For the interpretation of that instrument, I shall look to the decisions of the judicial tribunals established by its authority, and to the practice of the government under the earlier Presidents, who had so large a share in its formation. To the example of these illustrious patriots, I shall always recur with honor and reverence, and especially to his example, who was by so many styled the Father of his country. To command the army and the navy of the United States with the advice and consent of the Senate, to make treaties, and appoint ambassadors and other officers; to give the Congress full information of the State of the Union, and to recommend such measures as he may deem necessary; and to take care that the laws shall be faithfully executed

—these are the most important positions entrusted to the President by the Constitution; and it may be expected that I shall briefly allude to the principles which shall control me in their execution.

Chosen by the body of the people, under the assurance that my Administration would be devoted to the welfare of the whole country, and not to the support of any particular section, or merely local interest, I this day renew the declaration I have hitherto made, and proclaimed, my fixed determination to maintain, to the extent of my ability, the Government in its original purity, and to adopt, as the basis of my public policy those great republican doctrines which constitute the strength of our national existence.

In reference to the army and navy, lately employed with so much distinction in active service, care shall be taken to secure the highest condition of efficiency; and in furtherance of that object, the military and naval schools, sustained by the liberality of Congress, shall receive the especial attention of the Executive.

As American freemen, we cannot but sympathize in all efforts to extend the blessings of civil and political liberty, but, at the same time, we are warned by the admonitions of history, and the voice of our beloved Washington, to abstain from all entangling alliances with foreign nations. In all disputes between conflicting governments, it is our interest, no less than our duty, to remain perfectly neutral; while our geographical position—the genius of our institutions and of our people—the advancing spirit of civilization, and, above all, the doctrines of Religion, direct us to the cultivation of peaceful and friendly relations with all other powers. It is to be hoped, that no international question can never arise which a government, confident of its own strength and resolved to protect its own just rights, may not settle by wise negotiations, and it eminently becomes a government like our own, founded on the morality and intelligence of its citizens, and upheld by their affections, to exhaust every resort of honorable diplomacy, before appealing to arms. In the conduct of our foreign affairs, I shall conform to these principles, as I believe them essential to the best interests, and the true honor, of the country.

The appointing power vested in the President, imposes delicate and onerous duties. So far as it is possible to be informed, I shall make honesty, capacity and fidelity indispensable requisites to the requisites to the bestowal of office; and the absence of either of these qualities, shall be deemed sufficient cause for removal.

It shall be my study to recommend such constitutional measures as may be necessary, and proper, to secure encouragement and protection to the great interests of agriculture, commerce and manufactures; to improve our rivers and harbors; to provide for the speedy extinguishment of the public debt; to enforce a strict accountability on the part of all officers of the Government;

and the utmost economy in all public expenditures. But, it is for the wisdom of Congress itself, in which all legislative powers are invested by the constitution, to regulate these and other matters of domestic feeling. I shall look with confidence to the enlightened patriotism of that body, to adopt such measures of conciliation as may harmonise conflicting interests, and tend to perpetuate that Union which should be the paramount object of our hopes and affections. In any action on my part, calculated to promote an object so near the heart of every one who truly loves his country, I will zealously unite with the coordinate branches of the Government.

In conclusion, I congratulate my fellow citizens on the high state of prosperity to which the goodness of Divine Providence has conducted our common country. Let us invoke a continuance of the same protecting care which has led us, from small beginnings, to the eminence which we this day occupy, and let us seek to deserve that continuance, by prudence and moderation in our councils—by well directed attempts to assuage the bitterness which too often marks unavoidable differences of opinion—by the promulgation and practice of just and liberal principles, and by an enlarged patriotism, which shall acknowledge no rights but those of our own wide spread Republic.