No. 24.

[Telegram.—Translation.]

The Princess Imperial, Regent of Brazil, to the President.

RIO DE JANEIRO, *July* 4, 1876. (Received July 4.)

The Princess Imperial, Regent of Brazil, congratulates herself and the President of the United States of America on the occasion of the centenary of the independence of those States, for whose prosperity she offers sincere prayers.

THE PRINCESS IMPERIAL, REGENT.

No. 25.

[Telegram.]

The President to the Princess Imperial, Regent of Brazil.

GREAT AND GOOD FRIEND: I duly received by telegraph the congratulation which your Imperial Highness was pleased to address to me on the occasion of the centenary anniversary of the Independence of the United States. The good wishes which you kindly offer for our continued prosperity are cordially reciprocated.

I pray God to have your Imperial Highness in His safe and holy keeping.

Written at Washington, this twenty-second day of July, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and seventy-six, and of the Independence of the United States the one hundred and first.

Your good friend,

U. S. GRANT.

CENTRAL AMERICAN STATES.

No. 26.

Mr. Williamson to Mr. Fish.

No. 371.] LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES
IN CENTRAL AMERICA,
Guatemala, June 7, 1875. (Received July 27.)

SIR: I have the honor to submit the following synoptical report respecting the Central American states, which I hope may be interesting. The information has been compiled from various sources. A principal source has been a geography of Central America, just published by Mr. Toledo, which has been adopted by the government of Guatemala as a text-book in the schools.

The difficulty, if not impossibility, of obtaining accurate information in countries whose governments have not yet sufficiently realized the importance of statistics, or have not yet published them, may be pleaded as an excuse for inaccuracies which may hereafter be detected, and, I hope, pointed out.

	Area in square miles.
Guatemala, (excluding Soconusco, which has been in possession of Mexico since 1841)	40,777
San Salvador	9,600
Honduras	43,700
Nicaragua	40,000
Costa Rica, (including Guanacaste)	21,497
Total	155,574

All the estimates (for there has been no complete survey) differ. In a standard geography (Black) I have seen the area of Guatemala stated at 28,000 square miles and Honduras at 72,000.

Some geographers and writers include Chiapas and Soconusco in Guatemala, and even Belize. Others exclude the Mosquito coast and Bay Islands from Honduras and Nicaragua. Some give Costa Rica her ancient provincial boundary south of the Gulf of Chiriqui, and others take away Guanacaste and give it to Nicaragua.

The total area of the Central American states thus appears to be considerably less than the area of the State of California. Of this area a great part is occupied by volcanic mountains, and the proportion fit for cultivation is variously estimated.

In my judgment, there have been great exaggerations about the fertility of the soil of Central America. There are localities of unparalleled richness, capable of sustaining a very dense population. The general capability to sustain population, I think, is not above the average of Europe, if so great.

John Bailey, esq., in his work published in 1850, estimates that—

Guatemala is capable of sustaining a population of	7,956,000

Upon his basis of calculation,

San Salvador would be capable of sustaiinng	1,920,000
Honduras	8,740,000
Nicaragua	8,000,000
Costa Rica	4,299,400
Total	30,915,400

This speculation is in my opinion an excessive exaggeration.

POPULATION.

Guatemala	1,200,000
San Salvador	650,000
Honduras	350,000
Nicaragua	265,000
Costa Rica	170,000
Total	2,635,000

The populations are classified as follows:

GUATEMALA.

White foreigners	829
Unmixed native whites	25,000
Ladinos, which include all mixtures of whites with Indians, negroes, and Caribs, in a greater or less degree	300,000
Mestizoes, (mixed colored blood)	74,171
Caribs and negroes	5,000
Indians	795,000
Total	1,200,000

SAN SALVADOR.

White foreigners	1,000
Native whites	25,000
Ladinos, (as defined above)	400,000
Mestizoes, (as defined above)	48,800
Caribs and negroes	200
Indians	175,000
Total	650,000

HONDURAS.

White foreigners	500
Native whites	2,500
Ladinos, (as defined above)	150,000
Mestizoes, (as defined above)	42,500
Caribs and negroes	7,500
Indians	147,000
Total	350,000

NICARAGUA.

White foreigners	1,300
Native whites	5,000
Ladinos, (as defined above)	100,000
Mestizoes, (as defined above)	90,000
Caribs and negroes	10,000
Indians	58,700
Total	265,000

COSTA RICA.

White foreigners	2,500
Native whites	75,000
Ladinos, (as defined above)	70,000
Mestizoes, (as defined above)	17,000
Caribs and negroes	500
Indians	5,000
Total	170,000

As this classification of the population of Central America has been made without a census, and differs materially from other classifications both as to the five states and as to three of the states separately, I give herewith the proportions stated in the published works of the following writers, Squier, Wells, Crowe, Levy, and Toledo.

Mr. Squier gives the following proportions for the whole of Central America in 1855:

Whites	100,000
Mixed	800,000
Negroes	19,000
Indians	1,189,000
Total	2,108,000

Mr. Crowe gives the following:

Indians	$\frac{3}{5}$
Ladinos	$\frac{1}{4}$
Whites	$\frac{1}{20}$
Mulattoes	$\frac{1}{80}$
Negroes	$\frac{1}{50}$
Zamboes	$\frac{1}{100}$

Mr. Levy, in his work on Nicaragua, gives the following for that state:

Indians	.550
Whites and creoles	.045
Negroes	.005
Mestizoes, (mixed)	.400

Dr. Wells, in 1857, divides the population of Honduras as follows:

Negroes and mulattoes	140,000
Indians	100,000
Ladinos	60,000
Whites	50,000
Total	350,000

Mr. Toledo, in his geography, referred to, divides the population of Guatemala as follows:

Indians	720,000
Ladinos	300,000
Whites	180,000
Total	1,200,000

I do not pretend to claim that my classification is absolutely correct. All that I can say for it is, that it is an estimate based upon careful observation and inquiry, after having traveled twice through the Central American States. At best, however, it is an estimate, and an estimate may be called a deliberate guess.

According to this classification the population of the whole of Central America may be divided as follows:

White foreigners	6,129
Native whites	132,500
Ladinos, (as defined)	1,020,000
Mestizoes, (as defined)	272,471
Caribs and negroes	23,200
Indians	1,180,700
Total	2,635,000

The white population is less than the population of San Francisco, and the whole population is less than that of Ohio according to the census of 1870. It increases slowly.

It is proper to remark that the Indians of Central America are agricultural, (except, perhaps, one or two small tribes,) and constitute the main body of the laborers of the country. The Ladinos are the governing class, and are likely to continue so, unless they are absorbed by the Indians as their white ancestors have been.

The mass of the population is on the plateau nearest the Pacific slope. It is believed a large majority of the Indians retain the primitive habits of their ancestors and speak nothing but their native dialects.

PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS.

Railroads.—There are two railroads in Central America, both narrow gauge. One is from Puerto Cortez to San Pedro, in Honduras, 37 miles long. The other is in Costa Rica, from Alajuela to Cartago, both interior towns, the former two days' journey from the Pacific coast, and the latter about four days' journey from the Caribbean. There is also a part of the Costa Rica Railroad completed from Port Limon, about 20 miles in the interior. The whole length of road completed in Costa Rica is stated to be about 57 miles.

Telegraphs.—Guatemala has 398 miles of completed telegraph-lines, and 511 additional miles under contract and in course of construction. San Salvador has over 500 miles completed; Costa Rica has the line completed nearly through her territory from Puntas Arenas to Port Limon. Nicaragua and Honduras have no telegraph-lines yet, but the former state is reported to have one under contract.

Cart-roads.—In Guatemala, San Salvador, Costa Rica, and Nicaragua the centers of population are accessible by cart-roads. Honduras has none. Most of the interior transportation in Central America is by mules, and Indians called "Cargadoros." I do not think it too much to say that during the r iny season of six months there are but few cart-roads that are passable by wheels.

ARMY.

The standing army of Guatemala consists of—

Generals	43
Officials	287
Soldiers	1,848
The militia numbers	33,229

Indians are exempt by law from military service, and are said never to volunteer.

The standing army of San Salvador is—

Men and officers	1,090
Organized militia	9,000

In San Salvador the Indians are subject to military duty, and I have been told by officials of that government that in time of war a military force of 50,000 men would be liable to duty.

The army of Honduras is composed of the national guard of 2,000 men, of whom only 500 remain on duty during time of peace.

In Nicaragua the standing army is composed of—

Generals	25
Men	1,000

which in time of war can by law be increased to 6,000.

The standing army of Costa Rica is 500 men in time of peace, liable to be raised to 8,000 in time of war, excluding the militia. Costa Rica has a modification of the Prussian military system, and her male population between the ages of eighteen and fifty-five is divided into three classes, all subject to military duty in time of war.

The military expenses of Guatemala for 1874 were $1,019,293.07.

The military expenses of San Salvador for the fiscal year of 1874 were $430,390.74.

The military expenses of Honduras during the fiscal year of 1873 were $83,220.

The military expenses of Nicaragua and Costa Rica are not published, and are unknown.

None of the states own a single armed naval vessel that I am aware of

EDUCATION.

In Guatemala, by a late decree, primary education is made gratuitous and compulsory, as reported in my No. 299. The number of pupils in 1874 was 20,528.

According to the published report for 1874, the total amount expended by the government for public instruction was $64,779.05.

Guatemala has a polytechnic school, a university, two normal schools, a school of medicine and law, and several other institutions of learning in the capital. The polytechnic school and the two normal schools are directed by foreigners.

San Salvador has about 28,000 pupils, two normal schools and a university. Her educational system is believed to be judiciously organized. In the fiscal year of 1873, according to the official report, $50,067.99 were expended for public instruction.

In Honduras there are said to be 275 schools with 9,000 pupils, but I believe this to be an exaggeration.

There is a university and college in Honduras. According to the official report before me, the only item in the estimate for the fiscal year 1873 and 1874 for educational purposes, is as follows: "University, $720."

It is generally reputed that Honduras is more backward in point of education at present than any of the other states. The government of President Leiva has taken the most active stèps to remedy this evil.

In Nicaragua there are 180 schools and 4,500 pupils. Primary education is gratuitous. There are three colleges and one university in that state. From the best information I can obtain, the government expends about $50,000 a year for public instruction. According to the last official report of the minister of public instruction of Costa Rica, there were 95 public primary schools and 5,755 pupils; there is one university and several colleges.

The government appropriation for public instruction for the fiscal year ending in 1874 was $72,137.98. Primary instruction is gratuitous and compulsory. It is believed to be very general and quite thorough.

While it will be observed there are many universities in Central America, it seems to be generally admitted that the standard of education is not high. The existing governments of Guatemala and San Salvador seem to be particularly zealous in the cause of public education, and, in my judgment, deserve great credit for the steps they have taken to promote this object. If their present zeal does not abate and their plans do not fail, it is probable the next generation in these two countries will have a fair primary education. Education in Central America has passed from the hands of the priests into those of the laity. I am glad to be able to say the study of our language has become more general in the colleges and universities as well as in private schools. I have used all my official and personal influence to encourage its study.

AGRICULTURE.

The agriculture of all the states, owing in part to the class of laborers used and to their prejudices against the use of new implements, is in a very primitive state.

The principal agricultural labor of the country is employed in the production of corn and beans (frijoles) for domestic consumption. As a general statement, it may be said that the whites and Ladinos are the proprietors, mechanics, merchants, professional men, politicians, and officials, and the Indians and Mestizoes are the laborers.

Nominally, agricultural labor is not compulsory. The wages of the laborer differ very materially in the different states, ranging, as in parts of Guatemala, from 12½ cents per day to $1.50, as in parts of Costa Rica. The Indian laborers all have their own little field, in which their wives and children labor. Most of them are in the neighborhood of towns. It is generally said that agriculture is most advanced and diversified in San Salvador.

The principal agricultural products for export are coffee, indigo, muscovado, cacao, and cochineal. Coffee is rapidly becoming the chief agricultural export, and I do not think it unlikely that in less than ten years the five Central American states will export at least one million sacks of coffee. Costa Rica began a successful cultivation first in 1829. Guatemala, San Salvador, and Nicaragua later followed her example. The coffee export of the two former states is already large, and there is an

annual increase of acreage in the coffee-planting. Both states have soils and climates well adapted to its successful and profitable culture.

The coffee-planters admit that, at the present price of labor in favored localities, they can produce coffee profitably at ten cents per pound. To illustrate how great has been the change in the agricultural products of Guatemala, San Salvador, and Costa Rica for export within a comparatively few years, I make the following statement from official reports:

The official report of Guatemala for 1858 shows an export of 13,000 pounds of coffee, valued at $1,040.

The official report of 1873 shows the export of coffee to the value of $2,408.106.85.

The official report of San Salvador for 1857 does not show that that state exported a pound of coffee. The official report of the same state for the fiscal year of 1873 and 1874 shows the value of coffee exported to have been $1,342,953.21.

The official report of Costa Rica for the year 1852 shows coffee was exported to the value of $609,784. The official report of 1873 and 1874 shows the exportation of coffee to have been $6,099,187.32.

Under Spanish domination the labor of Central America was employed in the production of cochineal, indigo, and the precious metals for export. Cochineal and indigo, although they have ceased to be the leading articles of export in Guatemala and San Salvador, are still exported in large quantities, and the latter article, indigo, continues to be, and in my judgment will long continue to be, the chief export of Nicaragua.

MANUFACTURES.

Although there is a considerable quantity of articles manufactured in the Central American states, there are no manufacturing establishments. Nearly all the articles for domestic use by the poorer classes are manufactured in the different states, and there is but a small excess for exportation. Good blankets, shawls, hats, boots, shoes, and hammocks are manufactured. To illustrate, the official reports for 1873 show the total export of manufactured goods from Guatemala to have been $54,125.50, and from San Salvador for the same year $51,327.72.

I think the people have a great deal of ingenuity as well as manual dexterity, and I hope that many articles of Central American manufacture may be exhibited at our Centennial Exposition. Some of them I am sure would elicit admiration.

CURRENCY.

The principal currency of Central America is coin. There are but three banks that issue bills, two in Costa Rica and one in Guatemala. Only two of the states coin their own money, Costa Rica and Guatemala, and their mints are not now in operation. The coined gold and silver of these two states is below the American standard, that of Guatemala 3 per cent., and that of Costa Rica 12½ per cent.

This debasement of the coined metals appears to be one of the chief reasons why so little American gold and silver, except in dimes and half-dimes, is in circulation in these states.

The following-named moneys constitute the body of the currency: the English sovereign, the coinages of Colombia, of Peru, of Chili, and the dimes and half-dimes of the United States.

What is called "cut money" is the chief currency in San Salvador for small transactions. In my judgment the deficiency of currency in

circulation is a serious impediment to commercial transactions. It is to be regretted that none of the governments of these states have yet chosen to avail themselves of the act of January 29, 1874, authorizing coinage to be executed at United States mints for any country applying for the same.

COMMERCE.

The commerce of Central America has made a rapid development within the last twenty years, and especially rapid when the character of the population is considered. The course of trade, as well as the chief article of export, has undergone a change during that period. The change in the former has been chiefly due to the establishment of the steam line on the Pacific by the Panama Railroad Company, to which the Pacific Mail has succeeded. Twenty years ago the larger portion of the exports of Central America found their outlet at Isabal, Omoa, Truxillo, and San Juan del Norte, on the Caribbean side. Now very little goes to those ports, and San José, Alajuela, La Libertad, La Union, Amapala, Corinto, and Puntas Arenas, all on the Pacific, are the chief ports for exportation and importation.

From 1821 (the time at which Central America separated from Spain) down to the establishment of the steam line above mentioned, British traders enjoyed almost a complete monopoly of the trade of Central America. Since that time, although Great Britain still retains a very large share, there has been a more general distribution among the commercial nations, and it is gratifying to know there has been an increase in favor of the United States, as the following tables show. They are taken from "No. 3, series 1874 and 1875, Commerce and Navigation, Bureau of Statistics."

Table showing value of total exports from and total imports to Central American states from the United States.

Central American states.	1862.	1863.	1864.	1865.	1866.	1867.	1868.
Imports	$144,161	$184,545	$592,387	$490,486	$745,588	$916,111	$1,122,189
Domestic exports	115,640	231,087	312,751	251,025	572,114	643,785	301,416
Foreign exports	39,951	22,768	38,516	16,755	32,033	97,820	14,795
Total	299,752	438,400	943,654	758,266	1,349,735	1,657,716	1,438,400

Central American states.	1869.	1870.	1871.	1872.	1873.	1874.
Imports	$3,165,056	$2,772,985	$1,528,399	$1,609,044	$1,981,322	$2,896,012
Domestic exports	2,516,224	2,404,271	589,505	1,406,855	1,279,329	1,380,515
Foreign exports	81,322	81,749	20,206	71,060	68,220	82,916
Total	5,762,602	5,259,005	2,138,110	3,086,959	3,328,871	4,359,443

From this table it appears our trade with Central America is already larger than it is with—

Denmark and the Danish West Indies	$2,910,337
Austria and the Austrian possessions	2,176,863
Portugal and the Portuguese possessions	2,351,896
Greece	516,836
Turkey	3,345,428
Sandwich Islands	1,666,800

and is but $64,945 less than with Sweden and Norway and the Swedish West Indies, $4,424,388. Chili and Peru together only have a trade with us of $7,358,742.

As the exported products of Central America are all tropical, and

such articles as are consumed in the United States, and as all the imports into Central America are such articles as are produced and manufactured in the United States, it seems obvious that our proximity ought in time, and with proper energy and skill, to give us control of this valuable trade. Might it not be promoted by reciprocity treaties?

According to Table No. 11 of my No. 196, of July 28, 1874, the total trade of the United States with Central America was $4,702,520.46, and the total volume of trade of the five states was $27,565,906.32.

Up to the present time it has been impossible to make up returns of the trade of the last year from official Central American sources. The few data in my possession indicate an increase in the volume of trade, but I regret to say not a proportionate increase in the trade with the United States.

There has been a marked increase of the export trade within the last few years. Mr. Levy, in his work on Nicaragua, puts down the exportation for the year 1870 from the five states as follows:

Guatemala	$2,785,000
San Salvador	2,880,160
Honduras	900,000
Nicaragua	1,024,030
Costa Rica	1,766,476
Total	9,355,666

According to Table No. 10 of my No. 196, the exportations of these states for the year 1873 were as follows:

Guatemala	$3,363,061 77
San Salvador	3,476,715 30
Honduras	1,140,000 00
Nicaragua	2,000,000 00
Costa Rica	6,619,645 52
Total	16,599,422 59

A gain in the export trade of $7,243,756.59 within three years. As soon as I can get the official reports, I will make up and forward, as last year, a report of the trade of each and all the Central American states for the last fiscal year.

I have, &c.,

GEO. WILLIAMSON.

No. 27.

Mr. Williamson to Mr. Fish.

No. 539.] LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES,
Guatemala, August 14, 1876. (Received Sept. 12.)

SIR: I have the honor to inform you that Mr. Marco A. Soto left this city a few days ago to assume the presidency of Honduras.

He has been so often mentioned in my dispatches that there is but little to add concerning him. He is under thirty years of age, a man of amiable manners, quite sprightly, and is well acquainted, by his experience as minister of foreign affairs of Guatemala, with the method of managing public affairs in these countries.

It is announced here that all the claimants to the presidency of Honduras—Leiva, Medina, Arias, and Gomez—are favorable to Mr. Soto;

also that nearly all the principal persons and towns in that unhappy state have pronounced in his favor. No election has yet been held, but it is presumed, when Mr. Soto is fully established in power, the people of Honduras will be permitted to pass through that usual formality in this quarter. However that may be, it is well ascertained that the government of Guatemala, with the co-operation of that of Salvador, has determined to make Mr. Soto president of Honduras.

It is alleged by the government here that his assumption of that position will save that state from anarchy and will insure the peace for ten years. In my judgment, this act is the final consummation of the policy that promoted the revolution of Medina and declared the late war against Salvador. Barrios, Samayoa, and Soto composed the triumvirate that governed Guatemala. Honduras has been assigned to Soto. If the convention of Chingo had been carried out by Salvador, the assignment would have been made without war. Her government understood what was intended; resisted, and was overthrown. That of Leiva was powerless. Soto may be president of Honduras as long as he is supported by the arms of Guatemala and Salvador. He must take his orders from the former.

I have, &c.,

GEO. WILLIAMSON.

No. 28.

Mr. Williamson to Mr. Fish.

No. 547.] LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES,
CENTRAL AMERICA,
Guatemala, September 3, 1876. (Received Sept. 28.)

SIR: I have the honor to make the following report of the present political condition of Central America:

The constituent assembly (convention) of Guatemala has met to frame a constitution, and has elected its officers. It is composed of the friends of the president and his prime minister, Mr. Samayoa. The several interests and aspirations of these personages are not likely to disturb the harmony of the assembly, it being well understood that the President is to have his own way in all measures. It is believed the constitution which the convention will adopt has been prepared by the government. My information is that it is to be short, and that its principal feature will be to fix the term of the presidential office so that the present incumbent will continue to hold his office for six years longer. He has now been President for more than three years. No one except the government people and the members seems to take the smallest interest in the convention. Nominally it has been called for the purpose of embodying in the organic law what are called the principles of the revolution of 1871.

The accompanying proclamation of General Medina states that no resistance to Mr. Soto assuming the presidency of Honduras will be made by the Medina party. General Medina and his friends, it was apprehended at one time, might give Mr. Soto trouble. Public allegations are made that the government of Guatemala quieted Medina's opposition by the use of money, which I must say is not at all improbable. There was no danger of resistance from any of the other various claimants to the presidency of Honduras.

Mr. Soto is at Amapala, preparing to go to the capital, where he expects to arrive about the middle of this month. His proclamation, to be issued when he assumed the executive office, was prepared before he left here. It has probably been issued at Amapala before this time.

President Zaldivar has restored order and maintained the peace in Salvador. He seems to be succeeding well, so far, in satisfying the politicians and keeping the people quiet. No apprehension of any disturbance in that country for some time is now entertained.

Nicaragua is still under arms without any well-founded reason. The revolutionists, Jarez and Selva, have neither resources nor men at present. The enemies of the government of Nicaragua say it is doing exactly what they wish by expending large sums in useless military displays.

They expect that government to create so much dissatisfaction by these heavy expenses that a revolution in the heart of the country will be successfully initiated. I should not be greatly surprised at that event, but my latest information from reliable sources says the government of Chamorro is both strong and popular.

Ex-President Guardia has returned to Costa Rica. The provisional government of Herrera is still in power there, but it is presumed that Guardia will either assume the presidency himself or have his son-in-law, a Mr. Sisano, elected to that office. The vexatious question of boundary with Nicaragua will then again be brought forward and war threatened. I do not apprehend there is any danger of hostilities beginning (if they begin at all) until, perhaps, about the first of January.

* * * * *

You will see from the foregoing report that there is, in my judgment, a prospect of Central America remaining at peace for several months. Here coming political events do not cast their shadows before, and no one can venture to say what a day may bring forth.

I have, &c.,

GEO. WILLIAMSON.

[Inclosure.—Translation.]

José Maria Medina, provisional president of the republic of Honduras, to his fellow-citizens:

In my manifesto of June 11th, I recorded, in a clear and determined manner, my firm resolution not to return to the exercise of supreme power, even should I be called thereto by a general election. Up to the present I have seen no reason which would induce me to alter this determination; and, in consequence, I have refused to accept the power which passed into my hands by virtue of the decree issued on the 12th instant by the Ex-President, Don Crescencio Gomez. The republic is, therefore, without a head, and ought not to remain in that condition, as such a situation will lead to all the horrors of anarchy. In order that this danger may cease to exist, it is necessary that the government should be intrusted to some citizen who by his honesty, his talents, and his patriotism may be worthy of such an elevated post.

Fortunately, these qualities are united in our fellow-citizen Don Marco Soto. Young, of good ideas, without party hatreds, and animated by the best sentiments, I am convinced that in occupying the chief magistracy he will know how to fulfill, to the satisfaction of all, the just hopes of patriotism and of the future. Señor Soto has further merited the confidence of the governments of Guatemala, Salvador, and Costa Rica; he has been proclaimed by some of the towns, and therefore, for these reasons, I have invited him to assume the presidency of Honduras.

For my part, I compromise myself to recognize him in that character, and I offer him from the present moment my adherence and respect. Give him also your important co-operation, and let us force all motives of discord among us to cease, forgetting forever the miserable petty hatreds which have divided us.

As I am desirous of clearing away any false ideas which might tend to lead public opinion astray, allow me to protest against the iniquitous rumor which has been circulated that the government of Guatemala pretended to dominate us. This is not

true; and its falsity is proven by the frank and sincere protestations which that government has so often made, to the effect that it will ever respect the autonomy and institutions of these states.

May the government of Señor Soto be inaugurated under the auspices of union and peace; may he encounter no difficulty in bringing the mission intrusted to him to a happy termination; and may he, as far as possible, contribute efficiently to realize the ideas of Central-American policy, viz, the national union. Such are the wishes of your fellow-citizen and friend,

J. M. MEDINA.

GUALSINSE, *August* 18, 1876.

CHILI.

No. 29.

Mr. Williamson to Mr. Fish.

No. 8.] LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES,
Valparaiso, July 19, 1876. (Received August 31.)

SIR: My official residence for the past six years in Peru and Chili gave me ample opportunity to observe the laws and customs of the people. I have the honor, therefore, to submit to the Department a brief review of the political parties in Chili from the year 1851 to the present time.

During the last two months have been held throughout Chili the elections for the several municipalities of the various departments of the republic, of senators and representatives, and on the 25th ultimo that of President, this last resulting in the choice of Señor Don Anibal Pinto chief magistrate for the constitutional period of five years from the 18th of next September.

With this single announcement in former years, indeed during the entire history of Spanish America, this dispatch might have closed, so notorious being the fact that heretofore the masses had little, if any, participation in the choice of their rulers, that the interest of such events was purely local, and, unless to fill a paragraph, scarcely chronicled in a foreign periodical.

I am, therefore, probably the first to place on record in the Department the testimony that Chili has now taken a stride far in advance of her sister states, and if the promise of progress in self-government now evinced by the people be realized, she will soon have little to envy in the political states of older nations.

I may be pardoned in giving a very brief retrospect of her history, which will at least serve as a frame for the more pleasing picture she now presents us.

Until 1851 the Presidents of Chili were either fortunate generals or statesmen of no extraordinary ability, governed by their chief ministers, who invariably succeeded them, and by cliques of the conservative and ultramontane parties, then the dominant ones of the country.

In 1851 General Bulnes, wishing to force upon the nation his minister, Don Manuel Montt, plunged the country into the most sanguinary civil war ever known in South America, terminating, in the battle of Longomilla, in the fulfillment of Bulnes's wishes and the presidency of his favorite; but the party which opposed this choice, and which had been slowly and steadily increasing, though a minority, was a dangerous one, comprising the youth and talent of Chili.