

**THE OFFICIAL
CORRESPONDENCE ON THE
CLAIMS OF THE UNITED STATES
IN RESPECT TO THE 'ALABAMA'**

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The Official Correspondence on the Claims of the United States in Respect to the 'Alabama' by
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OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE

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IN RESPECT TO THE

'ALABAMA'

LONDON

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1867

JAN 21 1922

PREFACE.

THE MISREPRESENTATIONS of the newspapers, both English and American, of the important questions of International Law involved in the cases of the 'Alabama' and 'Shenandoah,' have rendered it necessary to bring under the notice of the Nation, in one publication, all the official correspondence on this subject.

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CORRESPONDENCE

RESPECTING

THE 'ALABAMA.'

Mr. Adams to Earl Russell.

Legation of the United States,
London, June 23, 1862.

MY LORD,—Some time since it may be recollected by your Lordship that I felt it my duty to make a representation touching the equipment from the port of Liverpool of the gun-boat the 'Oreto', with the intent to make war upon the United States. Notwithstanding the statements returned from the authorities of that place, with which your Lordship favoured me in reply, touching a different destination of that vessel, I have the strongest reason for believing that that vessel went directly to Nassau, and that she has been there engaged in completing her armament, provisioning, and crew for the object first indicated by me.*

I am now under the painful necessity of apprising your Lordship, that a new and still more powerful war steamer is nearly ready for departure from the port of Liverpool on the same errand. This vessel has been built and launched from the dockyard of persons one of whom is now sitting as a Member of the House of Commons, and is fitting out for the especial and manifest object of carrying on hostilities by sea. It is about to be commanded by one of the

* The 'Oreto' was seized at Nassau for violation of the Foreign Enlistment Act, but was released by direction of the Vice-Admiralty Court after a full judicial investigation. She afterwards ran the blockade, and having been armed at Mobile, was known as the 'Florida' ship-of-war.

insurgent agents, the same who sailed in the 'Oreto.' The parties engaged in the enterprise are persons well known at Liverpool to be agents and officers of the insurgents in the United States, the nature and extent of whose labours are well explained in the copy of an intercepted letter of one of them which I received from my Government some days ago, and which I had the honour to place in your Lordship's hands on Thursday last.

I now ask permission to transmit, for your consideration, a letter addressed to me by the Consul of the United States at Liverpool, in confirmation of the statements here submitted, and to solicit such action as may tend either to stop the projected expedition, or to establish the fact that its purpose is not inimical to the people of the United States. Renewing, &c.

(Signed) CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS.

(Inclosure.)

Mr. Dudley to Mr. Adams.

United States Consulate,
Liverpool, June 21, 1862.

Sir,—The gunboat now being built by the Messrs. Laird and Co., at Birkenhead, opposite Liverpool, and which I mentioned to you in a previous despatch, is intended for the so-called Confederate Government in the Southern States. The evidence I have is entirely conclusive to my mind. I do not think there is the least room for doubt about it. Beauforth and Caddy, two of the officers from the privateer 'Sumter,' stated that this vessel was being built for the Confederate States. The foreman in Messrs. Lairds' yard says she is the sister to the gunboat 'Oreto,' and has been built for the same parties and for the same purpose; when pressed for a further explanation, he stated that she was to be a privateer for the 'Southern Government in the United States.' The captain and officers of the steamer 'Julie Usher,' now at Liverpool, and which is loaded to run the blockade, state that this gunboat is for the Confederates, and is to be commanded by Captain Bullock.

The strictest watch is kept over this vessel; no person except those immediately engaged upon her is admitted

into the yard. On the occasion of the trial trip made last Thursday week no one was admitted without a pass, and these passes were issued to but few persons, and those who are known here as active Secessionists engaged in sending aid and relief to the rebels.

I understand that her armament is to consist of eleven guns, and that she is to enter at once, as soon as she leaves this port, upon her business as a privateer.

The vessel is very nearly completed; she has had her first trial trip. This trial was successful, and entirely satisfactory to the persons who are superintending her construction. She will be finished in nine or ten days. A part of her powder canisters, which are to number 200, and which are of a new patent, made of copper with screw tops, are on board the vessel; the others are to be delivered in a few days. No pains or expense have been spared in her construction. Her engines are on the oscillating principle, and are 350 horse-power. She measures 1,050 tons burthen, and will draw fourteen feet of water when loaded. Her screw or fan works in a solid brass frame casting, weighing near two tons, and is so constructed as to be lifted from the water by steam-power. The platforms and gun carriages are now being constructed.

When completed and armed she will be a most formidable and dangerous craft, and if not prevented from going to sea will do much mischief to our commerce. The persons engaged in her construction say that no better vessel of her class was ever built. I have, &c.

(Signed) THOMAS H. DUDLEY.

Earl Russell to Mr. Adams.

Foreign Office, June 25, 1862.

Sir,—I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 23rd instant, calling attention to a steam-vessel which you state is now fitting out at Liverpool, with the intention of carrying on hostilities against the Government of the United States; and I have to acquaint you that I have lost no time in referring the matter to the proper Department of Her Majesty's Government. I am, &c.

(Signed) RUSSELL.