SANDWICH ISLANDS AND CHINA.

Message from the President of the United States, respecting the trade and commerce of the United States with the Sandwich Islands and with diplomatic intercourse with their Government; also in relation to the new position of affairs in China, growing out of the late war between Great Britain and China, and recommending provision for a diplomatic agent.

DECEMBER 31, 1842.—Referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

To the House of Representatives of the United States:

I communicate herewith to Congress copies of a correspondence which has recently taken place between certain agents of the Government of the Hawaiian or Sandwich Islands and the Secretary of State.

The condition of those islands has excited a good deal of interest, which is increasing by every successive proof that their inhabitants are making progress in civilization, and becoming more and more competent to maintain regular and orderly civil government. They lie in the Pacific Ocean, much nearer to this continent than the other, and have become an important place for the refitment and provisioning of American and European vessels.

Owing to their locality and to the course of the winds which prevail in this quarter of the world, the Sandwich Islands are the stopping-place for almost all vessels passing from continent to continent, across the Pacific Ocean. They are especially resorted to by a great number of vessels of the United States, which are engaged in the whale fishery in those seas. The number of vessels of all sorts, and the amount of property owned by citizens of the United States, which are found in those islands in the course of a year, are stated, probably with sufficient accuracy in the letter of the agents.

Just emerging from a state of barbarism, the Government of the islands is as yet feeble; but its dispositions appear to be just and pacific, and it seems anxious to improve the condition of its people, by the introduction of knowledge, of religious and moral institutions, means of education, and the arts of civilized life.

It can not but be in conformity with the interest and wishes of the Government and the people of the United States that this community thus existing in the midst of a vast expanse of ocean should be respected, and all its rights strictly and conscientiously regarded. And this must also be the true interest of all other commercial states. Far remote from the dominions of European Powers, its growth and prosperity as an independent state may yet be in a high degree useful to all whose trade is extended to those regions, while its near approach to this continent, and the intercourse which American vessels have with it—such vessels constituting five-sixths of all which annually visit it—could not but create dissatisfaction on the part of the United States at any attempt by another power, should such attempt be threatened or feared, to take possession of the islands, colonize them, and subvert the native Government. Considering, therefore, that the United States possesses so very large a share of the intercourse with those islands, it is deemed not unfit to make the declaration that their Government seeks nevertheless no peculiar advantages, no exclusive control over the Hawaiian Government, but is content with its independent existence, and anxiously wishes for its security and prosperity. Its forbear-