



Primary Source

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A Report

A Report from General Manuel Mier y Terán

In 1828 the Mexican government sent General Manuel Mier y Terán to report on the state of affairs in Texas. From Nacogdoches, Mier y Terán sent back a strong warning that a revolution was brewing.

Nacogdoches, 30 June 1828

As one covers the distance from [San Antonio de] Bejar to this town, he will note that Mexican influence . . . [decreases] until on arriving in this place he will see that it is almost nothing. And indeed, whence¹ could such influence come? Hardly from superior numbers in population, since the ratio of Mexicans to foreigners is one to ten. . . . Neither are there civil authorities . . . [except] one insignificant little man—not to say more—who is called an *alcalde*, and an *ayuntamiento* that does not convene² once in a lifetime. . . . It could not be otherwise than that from such a state of affairs should arise an antagonism³ between the Mexicans and foreigners, which is not the least of the smoldering fires which I have discovered. Therefore, I am warning you to take timely measures. Texas could throw the whole nation into revolution.

The colonists . . . suffer from a venal⁴ and ignorant *alcalde*. . . . Meanwhile, the incoming stream of new settlers is unceasing. . . .

The wealthy Americans of Louisiana and other western states are anxious to secure land in Texas for speculation, but they are restrained by the laws prohibiting slavery. If these laws should be repealed—which God forbid—in a few years Texas would be a powerful state which could compete in productions and wealth with Louisiana. The repeal of these laws is a point toward which the colonists are directing their efforts. They have already succeeded in getting from the Congress of Coahuila a law very favorable to their prosperity:⁵ The state government has declared that it will recognize contracts made with servants before coming to this country. . . . This law . . . is going to be interpreted as equivalent⁶ to permission to introduce slaves. . . .

In spite of the enmity⁷ that usually exists between the Mexicans and the foreigner, there is a most evident uniformity⁸ of opinion on one point, namely the separation of Texas from Coahuila and its organization into a territory of the federal government. . . .

The whole population here is a mixture of strange and incoherent⁹ parts . . . : numerous tribes of Indians, now at peace, but armed and at any moment ready for war . . . ; colonists of another people, more progressive and better informed than the Mexican inhabitants, but also more shrewd and unruly;¹⁰ among these foreigners are fugitives¹¹ from justice, honest laborers, vagabonds¹² and criminals, but honorable and dishonorable alike travel with their political constitution in their pockets, demanding the privileges, authority and officers which such a constitution guarantees. . . .

Review Questions

1. What is General Mier y Terán's opinion of the local Mexican government officials?
2. On what issue do most Texans agree?

Critical Thinking

3. **Making Inferences** What do you think he means by saying the Americans "travel with their political constitution in their pockets"?
4. **Drawing Conclusions** What does Mier y Terán think would happen if slavery were made legal?

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1 **whence** from where
2 **convene** meet
3 **antagonism** hatred
4 **venal** corrupt, greedy for money
5 **prosperity** wealth
6 **equivalent** equal

7 **enmity** bad feeling
8 **uniformity** sameness
9 **incoherent** confused, jumbled
10 **unruly** wild, uncontrolled
11 **fugitives** escapees
12 **vagabonds** drifters