

*John Black, United States Consul at Mexico City, to James Buchanan,
Secretary of State of the United States*³

No. 355

MEXICO, *December 18, 1845.*

SIR: On Wednesday the 3^d Instant I received a letter from our consul at Vera Cruz dated the 29th of November, informing me that a vessel had just arrived at Sacrificios, on board of which was the Hon. John Slidell, who had sent for him the said Consul to come down to that place as he wished to leave Vera Cruz for this capital by that nights Diligence; but he the Consul was of opinion he would not be able to leave until the next stage.

On the receipt of this letter, I called at the Foreign Department of this Government, to see the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and was informed by M^r Monasterio, the Chief Clerk, that the Minister was upstairs with the President, and that he was going up to see him, and would advise him of my wish. He soon returned and requested me to go up, as the Minister wished to see me. I went up to the President's quarters, where the Minister came out into the ante chamber and met me; and accosted me, saying, That the

¹ Above, this volume, pt. 1, doc. 3251.

² In this omitted portion Slidell states that he hopes to be able to send later some information regarding the unpaid installments of Mexican indemnity and that Lieutenant Kennedy will be the bearer of this dispatch.

³ Consular Letters, Mexico, vol. 8. Received January 12.

Government was informed, that there was an arrival at Vera Cruz, from the United States, bringing out a commissioner, by which the Government was taken by surprize, and asked me who could this commissioner be, and what had he come for. I told him I did not know, but I presumed it was the Envoy which the Mexican Government had agreed to receive from the Government of the United States; all the information which I had upon the subject was, that the Consul of the United States at Vera Cruz had advised me, in a letter under date of the 29th of November, that the Hon. John Slidell had just arrived at Sacrificios, and wished to leave Vera Cruz for this Capital by the first Diligence; and that I was under the impression, that this person was an Envoy from the Government of the United States to that of Mexico, as we had good reason to expect one about this time. He said that ought not to be: the Government did not expect an Envoy from the United States, until January, as they were not prepared to receive him; and he desired if possible, that he would not come, to the Capital, nor even disembark at this time, and that I should endeavour to prevent his doing so, as his appearance in the Capital at this time, might prove destructive to the Government, and thus defeat the whole affair: you know the opposition are calling us traitors, for entering into this arrangement with you. I told him I regretted this had not been known in time, as the Envoy would be now on his way to this Capital, and that the Mexican Government had set no time for his arrival, and it was to be presumed that they would be ready to receive him whenever he arrived. I know, he said, there was no time set; but from the conversations which I have had with yourself, and what I have heard from others, I had good reason to believe that the Envoy would not have been appointed by your Government, or at least not have started on his Mission, until after the Meeting of Congress; which, he said, he understood would not meet until the first of this month.—

He said that the Government itself was well disposed, and ready to proceed in the Negotiation; but that if the affair was commenced now, it would endanger its existence; that the Government were preparing the thing, collecting the opinion and consent of the Departments, which they expected to have finished by January, and then they would be able to proceed in the affair, with more security; that the Government were afraid that the appearance of the Envoy, at this time, would produce a revolution against it, which might terminate in its destruction.

I told him it was too late now to prevent the Minister's arrival; but that I would meet him at Puebla, and make known to him the fears of the Mexican Government, in order that he might know its present situation, before he entered the Capital, and in conformity to this, I met M^r Slidell at Puebla, and made known to him, what I have herein before related, and returned to the Capital with him,

I have the honor [etc.].