

Historical Note.

1824-1843.

from the date of a new Treaty, but that the rights of settlement and other rights should be restricted during the new term, so that the citizens of the United States should form no settlements to the north of the 49th parallel, and that British subjects should form no settlements to the south of that parallel, or to the north of the 54th.

Terms were not agreed on, and the Conference came to an end in July 1824.

1826, 1827.

In November 1826 negotiations were again resumed.

The United States' proposal was, that if the 49th parallel should be found to intersect the Oregon or McGillivray's River at a navigable point, the whole course of that river thence to the ocean should be made perpetually free to British vessels and subjects.

The British Plenipotentiaries were authorized to offer that if the United States would consent to the Columbia being the southern British frontier, the United States should have the harbour in De Fuca Strait, called by Vancouver, Port Discovery, with land five miles in breadth encircling it.

Should this offer not fully satisfy the United States, the British Plenipotentiaries were then authorized to extend the proposition, so as to include the cession by Great Britain to the United States of the whole peninsula comprised within lines described by the Pacific to the west, De Fuca's Inlet to the north, Hood's Canal (so called in Vancouver's charts) to the east, and a line drawn from the southern point of Hood's Canal to a point ten miles south of Gray's Harbour to the south, by which arrangement the United States would possess that peninsula in exclusive sovereignty, and would divide the possession of Admiralty Inlet with Great Britain, the entrance being free to both parties.

The negotiations ended in a Convention dated 6th August, 1827. This Convention continued Article III of the Treaty of 1818 indefinitely, but with power to either party to put an end to it on twelve months' notice (after 20th October, 1828).

The Convention also contained a saving for the claims of either party to any part of the country west of the Rocky Mountains.

1827-1842.

Negotiations on the Oregon question remained in abeyance until the special mission of Lord Ashburton to the United States in 1842, when he received the following instructions on this subject:—

"Your Lordship may, therefore, propose to the Government of the United States, as a fair and equitable adjustment of their [the two Governments] respective claims, a line of boundary commencing at the mouth of the Columbia River; thence by a line drawn along the middle of that river to its point of confluence with the Great Snake River; thence by a line carried due east of the Rocky or Stony Mountains; and thence by a line drawn in a northerly direction along the said mountains until it strikes the 49th parallel of north latitude. The southern bank of the Columbia River would thus be left to the Americans and the northern bank to the English, the navigation of the river being free to both, it being understood that neither party should form any new settlement within the limits assigned to each on the north or south side of the river respectively.

"Should your Lordship find it impracticable to obtain the line of boundary above described, Her Majesty's Government would not refuse their assent to a line of boundary commencing at the Rocky or Stony Mountains at the point where the 49th parallel of north latitude strikes those mountains; thence along that parallel to the point where it strikes the great north-easternmost branch of the Columbia River, marked in the map as McGillivray's River; thence down the middle of that river and down the middle of the Columbia River to its junction with the ocean. But your Lordship will reject the proposal formerly made by the American Government, in case it should be repeated, of following the 49th parallel of latitude from the Rocky Mountains to the Ocean, as the boundary of the territory of the two States.

"If the Government of the United States should refuse the proposed compromise, and should nevertheless determine to annul the Convention of 1827, the rights of the British Government to the whole of the territory in dispute must be considered as unimpaired."

This mission resulted in the Treaty of Washington of 9th August, 1842, which contained no arrangement respecting Oregon. The main reason that induced Lord Ashburton to abstain from proposing to carry on the discussion on this subject was the apprehension that thereby the settlement of the far more important matter of the North-Eastern boundary might be impeded or exposed to the hazard of failure.

1843.

In August 1843, Mr. Fox, Her Majesty's Minister at Washington, was asked whether the United States' Government were taking any steps in furtherance of the Oregon