

island coast. The most important harbors, and in fact the only ones, in the strait of Juan de Fuca are on the Vancouver island shore, for on the south side of Fuca strait there are but a few open roadsteads.

At the entrance of Fuca strait, on the north side, there are also extensive fishing banks, extending west, in from 40 to 100 fathoms water, which at no distant day will rival those of Newfoundland; and for fishing purposes the harbors formed by the numerous islands studding Barclay sound are most convenient.

Barclay sound is the outlet to a greater portion of Vancouver island, which is drained through the Alberni canal, that extends 25 miles through a mountainous range to the basin, as it were, of the island, a level country heavily timbered and watered by a large stream that receives its supply from a chain of lakes penetrating still further north.

These acquisitions would have been of great value to American interests, being at the entrance of and upon the Juan Fuca strait, that leads to the extensive waters a short distance east; and now, unless we secure San Juan island, with its harbor, the commerce of this vast inland sea will be, to a great extent, paralyzed, if not controlled, by an opposing naval power.

These islands, extending from the 49th parallel south to the strait of Juan de Fuca, have an area of about 355 square miles; and the principal continuous channels south to the Fuca strait may be stated as follows, viz:

1. Through Portier Pass south by Swanson channel and the Canal de Haro, leaving 90 square miles of islands to the west and 265 square miles to the east.
 2. Through Active Pass south by the Swanson channel and the Canal de Haro, leaving 110 square miles to the west and 245 to the east.
 3. Through the Canal de Haro, leaving 145 square miles to the west and 210 to the east.
 4. Through President's passage, Ontario roads, and Little Belt passage, leaving 210 square miles to the west and 145 square miles to the east.
- And finally through Rosario strait, placing 310 square miles to the west, or all the islands with the exception of Cypress, Guemes, Sinclair, Lummi, and a few smaller ones, comprising only about 45 square miles.

In the geographical memoir published in executive document of Senate, No. 29, 2d session 40th Congress, a full description of these islands is given, with a map and cross-section showing conclusively "the channel which separates the continent from Vancouver's island." In the construction of that map, tracing out each 10-fathom curve, it appears that the strongest currents are from the gulf of Georgia south to the Fuca strait, through the two main channels, the Canal de Haro on the west and Rosario strait on the east; and in order to show at a glance nature's dividing line the 10-fathom curves as far as the 70th fathom have been shaded by sanding; and using the map to illustrate the channel question, I suggested following the strongest current, and gave the comparison of the two channels that is more fully stated under the heading of "channels" in the geographical memoir.

The position of these islands bears an important relation to the terminus of the North Pacific railroad, if that is to be upon the waters of Puget sound. Independent of their commanding position as naval or military stations, controlling, as they will, the principal outlet of Washington Territory, they of necessity will be the outlet for all that portion north of the Skagit river; and to leave that question to arbitration is to suggest an equal division.

It has been and doubtless is still the intention of the English govern-