

cannot reasonably be questioned. Neither is there anything necessarily unfriendly in the act itself ; but, as both parties would thus be replaced in their former position, each retaining all its claims and asserting all its rights, which each would freely exercise, it is obvious that, in proportion as the country became settled, local differences would arise which must speedily lead to the most serious consequences.

"In this state of affairs it is matter of some anxiety and doubt what step, with a view to an amicable settlement of the question, may be most consistent with the dignity and the interests of Great Britain. After all the efforts we have made, and the course we have pursued, we might perhaps most naturally pause, and leave to the United States the office of renewing a negotiation which had been interrupted under such circumstances. But Her Majesty's Government would feel themselves to be criminal if they permitted considerations of diplomatic punctilio or etiquette to prevent them from making every proper exertion to avert the danger of calamities which they are unwilling to contemplate, but the magnitude of which scarcely admits of exaggeration.

"I think that an opportunity has now arisen when we may reasonably lay aside those formal considerations by which, under ordinary circumstances, we might have been precluded from making any fresh overture or demonstration on this subject.

"In complying with the recommendation of the President to terminate the Convention under which the Oregon Territory is at present occupied, the Legislature of the United States have accompanied their decision by resolutions of a pacific and conciliatory character ; and have clearly signified to the Executive Government their desire that this step should not lead to the rupture of amicable negotiations for the settlement of the question. I can scarcely doubt that the Government of the United States will be duly influenced by the desire thus unequivocally expressed by Congress ; and it is in this hope and belief that I now proceed to instruct you to make another, and, I trust, final proposition to the American Secretary of State, for the solution of these long-existing difficulties.

"I avail myself of this opportunity the more readily, because, although Her Majesty's Government have strongly pressed a reference of the whole subject to arbitration, they are by no means insensible to the inconvenience attending such a mode of proceeding, and would willingly avoid it if possible. Nothing, indeed, but the apprehension that an amicable settlement by means of direct negotiation was entirely hopeless, would have led them so decidedly to adopt this course ; and they are still of opinion that, with such a prospect of failure before them, it would be their duty to adhere as earnestly as ever to this recommendation. Nor can they believe that any Christian Government could ultimately persevere in rejecting a proposal of this nature, whatever might be their objections to its adoption, and in the face of the civilized world deliberately recur to the dreadful alternative of war.

"The boundary having been fixed by the Convention of 1818, between the possessions of Great Britain and the United States, and the line of demarcation having been carried along the 49th parallel of latitude for a distance of 800 or 1,000 miles through an unfrequented and unknown country, from the Lake of the Woods to the Rocky Mountains, it appeared to the Government of the United States that it was a natural and reasonable suggestion that this line should be continued along the same parallel, for about half that distance, and through a country as little known or frequented, from the Rocky Mountains to the sea. And, indeed, with reference to such a country, the extension of any line of boundary already fixed might equally have been suggested, whether it had been carried along the 49th or any other parallel of latitude.

"On the other hand, however, it may justly be observed that any division of territory in which both parties possess equal rights ought to proceed on a principle of mutual convenience, rather than on the adherence to an imaginary geographical line ; and in this respect it must be confessed that the boundary thus proposed would be manifestly defective. It would exclude us from every commodious and accessible harbour on the coast ; it would deprive us of our long-established means of water-communication with the interior for the prosecution of our trade ; and it would interfere with the possessions of British colonists resident in a district in which it is believed that scarcely an American citizen, as a settler, has ever set his foot.

"If, therefore, the 49th parallel of latitude be adopted as the basis of an agreement, it will be incumbent upon us to obviate these objections, which, I trust in great measure, may be successfully accomplished.

"You will accordingly propose to the American Secretary of State that the line of demarcation should be continued along the 49th parallel from the Rocky Mountains to the sea coast ; and from thence in a southerly direction through the centre of King George's Sound and the Straits of Juan de Fuca, to the Pacific Ocean, leaving the whole of Vancouver's Island, with its ports and harbours, in the possession of Great Britain.

"You will also stipulate that from the point at which the 49th parallel of latitude shall intersect the principal northern branch of the Columbia River, called Macgillivray's River in the maps, the navigation shall be free and open to the Hudson's Bay Company, and to the subjects of Great Britain trading with the said Company, until its junction with the Columbia, and from thence to the mouth of the river, with free access into and through the same ; British subjects, with their goods, merchandize, and produce, to be dealt with as citizens of the United States ; it being always understood, however, that nothing shall interfere to prevent the American Government from making any regulations respecting the navigation of the river, not inconsistent with the terms of the proposed Convention.

"In the future appropriation of land, the possessory rights of all British settlers will of course be respected. The Hudson's Bay Company should be confirmed in the occupation of Fort Vancouver, and the adjacent lands of which the Company have been in possession for many years. They would also retain such other stations as were necessary for the convenient transit of their commerce along the line of the Columbia ; but all other stations, or trading posts, connected with their present exclusive rights of hunting and of traffic with the natives, within the territory south of the 49th degree of latitude, would in all probability forthwith be abandoned.

"The Puget Sound Agricultural Company have expended considerable sums of money in the cultivation and improvement of land on the north of the Columbia River. They occupy two extensive