

Maine complained, not less loudly, of infractions of the same agreement by the British Authorities, especially in the augmentation of their military force on the north side of the St. John's. As the whole matter related to a subject which would be but of temporary, and, as it was to be hoped, of short duration, the President thought that instead of discussing further the grounds of those mutual complaints, it would be for the benefit of all parties, that the civil posse of Maine should be withdrawn, and their places supplied by troops of the United States. In the beginning of July, as you will remember, I made an informal communication of these views to you, not, as Lord Sydenham seems to suppose, for the purpose of entering upon a formal negotiation for a convention on the subject, but for that of stating frankly, and in the most friendly manner, the President's opinion as to what was the best mode to be adopted by him, and suggesting to the British Government what occurred to him as worthy of its consideration as measures having the same general end.

You expressed the opinion that the British Government in Canada might see objections to a part of what the President proposed to do; but under the impression that both parties were agreed in the expediency of substituting as soon as possible, a regular force for the armed posse now in possession; and considering the advanced state of the season, it was thought necessary, at the Department of War, not to delay the movement of the two companies. There was no purpose in this, of acting suddenly or prematurely, or during the pendency of any negotiations upon the subject. For, as I have already stated, my informal communication to you was not intended as the commencement of a regular negotiation, but only as friendly information of the steps which the President thought proper to take, and a suggestion of what might be considered as proper on the side of the British Authorities as concurrent measures. It may be proper to observe here, that orders were given from the War Department for one of the field officers at Houlton to proceed with those companies; and as he would naturally meet with the commanders of the British posts, to explain to them, so far as necessary, the object of the movement.

The main fear expressed by Lord Sydenham appears to be, that part of the Madawaska Settlement which lies south of the St. John's, might be in danger by this occupation of the post at the mouth of the Fish River. When, in the communication already referred to, I suggested the propriety of confining the British forces to the north side of the St. John's, it was not intended to affect, in any degree, the question of the extent of the Madawaska Settlements, or the exercise of British jurisdiction, wherever heretofore that jurisdiction had been habitually exercised. The river was mentioned as a natural boundary which could not be mistaken, and proper, therefore, as the line between the posts of the respective Governments. It might have been added, that although neither Government accepted the award of the King of the Netherlands, yet the boundary recommended by him might be worthy of regard as a limit of the temporary possession held by the two Governments.

It is presumed not to be the purpose of either party to extend its jurisdiction over parts of the Disputed Territory where it has not heretofore actually existed. The officers commanding the United States' detachments will have orders to confine themselves to the objects which alone the Government has in view in placing them at their posts, and not to take upon themselves to interfere in any question of civil jurisdiction whatever. It is to be hoped that the observance of strict discipline by the troops on both sides, and a spirit of moderation and forbearance among the people along the frontier, will relieve both Governments from the difficulties and dangers on the subject of the temporary occupation of the Territory in dispute.

I have, &c.,  
(Signed) DANIEL WEBSTER.

---