

territory, except where the title to it is admitted to be in dispute.

Now, up to the time the President of the United States delivered his inaugural address, the United States have always admitted that the right to *exclusive* jurisdiction over the Oregon territory has been in dispute between this Government and that of Great Britain. This dispute, it is well known, led to the conventions of 1818 and 1827, which provide for the joint occupation of that territory by American citizens and British subjects, each to be governed by the laws of their own country, respectively. Under this convention, therefore, we stand justified in the eyes of all nations in refraining from the exercise of *exclusive* sovereignty or jurisdiction over any portion or all of that territory, however "clear and unquestionable" our title may be to it. But the moment the twelve months' notice expires, and this joint jurisdiction or occupation ceases, it will become our duty to ourselves, and to the national character and dignity of the United States, to extend the *exclusive* jurisdiction of our laws over that country, as far at least as it is occupied by American citizens. Therefore, sir, these are concomitant measures, the one absolutely involving the necessity of the other. Let gentlemen not flatter themselves that they can consistently vote for the notice, as proposed in the resolutions now before the committee, and withhold their support from the bill by which it is to be followed. That bill proposes to extend our exclusive jurisdiction not only over that portion of the territory where our citizens have taken up their abode, but over thousands of British subjects and many British forts, and over all that portion of the territory, comprising nearly one-half of it, which this Government has on several occasions, once very recently, offered to acknowledge as exclusively belonging to Great Britain. Now, Mr. Chairman, allow me to inquire what this Government and the people of the United States would say, if Great Britain should adopt similar measures?—if she should give us the notice, and propose at the expiration of twelve months to extend her sovereign authority over all Oregon, to the exclusion of our laws and the subjugation of our citizens? Sir, there is not a man in this country who would not cry aloud for war; who would not regard such an act on the part of Great Britain as equivalent to a declaration of war, to be met and resisted by all the energy and power of the Republic. If, under such circumstances, such would be the opinions of the people of this country, why should we suppose that the Government and people of Great Britain will quietly submit to our proceedings, if the measures