

rights there are not "to be a proper subject for arbitration," he seems to say, in language not to be misunderstood, to the Government of Great Britain, that, as far as he is concerned, or can control the action of this Government, the question of territorial rights is settled, and that any concessions which may hereafter be made on our part, if any ever shall be, may be regarded as an evidence of our liberality, and not as springing from a conviction of the justness of her rights, or the validity of her title to any portion of the territory in dispute.

I am not, sir, disposed to present an argument with respect to our title to Oregon. I shall not even say to what extent our title is better than that of Great Britain, or how far it can be sustained by all the evidences which have been or can be adduced. In my judgment, this question ought not to have been brought into this House. This is not the place to discuss questions of this nature. They properly belong to the Executive and the Senate. They are, under the Constitution, the treaty-making power. It is very difficult, if not impossible, for any man to present an argument here which shall in the slightest degree admit the force of British rights in Oregon, without bringing upon himself the imputation of having more or less compromised those of his own country. These delicate and complicated questions should be left in the hands of diplomatists, and settled by negotiation; or, if that finally fail, the next and the only peaceable resort, as it seems to me, is to submit them to a tribunal, constituted with a proper and just regard to the spirit of our institutions, for arbitration. If our title to that territory is, as has been asserted, "clear and unquestionable," all argument and negotiation are at an end, and this House, therefore, has been wasting time in misdirected and useless discussion. Our deliberations should have been directed to a vigorous preparation for the maintenance of rights which have been thus boldly and unqualifiedly asserted. But, sir, while this declaration has been uttered and repeated by the Executive and his friends upon this floor, they have staring them in the face the fact that he himself has offered to settle this controverted question by yielding up to Great Britain almost one-half of the entire territory—thus denying and admitting, almost in the same breath, that she has rights west of the Rocky Mountains, below the latitude of $54^{\circ} 40'$. If Great Britain has no rights in Oregon, why has he offered to concede to her almost one-half of it? If she has rights there, the delicate and difficult question to be determined is, where do our rights cease, and where do hers begin? That cannot be decided by argument in this House, by debating the question now