

Before advertng to the steps which have been more recently taken by Her Majesty's Government, with a view of arriving at a solution of this question, it will be as well to take a cursory view of what has passed since the date of the signature of the Treaty.

As early as February 1847, Mr. Pakenham inclosed a copy of a Memorandum by Sir George Simpson, the principal officer of the Hudson's Bay Company, drawing attention to the importance of determining, by means of a Commission, which of the channels separating the mainland from Vancouver's Island should form the line of demarkation, as otherwise the question of the sovereignty of the Islands might very soon become a source of dispute between British and American settlers.

Mr. Pakenham, No. 15 ;  
February 25, 1847.

Lord Palmerston informed Mr. Pakenham in reply, that Her Majesty's Government concurred in that suggestion ; but as the space through which the boundary line was to run was still imperfectly known, his Lordship thought it better that the consideration of the subject should be postponed until the Admiralty was in possession of the Reports of the Commanders of Her Majesty's ships "Herald" and "Pandora," which were engaged in surveying those waters.

To Mr. Pakenham, No. 25 ,  
April 19, 1847.

But in the following December an instruction was addressed to Mr. Crampton, informing him that it had been ascertained at the Admiralty that there was no probability of our acquiring, within any reasonable period, that detailed information with regard to those waters which had been hoped for from the surveys of Her Majesty's ships "Herald" and "Pandora," and Mr. Crampton was therefore directed to propose to the Government of the United States the appointment of a Commission, for the purpose of tracing the boundary.

To Mr. Crampton, No. 21 ;  
December 18, 1847.

With regard to the water boundary, Lord Palmerston observed that a preliminary question arose, which was one that turned upon the interpretation of the Treaty, rather than upon the result of local observation and survey.

The Convention of the 15th June, 1846, declared that the line should be drawn down the middle of the "channel" which separates the continent from Vancouver's Island ; and upon this it might be asked what the word "channel" was intended to