

article of the treaty with Great Britain of June 15, 1846, as provided for by the act of Congress of August 11, 1856. I received my instructions on the 28th of February, and proceeded at once to collect all such information within my reach as might contribute to a proper understanding of the meaning of the language of the treaty, and aid in the execution of the work intrusted to me. Lieutenant Parke was instructed to organize a party and prepare a suitable outfit for the prosecution of the survey along the 49th parallel of north latitude, from the western termination of the boundary line on the Gulf of Georgia to the Rocky Mountains. By direction of the department I also made an arrangement with the Superintendent of the Coast Survey for the employment of the surveying steamer *Active* and brig *Fauntleroy*, and the officers and assistants attached thereto, under the authority contained in the fifth section of the act organizing the commission, to make such hydrographical surveys as might be required to aid in the demarcation of the water boundary. Having learned that the British commissioner, Captain J. C. Prevost, of her Majesty's steamer *Satellite*, had left England at the close of December, and might be expected to reach the Straits of Fuca in the month of June, I hastened preparations as much as possible, to meet him at that time.

On the 20th of April, with the party as far as organized, I left New York, and reached San Francisco *via* the Isthmus of Panama on the 16th of May. Captain Alden, of the United States navy, commanding the "*Active*," reported to me that he was preparing the steamer for sea. During the time required for that purpose the organization of the party and outfit for the survey of the land boundary were completed. The "*Active*" being ready for sea on the 17th of June, we started on that day for the Straits of Fuca, and arrived at Victoria, the seat of government of Vancouver's Island, on the 22d, and there learned that the British commissioner had arrived in the neighboring harbor of Esquimalt on the 12th of June.

On the 27th of June the joint commission held its first official meeting. We exchanged credentials and exhibited our respective instructions, by which it appeared that we were mutually invested with full powers to carry into effect the first article of the treaty of June 15, 1846, so far as it relates to the water boundary*—the powers of the British commissioner being limited thereto, and to the determination of the point where the forty-ninth parallel of north latitude intersects the eastern shore of the channel separating the continent from Vancouver's island. In accordance with the act authorizing the commission, my instructions empowered me to determine and mark the entire boundary line between the United States and the British Possessions, as described in the first article of the treaty.

Captain Prevost stated that Captain Richards, of the navy, the chief astronomer and surveyor of the British commission, in command of her Majesty's steamer *Plumper*, was on his way to Vancouver's Island, but could not be expected before September, having only left England at the close of the month of March. In the instructions which Captain Prevost exhibited to me, he is designated as first commissioner, and Captain Richards as second commissioner; but the powers of commissioner, as I understood Captain Prevost, would only devolve upon Captain Richards in case of the death of the first commissioner, and the title was only given to provide for such a contingency; his ordinary duties being those of chief astronomer and surveyor.

The steamer *Satellite* not being prepared for surveying operations, Captain Prevost informed me that he could do nothing toward the determination of the water boundary until the arrival of the "*Plumper*," and after a survey of the channels and islands between the continent and Vancouver's Island and a chart of the same could be made by the chief astronomer and surveyor. This work having in a great measure been already performed by the officers of the United States Coast Survey during the past three years, and the charts having been

* See subsequent correspondence relative to powers of commissioners.