

dividing the Canal de Haro from Rosario Strait. Proceeding on this hypothesis, it will be manifest that the treaty ought to be interpreted as prescribing a fair division of the islands which stud the channel to which it refers. A plea has been set up on behalf of America to the effect that the object of defecting the boundary-line was merely to prevent it from cutting off a fragment of Vancouver's Island; therefore that we ought not to claim anything whatever beyond that one solid piece of land. But, first of all, this plea is manifestly inequitable. We reserved Vancouver's Island, and, in doing this, it is manifest that we also reserved those immediately adjacent insular appendages without which its possession would have been an element of weakness rather than of strength. Secondly, there is not a word in the treaty to support the idea that its language ought to be interpreted as giving us nothing but the one compact island specifically named. On the contrary, the language would be just as capable of bearing an exactly opposite interpretation, according to which we might claim that the United States ought to have nothing but the mainland all along Fuca's Straits, leaving every islet, however near the mainland, in our possession.

A fair division of the minor islands, made without reference to the treaty, and merely on the basis of an understanding that England was to have Vancouver's Island, and America the mainland, would assuredly give us the Island of San Juan. That island, and many others in its immediate vicinity, are geologically fragments of Vancouver's Island, and not of the mainland. The island, whose mere value as so much territory is hardly worth consideration in this dispute, is useless to the United States, except for the purposes of offensive military operations against the British dominions. To us, as Lord Milton has pointed out, it is of priceless importance for the proper defence of our own territory, while altogether unavailable for hostile operations against the United States. It is difficult to imagine a stronger equitable claim on the island than these considerations give us. We can only want the island for our own protection, and could not use it for aggressive purposes. The United States can only want the island as a *point d'appui* for aggressive purposes, and could not render it serviceable for their own defence.

The correspondence that took place between Captain Prevost and Mr. Archibald Campbell during their attempt to agree upon a boundary, concerns itself mainly with the technical arguments on each side, and affords, together with the instructions issued by each Government to its own representative, a com-

plete epitome of these arguments. On behalf of England it is maintained that, when the treaty was concluded in 1846, only one navigable channel was known to exist, viz., that known by the name of Rosario Strait. The Canal de Haro is alleged to be a channel only fit for steamers, and in endeavouring to show that it is in all respects as navigable a channel as Rosario Strait, Mr. Campbell seems driven to quote from an American hydrographical report dated as late as 1855, on which it is not improbable that the existence of the San Juan question as an international difficulty had some influence. In dealing with another technical point he was not ashamed to use the argument embodied in the following passage:—'Rosario Strait is a navigable channel, but it does not separate the continent from Vancouver's Island. In no part of its course does it touch upon the shore of either. It separates the islands of Lummi, Sinclair's, Cypress, Guemes, and Fidalgo on the east; from Orcas, Blakeley, Decatur, and Lopez islands on the west; but in no respect does it separate the continent from Vancouver's Island, and cannot therefore, in my opinion, be claimed, in accordance with the language of the treaty, as the channel therein referred to.'

Thus, if there had been one main channel twenty miles wide connecting the Gulf of Georgia with the Straits of Fuca, still if each shore were fringed with islands, Mr. Campbell's argument would have made it necessary to take the boundary-line inside them, within a half-mile or so either of the mainland or of Vancouver's Island, in order that it might pass through a channel washing one or other of the territories named in the treaty. It is impossible to read the passage we have quoted from Mr. Campbell's despatch without feeling that the argument it involves must have been invented to accommodate the facts, and would never have been heard of under a somewhat different conformation of the regions in dispute.

It would be tedious to follow the two commissioners through all their prolonged and fruitless diplomacy, but we may here record the fact that Captain Prevost, after vainly exhausting his arguments in endeavouring to convince Mr. Campbell that the Rosario Strait was the channel of the treaty, and after finding his own conviction to that effect entirely unshaken by the counter-arguments brought forward on the other side, proposed a compromise. He suggested that the whole intervening space between the mainland and Vancouver's Island should be treated, in laying down the boundary, as if it were one channel, and that the line should be taken as nearly along the middle of the