

hoped also to gain the cession of Point Roberts, a part of the continent falling south of the parallel, and a commanding position on the gulf of Georgia, near the entrance to Fraser river.

The danger of war was a bugbear. It is now known that, when the original treaty was made, the British government would have yielded the whole of Vancouver island rather than fight; and that later, if firmly met, she would have receded from her claim to the San Juan group. The movement of General Harvey, in taking military possession of San Juan, was the right one. There was a vast deal of bluster and threatening on the part of the British, but there would have been no fighting to get possession of it; but Mr. Buchanan, then President, made another fatal mistake. He sent out General Scott to compromise once more, and a new joint occupation was agreed upon. The duplicity of the British in this matter was shown during the joint survey of the northwest boundary. While the American commissioner, Mr. Archibald Campbell, had full powers to settle the line, his English colleague, Captain Prevost, of the British navy, had secret instructions not to settle unless San Juan island was yielded, and the negotiations were continued for months in vain before the reason leaked out.

The idea seems to prevail that England, becoming indifferent to the possession of these western territories, only wants to be "let down gracefully." This mistake will prove as ruinous as the others. She never was more determined to hold on to these points than now. If she is to lose her possessions on the Pacific, as she must eventually, she wishes to make us pay the heaviest penalty for the acquisition. She will get all the higher price for holding San Juan and Point Roberts. The Reverdy Johnson treaty shows this in every line. The question of the true construction of the treaty of 1846 is *not* the one submitted. The story is told in the second and in the separate articles. The second article reads thus:

If the referee should be unable to ascertain and determine the precise line intended by the words of the treaty, it is agreed that it shall be left to him to determine upon *some* line which, in his opinion, will furnish an *equitable* solution of the difficulty, and will be the nearest approximation that can be made to the accurate construction of the treaty.

And the "separate article" (a perfect anomaly in diplomacy) provides that this treaty shall not go into operation or have any effect until the question of NATURALIZATION, now pending, shall have been satisfactorily settled. If that does not mean that San Juan island (and Point Roberts too) is to be given up as a consideration of the naturalization treaty, it has no meaning.

The settlement of this question is left to the arbitration of the "President of the Swiss Confederation." We might well hesitate at the submission of so important a matter to a person of whose functions and abilities we know nothing, who may or may not be a lawyer or a statesman. But what shall we say when we find that there is no such person in existence? There is no "President of the Swiss Confederation." There are presidents of the *Conseil National*, of the *Conseil des Etats*, and of the *Conseil Fédéral*; three presidents after a fashion; that is, presiding officers of three different bodies, who are elected annually. But to which of them is this subject submitted? Is it to President Kaiser, of Solenne, to President Appli, of St. Gall, or to President Dubs, of Zurich?

And why was it not submitted (if there is to be any submission) as a question, pure and simple, of the interpretation of the treaty of 1846? Are we to compromise every fresh claim that Great Britain may set up on any occasion by a new concession? If there is a real doubt about the true intent and meaning of that treaty, let us submit it *as such*, and submit it to some authority, high enough, learned enough, and responsible enough, to decide it at once.