

coast ; but, if any good result could thereby be attained, it would be easy to show that our title to the Oregon territory was good as far south as the parallel of 42, and that, in surrendering the valley of the Columbia, and a coast studded with ports and harbours, we were giving up an extent of territory, and a valuable sea-coast, which fully entitled us to require, as a set-off, that, in regard to the boundary line between Vancouver's Island and the Continent, we should be placed in such a position as to secure to us every advantage which the possession of Vancouver's Island entitled us to claim.

With regard to the statement that the Canal de Haro is the shortest, the deepest, and the widest channel, this might be a very fair argument to advance as a reason why it should serve as the boundary line if the Treaty were now about to be negotiated ; but it has no bearing upon the question whether it was the channel selected by the negotiators of the Treaty of 1846. It might just as well be asserted that, because the Great Belt is the widest and the deepest of the several channels connecting the Baltic with the Cattegat, therefore the Great Belt, and not the Sound, ought to be the boundary line between Denmark and Sweden. If this, which is purely an *ex post facto* argument (inasmuch as it is only since the signature of the Treaty of 1846 that the capacity of the Haro Channel has been ascertained), were to be allowed any weight, we should be equally entitled to advance, as an argument in support of our view of the case, that the small islands situated midway between Vancouver's Island and the Continent had always been considered as dependencies of Vancouver's Island, while, with regard to San Juan, the immediate bone of contention, the proposition of Lord Aberdeen that any division of territory in which both parties possess equal rights ought to proceed on a principle of mutual convenience (a proposition which, without doubt, was enunciated by Sir R. Pakenham in his negotiations with the United States' Plenipotentiary), must decide the question with regard to that island in our favour, because it is on all hands admitted that its retention as a British island is necessary to the security of our possessions in that quarter, while to the United States it is of no intrinsic value whatever, unless for purposes of offence against Great Britain.