

never envy the equal participation in the benefits and advantages to be derived from a well organized system of government. Any possible inconveniences arising from the continuance of the convention of 1827, not now anticipated by the committee, can, and doubtless will, be looked to by the Executive, who can at any time abrogate the same, by giving the notice contemplated in it. The giving of that notice, being a matter of treaty stipulation, belongs, perhaps, exclusively to the Executive; on whose province there is no occasion, and the committee have no inclination, to intrude.

In connexion with this branch of the subject, the committee will advert to the fact, (as it is now understood to be,) that negotiations are in progress between the United States and Great Britain on the subject of this territory. They conceive that this should make no difference in the action of the committee. They have to act on the subject as it is *now* presented to them—not as it *may be* changed or altered hereafter, by any future arrangements between the two countries. If the United States have *now* the right to the Oregon country—if they have *now* the sole and undisputed possession of it—if our people have *now* permanent settlements in it, and are every day suffering for the want of a properly organized government to protect the virtuous and to restrain the vicious,—we ought not to withhold our action, under the possibility of some alteration in the relations of the two countries in that region, at some uncertain and indefinite period. That negotiation can still progress; and any treaty stipulation inconsistent with our legislation, will control it to the extent of such interference. No one, we believe, supposes that the pending negotiations can ever result in the entire loss of the Oregon country. Enough will doubtless remain of it, under any circumstances, to require the extension of our laws in the manner now contemplated. If the present negotiation relates (as the committee apprehend it does) solely to the ascertainment and settlement of the northern boundary of the territory, they can anticipate, from no examination which they have been able to make, any such loss of country in that direction, as will at all affect the propriety of the passage of the bill which is now presented to the House.

There is enough, doubtless, for that negotiation to act upon, without resorting even to the supposition that any portion of our territory south of latitude 54 degrees 40 minutes north may be lost. We propose the extension of our laws fully up to that latitude, and will now submit the grounds on which we maintain that the United States has a full and indefeasible right and title to that point. We adopt as our own, and submit to the House, the views of a former committee* on the question of title; which we believe must carry conviction to every disinterested and impartial mind:

As preliminary to the discussion of the contested points of the case, and as needful to the full understanding of its merits, the committee premise a brief account of the voyages of discovery, enterprises, and settlements of the powers in question, on the northwest coast and interior of the continent, so far as they bear upon the present controversy; referring to the documents appended to this report for a full and detailed account of the history of northwestern discovery.

Spain, having established her power in Mexico, was impelled, by the same causes which led to the original conquest, to seek its extension. She was impelled to undertake expeditions by sea and land to the northwest, by another inducement—namely, the hope of discovering a direct northerly passage, by

* See Mr. Cushing's report to the 25th Congress.