

what does it show? Foreign tonnage of England, 2,420,000 tons; of the United States, 2,417,000 tons, leaving out the tonnage of our lakes and rivers. What is the commercial tonnage of other European Governments? France has 625,000 tons; Russia, 239,000 tons; Denmark, 95,375; Holland, 214,984; Sweden, 118,025; Turkey, 1,902, amounting in all to 1,293,586, or about one-half of that of the United States. What, sir, was the commerce of the Mississippi and its tributaries only forty years ago? It was unknown to the world. A few canoes and keel-boats were paddled and poled along its shores. What is it now? Hundreds of floating palaces bear upon its bosom more than \$200,000,000 worth of commercial commodities annually. What was the commerce of your lakes forty years ago? A few Indian traders along the shores. What is it now? You have upon Lakes Erie and Michigan alone four hundred commercial vessels, with a tonnage of 80,000 tons, carrying annually a commerce of the value of \$1,500,000, and in progress of construction thirty-four vessels more; of which ten are steamers of the first class. These are the avenues through which the agricultural products of the Western valley pass to market.

If this, sir, has been our progress in sixty-three years, starting from a state of comparative imbecility, and with but one sea open to us, what will it be with the trade of the Pacific opened to us, with our present means of advancement, in the next quarter of a century to come? That country, where solitude now reigns almost unbroken save by the sighing of the winds, the whoop of the savage, the crack of the hunter's rifle, or the dashing of the Pacific waves upon its shores, will then have become the home of civilized men. From its ports and harbors will go forth a commercial marine, whose sails will whiten every wave, and whose majestic steamers will ride triumphant on the tranquil bosom of that great ocean. We cannot expect that the trade commanded by that ocean will be yielded without a struggle by adverse Powers. Full well does Great Britain understand the military strength and commercial importance of Oregon. She will not yield it, right or wrong, to her natural rival, so long as she can by any means retain it or any part of it. Why has she so long and obstinately persevered in the assertion of her unfounded pretensions to the whole of the country north of the Columbia, and to a joint right to the use of that river? The reason is obvious. There is not a good harbor south of the Columbia, and navigation at the mouth of that stream is rendered unsafe and dangerous by bars, shoals, and currents. All the good harbors lie north of the Columbia. Yield her that claim, and it is all that she wants. She will then have secured to herself the strong places of the country, and rendered the balance of it comparatively valueless to us. Our products could not then reach the ocean safely, except through British ports in a British province, and subject to be incumbered or prohibited by such duties as she may impose.

With Oregon improved, and connected by railroads with the Atlantic, we will furnish to the world the great desideratum so long sought for by commercial nations—a direct communication from Europe to Asia; and we will then be brought in close communication with the commerce of China, the East Indies, the west coast of South America,

and the Pacific isles. Can Britain sail 24,000 miles around Cape Horn, or 27,000 around the Cape of Good Hope, and successfully compete with us in that trade which we can reach from the western coast, by steam vessels, in 4000? Her voyage will require some eight months; ours, scarcely so many weeks. Who then will have the carrying trade? Britain will be compelled either to open a passage across the Isthmus of Darien, trade through our works, permit us to have the carrying trade or be driven from the market. Sir, that ocean gem of India trade has been acquired and enjoyed by each commercial nation, successively, from the earliest ages of the world. Carthage, Greece, Rome, Venice, Pisa, Genoa, Portugal, Holland, have each, in their turn, enjoyed it. England now has it. Our destiny now offers it to us. Will we accept it? Will we adopt and carry out such just and prudent measures of policy as will secure to us this great and valuable field for commercial enterprise? This leads us to the consideration of another branch of this subject.

The next question which presents itself to our consideration is: to whom does Oregon, in whole or in part, belong? To the United States or to Great Britain? What are our rights in, and our title to, Oregon? And what are the pretensions and claims of Great Britain to the same? By what evidence are the rights, claims, and pretensions of the parties, respectively, supported or proved? And here again I must quote from the speech of the gentleman from South Carolina, [Mr. HOLMERS,] who says: "I deny, in toto, any right, any claim 'to that territory, or to any part or parcel thereof, that does not apply with equal force and efficiency to the power of Great Britain; and if I do not, by as fair reasoning as I can bring, demonstrate this position, I am willing to give up now 'and forever any claim to logical powers.'" This makes the issue between the parties, and presents the British view of the question, in substance, and almost in the same words, in which it was presented by Messrs. Hopkins and Addington, British Plenipotentiaries, on the 16th day of December, 1826, when negotiating upon, and discussing, the British title to Oregon, with the proper authorities of the United States. They say: "Great Britain 'claims no exclusive sovereignty over any portion 'of that territory. Her present claim, not in respect to any part, but to the whole, is limited to a 'right of joint occupancy in common with other 'States, leaving the right of exclusive sovereignty 'in abeyance.'" Every British Minister and diplomatist, from that time to the present, has contended for the same position, that she had a joint right with the United States to the whole of Oregon, but that neither Government had a separate right to any part thereof. To this proposition I cannot yield my assent. It is not my purpose, however, to argue the title to the whole of Oregon—time will not permit, nor is it necessary for my present purpose. I propose, however, to show that we have a clear, perfect, and unencumbered title to the soil and sovereignty of a part of Oregon. If I succeed, by fair and legitimate proofs and arguments, in doing so, I shall have met and overthrown the position of the gentleman from South Carolina, and, with it, the position assumed by Britain, for they are identical.