

exclusive trade with  
age of acquiring any  
in this respect the  
offer materially from  
on to the territory it  
formalities of taking  
brought on the Co-  
strait of Fuca—for-  
formed in numberless  
especially as those of  
accompanied by actu-  
were in direct vio-

President, in the  
maintain the Spanish  
of America. I re-  
it is an antiquated and  
partial and illiberal  
unnecessary to say to  
liquity is the highest  
can be traced down  
own times. The  
coast is almost con-  
It is consecrated  
parallel of latitude,  
three centuries, as  
of two centuries  
the 54th by the lapse  
Sixty years ago  
unimpaired by any  
to territorial rights,  
ected by occupation  
century ago. During  
was not superseded  
part of other nations,  
I have stated. During  
have been suspended  
on the only two pow-  
up a claim to the  
the territory to which  
tion of national inter-  
it is a narrow view to  
all the rigorous tech-  
treat principles of na-  
and applied according  
of the parties, are the  
on or governments in  
of sovereignty over  
the earth we inhabit.  
to the northwest coast  
occupation. The ob-  
commerce, traffic, tran-  
the principles I have  
sider the Spanish title  
America, which has of  
as vesting rights in

of my remarks that  
and the Spanish title,  
in which it rests. I  
allotted to myself.  
I have said, I am  
to leave the whole  
the hands of the ad-  
ness and its sense of  
this, and to respect

of the invalidity of  
to assert a right to  
portion of the terri-  
a right of joint occu-

pancy in common with other powers, but denied the  
right of exclusive dominion in the United States.  
While insisting that she was entitled "to place  
her claims at least upon a parity with those of the  
United States," she has constantly refused to divide  
the territory at the 49th parallel of latitude, the  
boundary between her and us from the Lake of the  
Woods to the Rocky mountains—a line which  
would have severed the coast, and the country in  
immediate contiguity with it, into two parts so nearly  
equal as to leave her no reasonable ground, even on  
the score of an equitable division, for the continuance  
of a controversy. Her desire for territorial exten-  
sion in this quarter is for the purpose of establish-  
ing her colonial dominion over districts of country  
bordering on us and confining our settlements with-  
in narrower limits. Our contest for territorial rights,  
which we consider indisputable, has no object but  
to enable our citizens to extend themselves to our  
natural boundary—the Pacific. Her interest is re-  
mote and contingent. Ours is direct and certain.  
Here is the interest of a state in a distant country  
which she wishes to colonize. Ours is the interest  
of a country in its own proper territory and settle-  
ments. She is not content with subjecting to her  
away the fertile and opulent regions of the East; but  
she comes now thousands of miles across the ocean  
to dispute with us the dominion of the uninhabited  
wilderness, and curtail the area for our expansion.  
With the least disposition on her part to listen to the  
suggestions of reason and justice, this question  
would long ago have been settled on the fair and  
honorable terms of compromise—nay, sir, on the  
terms of concession, which we have more than once  
proposed.

I am sure that in the course of our government in  
relation to Great Britain, in our negotiations, and in  
the treaties which have been formed between us,  
no evidence will be found of a desire on our part to  
encroach on her rights, or to adjust any of the ques-  
tions which have arisen between us on either terms  
than those of justice and liberality. The settlement of  
the northeastern boundary—one of the most delicate  
and difficult that has ever arisen between us—affords  
a striking evidence of our desire to maintain with her  
the most friendly understanding. We ceded to her  
a portion of territory which she deemed of vital im-  
portance as a means of military communication be-  
tween the Canadas and her Atlantic provinces, and  
which will give her a great advantage in a contest  
with us. The measure was sustained by the con-  
stituted authorities of the country, and I have no  
desire or intention to call its wisdom in question.  
But it proves that we were not unwilling to afford  
Great Britain any facility she required for consol-  
idating her North American possessions—acting in  
peace as though war was not to be expected be-  
tween the two countries. If we had cherished any  
ambitious designs in respect to them—if we had had  
any other wish than that of continuing on terms of  
amity with her and them—this great military ad-  
vantage would never have been conceded to her.

On the other hand, I regret to say that her  
course towards us has been a course of perpet-  
ual encroachment. But, sir, I will not look  
back upon what is past for the purpose of re-  
viving disturbing recollections. Yet I am con-  
strained to say, that in respect to Oregon, I con-  
sider her legislation as a virtual infraction of the  
conventions of 1818 and 1827. By an act of Parlia-  
ment passed in 1821, she has extended the juris-  
diction, power, and authority of her courts of judi-  
cature in Upper Canada over the whole Indian ter-  
ritory in North America, "not within her own prov-

inces, or within any civil government of the United  
States," and of course embracing the territory of  
Oregon. She has given them cognizance of every  
wrong and injury to the person and to prop-  
erty, real or personal, committed within the territory,  
and has declared that every person whatsoever  
(not British subjects alone, but every person what-  
soever) residing in it shall be amenable to these  
courts. Nay, sir, she has authorized the crown to  
establish courts within the territory itself with pow-  
er to try criminal offences not punishable with death,  
and also civil causes to a limited amount—I believe  
£200—about \$1,000. She has thus assumed to exer-  
cise over this territory one of the highest attributes  
of national sovereignty—that of deciding upon rights  
of property and punishing violations of the criminal  
laws she has extended over them. She could hardly  
have asserted a more absolute sovereignty than she  
has done by this extension of her laws and the ju-  
risdiction of her courts over a territory in which  
she admits that she has no other right but that  
of a joint occupancy. I am aware that she has  
disavowed the intention of enforcing her  
criminal laws against citizens of the United  
States. But if senators will turn to the docu-  
ments accompanying the President's message, they  
will see that the Hudson's Bay Company has a  
much more summary method of disposing of Amer-  
ican citizens, who establish themselves on the  
north side of the Columbia, in the neighborhood of  
its settlements. Their condition is not bettered, if  
this exemption from the operation of the British  
statute is to be exchanged for a forcible process of  
ejection without law.

Under these circumstances, what is the duty of  
the United States? As I do not intend to intrude  
myself on the attention of the Senate again, without  
absolute necessity, on any question relating to Ore-  
gon, I desire to say now that I shall vote for the  
notice to terminate the convention of 1818, continued  
in force by that 1827—a convention which Great  
Britain treats as recognizing a right of joint  
occupancy, but which has in reality been for  
her an exclusive occupancy of the whole terri-  
tory north of the Columbia. I am in favor  
of extending the authority of our laws and the  
jurisdiction of our courts over the territory; and  
in doing so, I would, while the convention con-  
tinues, specially except British subjects, and di-  
rect them, when charged with infractions of our  
laws, to be delivered up to the nearest British  
authorities. I would make this reservation for  
the express purpose of preventing, as far as pos-  
sible, a conflict of jurisdiction, and to avoid all  
cause for imputing to us a disregard of treaties, or a  
desire to produce collision or disagreement of any  
sort. And in order to facilitate the extension of the  
authority of the Union over our fellow-citizens in  
that remote district of our country, and to remove,  
as far as possible, the obstacles to a more free and  
efficient intercourse between us and them, I would  
establish at once a chain of military posts, with  
competent garrisons and armaments, from the re-  
motest navigable waters which flow into the Mis-  
sissippi, to the eastern face of the Rocky moun-  
tains, stopping there so long as the convention con-  
tinues in force. Duty, honor, policy—all demand  
these measures at our hands; and I trust they will  
be executed with promptitude and decision.

Will these measures produce war? I cannot be-  
lieve that they will. I cannot believe it, because  
they furnish no just ground of provocation. The  
right to give the notice is reserved by treaty. The  
right of extending our laws over Oregon is a right