

which passed an act affecting to include the Haro Archipelago, to which the island of San Juan belongs, in one of the counties of the Territory. In 1854 the legislature of Washington Territory, by that time detached from Oregon, passed a similar act, in accordance with which the property of the Hudson's Bay Company on the island of San Juan was in 1855 assessed by the civil authorities of Washington Territory. The Company naturally refused to pay taxes to a foreign government on account of property which had always been regarded as, and which they still believed to be, situated on British ground. The property in question was then formally advertised and sold by the American authorities, and it was the official correspondence relating to this transaction that at last prompted Congress to appoint a boundary commissioner.

It seems to be the policy of the American Government never to recede from a claim once put forward in its name, no matter by whom or under what circumstances. Mr. Campbell proved a persevering exponent of this policy. In the course of a long correspondence with Captain Prevost, the British Commissioner, he never swerved from his contention that the Canal de Haro was the channel which best carried out the language and intentions of the treaty. Captain Prevost, on the contrary, became more and more convinced that the boundary-line, to be fairly drawn, must be carried down the Rosario Strait. Under these circumstances it became wholly impossible for the joint-commission to conclude its task, and its members ultimately reported themselves to their respective Governments as hopelessly at variance.

Before explaining the merits of their controversy it is desirable to say a few words on the importance of the point at issue. Some people may imagine that the possession of a small islet on the Pacific coast is an advantage for which it cannot be worth our while to contend. Viscount Milton, however, who has studied the subject with great care, declares:—'On a just and equitable solution of the so-called San Juan Water-Boundary question depends the future, not only of British Columbia, but also of the entire British possessions in North America.' He goes on to explain that Victoria, the capital of British Columbia, is situated at the south-eastern extremity of Vancouver's Island, and its approach, in a military sense, absolutely commanded by the Island of San Juan. Rosario Strait is commanded by islands already in possession of the United States. With San Juan in their hands, they could shut us out also from the use of the Canal de

Haro, and, practically, from all communication by sea with our colonies on the mainland, as the northern passage *via* Queen Charlotte's Sound, is narrow, intricate, and perilous in the extreme. These considerations have earned for the island of San Juan the title of 'the Cronstadt of the Pacific.'

We now come to the arguments in support of the British and American claims. We find the British position fortified, to begin with, by a memorandum drawn up by Sir Richard Pakenham, the British plenipotentiary who negotiated the very treaty whose signification is now the question in dispute. He declares that the treaty was arranged without any reference having been made by the American Government to the islands in the channel between the continent and Vancouver's Island. True, it subsequently appeared that Mr. McLane, United States Minister in London, writing to Mr. Buchanan, the American Secretary of State, and negotiator of the treaty, said that the line about to be proposed by Her Majesty's Government would 'probably be substantially to divide the territory by the extension of the line on the parallel of 49 degrees to the sea; that is to say, to the arm of the sea called Birch's Bay, thence by the Canal de Haro and Straits of Fuca to the ocean.' The Americans attribute great importance to this despatch; but what use did they make of it at the time it was written, at the time when the hydrographical knowledge of the region under partition was confessedly imperfect, and the accurate definition of the boundary was much to be desired? 'It is certain,' says Sir Richard Pakenham, 'that Mr. Buchanan signed the treaty with Mr. McLane's despatch before him, and yet that he made no mention whatever of the Canal de Haro as that through which the line of boundary would run, as understood by the United States Government.' We quote this passage, not to show that Mr. Buchanan was designedly entrapping Mr. Pakenham to accept words having a signification to which he would not have given his assent if he had understood it, but merely as evidence that the United States Government contemplated nothing more in 1846 than the establishment of a fair boundary, on the basis of obtaining all the mainland south of the 49th parallel, while we reserved all Vancouver's Island. It is only by virtue of the contention now set up by the United States that Mr. Buchanan can be accused of having stooped to overreach the British plenipotentiary. If he understood the hydrography of Fuca Straits, he cheated Mr. Pakenham. If he acted fairly to Mr. Pakenham, he had no fixed impression as to the direction the boundary-line would take among the islands,

dividing Strait. will be interpreted the island it refers of America deflecting prevent Vancouver not to one solid plea is Vancouver manifests diately which i ment o Second support interpret compac contrar ble of tion, ac the Un the mai every i our pos A fa without on the land w Americ us the many geologi and no mere worth to the of offer British has po for the while a rations ent to the isl We ca protec sive p want gressiv serviced The tween Camp a bou techni togeth Gover