

before the country with a declaration, which is not sustained by the discovery of any new evidences of title in our favor, that our title to the whole country is "clear and unquestionable." If the President is sincere in this declaration—if he really believes our title to be so much better than that of Great Britain, why can he refuse—why does he seem to fear—to submit it to investigation, and to the decision of enlightened and honest commissioners or arbitrators? His refusing to do so seems to imply a want of confidence in his own declarations. That our title to that territory has been disputed ever since we laid claim to it, is well known to him and to all the world. That Great Britain would have declared war in 1792 against Spain, if she had not consented promptly to restore to their possessions and property the British settlers on Vancouver's, Island, is equally well known. That Great Britain, in our negotiations with her in 1817 and 1818, and 1826 and 1827, maintained with great force and unyielding pertinacity her right to settle and occupy that territory, can be seen in the diplomatic correspondence upon that subject of those periods; and the very best that she would consent to do was to allow to the United States an equal right to settle and occupy, or what is termed in the conventions the right of joint occupation. And now, Mr. Chairman, with all proper respect to the learned and venerable gentleman from Massachusetts, (Mr. ADAMS,) I should like to ask him a question. I desire, sir, to ask what his opinion is of our title to the Oregon territory? Whether in his judgment it is "clear and unquestionable," as has been asserted by the Executive?

Mr. ADAMS (the floor being yielded for the purpose) said: To say that the title is "clear and unquestionable," is to say that which is susceptible of two meanings—one relating solely to the question of right and wrong, and the other relating to the opinions of others. According to the construction we give to "clear and indisputable," in relation to the question of right and wrong, I say that our title is "clear and unquestionable." I will add one or two words more. That our title in the Oregon territory is not indisputable, or clear, is answered plainly in the fact that it is *disputed*. The gentleman has told us that it has been disputed for twenty-seven years. I cannot deny it. But if every thing which is disputed by the Government of Great Britain is disputable, then I should be under the necessity of changing the meaning of the word.

Mr. KING. Then, sir, why did the gentleman not give that definition when he was Secretary of State in 1817 and 1818? Why did he not assert, as he now does, that our title is clear