

his country, and binding upon him as its chief executive magistrate; and in the despatch in which is made the offer of the 49th parallel as a compromise, the Secretary of State says, that "*the President does it because he felt himself embarrassed, if not committed, by the acts of his predecessors.*" As much stress has been laid on the President's claiming the whole territory, and asserting that the claims of Great Britain are extraordinary and inadmissible, I will turn to the language of his predecessors, and we shall see whether, in the use of this language, he has not been following the example of those who had handed down to him this question with the landmarks so clearly defined that he could neither mistake, misunderstand nor overleap them.

Mr. Clay, when Secretary of State, in his despatch to Mr. Gallatin, dated June 19, 1826, says:

"It is not thought necessary to add much to the argument advanced on this point in the instructions given to Mr. Rush, and that which was employed by him, in the course of his negotiation, to support our title, as derived from prior discovery and settlement at the mouth of the Columbia, and from the treaty with Spain, concluded on the 22d of February, 1819. That argument is believed to have conclusively established our title on both grounds. Nor is it conceived that Great Britain has, or can make out, even a colorable title to any portion of the northwest coast."

"*By the renunciation and transfer contained in the treaty with Spain of 1819, our right extended to the 60th degree of north latitude.*" This was Mr. Clay's opinion, officially expressed as Secretary of State, of the validity of our title to the parallel of 60°, prior to the treaty with Russia. Are there any expressions in the President's message stronger than these, either as to the invalidity of the title of Great Britain, or the validity and strength of our own to the whole territory of Oregon? In another despatch of Mr. Clay, dated February 24, 1827, in characterizing the claims of Great Britain to the territory of Oregon, he uses language almost identical with that of the President's message. He speaks of these claims as "*new and extraordinary,*" and says, "that they certainly have not yet produced any conviction in the mind of the President of the validity of the pretensions brought forward, nor raised any doubts of the strength and validity of our own title." Mr. Clay further says, in speaking of the offer of the 49th parallel, that "*it is conceived in a genuine spirit of concession and conciliation.*" He also instructs Mr. Gallatin to say that the 49th parallel "*is our ultimatum, and you may so announce it.*" When the proposition was declined, Mr. Clay directs Mr. Gallatin to declare "that the American Government does not hold itself bound hereafter in consequence of any proposal which it has heretofore made to agree to the line which has been so proposed and rejected, but will consider itself at liberty to contend for the full extent of our just claims;" "which declaration," he says, "you must have recorded in the protocol of one of your conferences, and, to give it more weight, have it stated that it has been done by the express direction of the President."

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