

it is the shortest, the deepest, and the widest of the several channels connecting the Georgian Gulf with the Straits of Fuca.

Now it is perfectly true that the 49th parallel of latitude, which had been fixed by the Treaty of 1818 as the boundary between the British Possessions and those of the United States, from the Lake of Woods to the Rocky Mountains, was accepted by us in 1846 as the boundary from the Rocky Mountains westward to the sea.

But the British Government did not accept that boundary line absolutely. Lord Aberdeen, after admitting that it was a reasonable suggestion that the 49th parallel should form the general basis or principle of division, remarked that, on the other hand, it might be justly observed that any division of territory in which both parties possess equal rights, ought to proceed on a principle of mutual convenience, rather than on the adherence to an imaginary geographical line; and that in this respect it must be confessed that the boundary thus proposed would be manifestly defective. It would exclude us from every commodious and accessible harbour on the coast; it would deprive us of our long-established means of water communication with the interior for the prosecution of our trade; and it would interfere with the possessions of British colonists resident in a district in which it was believed that scarcely an American citizen, as a settler, had ever set his foot.

It will be seen from the above-quoted words of Lord Aberdeen's despatch, that the British Government did not accept the 49th parallel as the basis of division, so far as Vancouver's Island and the adjacent waters were concerned; and the Treaty was accordingly drawn up so as to exclude the possibility of any such assumption on the part of the United States.

The Americans make much of having conceded to us the whole of Vancouver's Island; they seem to be astonished that we can think of demanding more: but they forget that our title to the whole of the Oregon territory before the signature of the Treaty of 1846, was at least as good as theirs. It is true that the pretensions of the United States were in some quarters pushed to the length of denying our right to any territory whatever on that