

action is, by him, invited and recommended.

These considerations had great influence upon that vote. It will also be remembered that, at the time of that vote, there was a joint resolution pending in Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union, directing the notice to be given; and it was the wish of many of the friends of Oregon that the two measures—the bill and the notice—should be kept separate; and I am assured that many who were then for the notice voted against putting it in the bill, because they feared that both measures would be thereby endangered. They wished each to stand separate from the other, and upon its own merits, so that the one should not jeopard or prejudice the other.

In connexion with this point of the case, I hope I may be allowed to refer to a speech made by the President in 1829, when a member of the House of Representatives, on the subject of Oregon. It might be wise in the friends of Oregon to look to that speech; they may possibly find enough in it to make them doubt, at least, the fate of such a territorial bill as we might prefer. I greatly desire to see some efficient, beneficial legislation on this subject. I want to see our citizens there enjoying the full protection of our laws. How shall we accomplish that purpose? I know of but one sure way, and that is the notice as a first step. Let us divest ourselves of the shackles of the treaty, and then we can legislate without the fear of violating treaties. We never can organize a *complete* government there, until the treaty is abrogated.—You may pass bills which will do some good; you can now extend our laws over the citizens of the territory, saving and excepting British subjects; and you may afford protection to the emigrant on his way to Oregon. But it is thought by many able statesmen that you cannot give him a home after he gets there while the treaty exists, though I believe we can give him lands prospectively, to vest absolutely, after the line shall have been run between the two governments, or the one yields all to the other, in which event no new line will be necessary. But if there is a serious doubt about it, let us solve that doubt by abrogating the treaty. It must finally come to that in any reasonable contingency.

If we should pass a *complete* territorial bill, our chances for war, I apprehend, would be increased. Lord Palmerston and Sir Robert Peel have both declared that such a bill would violate the treaty. In debating that question in the British Parliament Lord Palmerston said:

"What has happened lately about that (Oregon) question? Why, the Senate have actually passed a bill for immediately taking forcible possession of the whole of that territory; and the senator who brought in that bill expressed his conviction that the American claim on this territory would immediately be acquiesced in by Great Britain, if it was only urged in what he was pleased to call a proper manner. It is impossible, I conceive, that

this bill should pass the other branch of the legislature; but if it were to pass, and to being thereupon, it would be a declaration of war. It is, and be the invasion and seizure of a territory, of our parties in its own favor."

To which Sir Robert Peel replied:

"The noble lord says the adoption of the House would be a case of war. I will not discuss—hypothetical cases of war, when, as I have said, the executive government has signified to us its intention, or to maintain peace, and to effect a satisfactory adjustment of the question of the Oregon territory, and I trust in the assurances of the executive government; and I will not believe that it will consent to a legislative measure at variance with these assurances."

They are not alone in the opinions thus advanced; many of our own statesmen have similar views. In the discussion in the Senate of the United States in 1843, on a bill known as Linn's bill, Mr. Calhoun said:

"Even I, who believe that the present moment is disposed to peace, that the recent misfortune to this country originated in the spirit of peace, that Sir Robert Peel has exhibited great wisdom and moderation—moderation in the midst of splendid success, and therefore more to be admired—do not doubt she would resist if we should attempt this measure."

In that same speech Mr. Calhoun further said:

"I am not however of opinion that Great Britain would declare war against us. If I were a power, she is under the direction at this time of men who are too sagacious and prudent to take such a course. She would probably consider the question at an end, and take possession adverse to us of the whole territory, at least of the Columbia river. She would, at the same time, take command that river by a strong fortification manned by a respectable garrison, and leave us to decide whether we shall acquiesce, or, in time, or attempt to dislodge her. To acquiesce under such circumstances, would be a virtue ought to render of the territory. To negotiate with exclusive and forcible possession against us, would be almost as hopeless; and to dislodge her at present would, as has been shown, be impracticable. Such, in my opinion, would be the probability, should this bill be passed."

I do not intend to be understood as assenting to these opinions. I voted for the bill in Congress, under the belief that it did not violate our treaty with Great Britain, nor do I believe it would. I am endeavoring to show, however, that some of the ablest statesmen in England, as well as in the United States, entertain the opinion that a territorial bill would violate the treaty, and that war would be the consequence of a war which would, in the minds of some, at least, carry with it the odium of bad faith on the part of this government—of a violation of existing treaties. I wish to avoid that imputation; I wish to avoid, if possible, even the suspicion of a breach of faith. If we have to fight, let us do it in a clear case; and