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Gen. Almond
Putnam's
Apr. 1870

THE NORTHWESTERN BOUNDARY DISPUTE.*

THERE are few people in the United States who have known that, throughout the whole of the civil war, and since 1859, the British and American flags have both been flying on San Juan Island. This joint military occupation has been justly very odious to our Government, to the authorities of Washington Territory, and to the Americans on the disputed islands, and ought to be terminated at the earliest possible moment. There are one hundred and seventy square miles of area in the Archipelago de Haro, sixty of which are arable land and eighty grazing land. The United States should as speedily as possible be placed in full possession, the civil authorities be enabled to exercise therein their functions, and the land-laws be carried into effect. During the Rebellion the people of that frontier were urged to be quiet, and wait until the war was over, and the Government should be at leisure to assert our rights.

The language of the Treaty of 15th June, 1846, required that the boundary-line should run "along the 49th parallel of north latitude to the middle of the channel which separates the continent from Vancouver's Island, and thence southerly, through the middle of said channel, and of Fuca's Straits, to the Pacific Ocean."

The English Government claims the Rosario Straits, the channel nearest the continent, as the boundary-line; we claim the Canal de Haro as the proper boundary.

That our claims to the Archipelago de Haro are of the most unmistakable character, abundantly appears to one

who will carefully read the Senate document named at the foot of this page, entitled "THE NORTHWESTERN BOUNDARY QUESTION," which contains a full statement of the whole matter. It begins with a letter of Mr. Seward, which says: "Every officer of this Government, who had any part in the negotiation, adoption, or ratification of the treaty, assented to it with the full understanding that the deflection of the boundary from the 49th parallel was consented to for the sole purpose of giving the whole of Vancouver's Island to Great Britain, and that, to effect this purpose, the line was to be carried through the Canal de Haro to the Straits of Fuca, on its way to the Pacific Ocean."

This document was prepared in the State Department, by Archibald Campbell, Esq., U. S. Boundary Commissioner, whose correspondence with Capt. J. C. Prevost, of the British navy, the English commissioner, is given at length. Mr. Cass, in his despatch of 20th Oct., 1859, to Mr. Dallas, very justly says that Mr. Campbell's "whole argument is marked both by ability and research." The entire document is drawn up in the most thorough and conscientious manner. It has, besides an excellent map of the region in dispute, a plate showing four cross-sections of the whole channel: 1st, along the 49th parallel; 2d, along the parallel of 48° 45'; 3d, along that of 48° 35'; 4th, along that of 48° 25'. It has, also, a complete physical and geographical description of the Archipelago de Haro, and each of the islands, and quotations from the reports of Gen. Persifer F. Smith and Gen. J. G. Totten, the late Chief of

* Senate Document No. 29, of 22d February, 1868, pp. 270.