

river Mississippi," in conformity with the provisions of the treaty of Versailles before cited, and so proceeding down the river to the bounds of Louisiana and Florida in that direction.

The annexation of Louisiana to the United States changed, of course, our northwestern frontier. But no new convention was immediately concluded, defining this on the side of Great Britain. The treaty of Ghent, December 24, 1814, proceeds on the assumption of limits according to the *status ante bellum*. It provides for ascertaining the northwestern point of the Lake of the Woods; but it goes no farther westward. In that direction the line is continued by the convention of October 20, 1818, "from the Lake of the Woods to the Stony Mountains, along the parallel of 49 degrees," in just application of the treaty of Utrecht. By the same convention, it is agreed, that any country that may be claimed by either party on the northwest coast of America, westward of the Stony Mountains, shall, together with its harbors, bays, and creeks, and the navigation of all rivers within the same, be free and open, for the term of ten years, to the vessels, citizens, and subjects of the two Powers; this agreement not to be construed to the prejudice of any claim which either of the parties may have to any part of the said country. Which agreement, by the convention of August 6, 1837, was continued indefinitely, subject to be terminated by either party on twelve months' notice.

I desire to see this agreement terminated as soon as possible. It gives nothing to the United States; for we have no occasion to ask the consent of Great Britain to use the harbors, bays, creeks, and rivers of our own territory. It gives every thing to Great Britain; because without it her vessels and subjects would be mere intruders and interlopers in a country which belongs to us. I desire to see the treaty notice given by the United States, and provision made by law for the occupation of the country by its rightful sovereign. The notice, we may rest assured, will never be given by Great Britain. Her policy is procrastination, in this case, as in that of our northeastern frontier; and for precisely the same reason. In both cases she has, under guise of temporary agreements, availed herself of our neglect, or at least of our unsuspecting good faith, to insinuate herself into actual possession of the territory in dispute. To settle the question, is to oust the intruder. To be sure, there is a stipulation that the agreement shall not prejudice the rights of either party; but it does prejudice our rights, deeply, fatally, as I will prove to this House by the most authentic facts.

Before I enter upon this, the more important and interesting part of this subject, I have a concluding suggestion to make on the question of title. I derive my knowledge of this from books; especially the negotiations of 1823 and 1826, (Doc. 19th Congress, 1st sess., Exec. No. 65; and Doc. 20th Con. 1st ses. Exec. No. 199,) and the reports of Mr. BAYLIES, of Mass., who, with Mr. FLOYD, of Va., was instrumental in bringing this topic before a former Congress. (Rep. 19th Cong. 1st ses. Nos. 35 and 213.) But there is an individual present (Mr. ADAMS) who is a living record of the diplomatic history of the country, and who was personally conversant with some of the most material of these negotiations. With permission of the House, I would respectfully appeal to my colleague to state whether I have properly represented the facts and treaties bearing upon our rights in this matter; since, if I have erred in any essential point, I wish to be corrected on the spot, by one to whose ampler knowledge of the subject I shall cheerfully defer.

[Mr. ADAMS then rose and addressed the House in a speech of considerable length, on various interesting topics appertaining to this question, to the Louisiana and Florida treaties, and to our relations with Great Britain; after which Mr. CUSHING resumed his speech, and continued and concluded it on the 22d of May.]

Mr. Speaker: I feel under great obligations to my colleague for his prompt compliance with my request, and for the information he has communicated to the House. His

opinion of the validity of our title to the country beyond the Rocky Mountains will deservedly have great weight in the public estimation. And I do not perceive that he and I differ materially in regard to the sources of that title: for, if he understood me as maintaining the abstract justice of the right of discovery, assumed by European Powers to justify their conquests and acquisitions in the New World as against the aboriginal inhabitants, it must have been because I did not express myself with sufficient fullness on that head. What I meant and mean to advance in this respect is, only, that as a conventional rule, by which to adjust claims of territory on this continent among themselves, the right of discovery, when followed up in a reasonable time by actual occupation, is generally received and admitted, with more or less flexibility of application to given cases, by the civilized nations of Europe, and is incorporated into the municipal, as well as the diplomatic, law of the United States.

And considering, therefore, that on this, and the various other grounds adduced, our title to the Oregon Territory is a good one, sufficiently so, as my colleague (Mr. ADAMS) observes, to be justly maintained, if necessary, by force, I proceed to state the facts and considerations which seem to me to demand that the present ambiguous condition of things in relation to the Territory should be ended, and our sovereignty therein reaffirmed and established. Having done which, I shall confidently hope for the aid and support of my colleague in the defence of the rights and interest of the United States.

Throughout the vast interior regions of North America, to the West and Northwest, with its noble rivers, continuous lakes, extensive prairies, and lofty mountain ranges, the chief object of commercial pursuit, it is familiarly known to us all, is the fur of the wild animals with which the country abounds; constituting almost the sole marketable wealth of the numerous tribes of Indians scattered over those parts of the continent. While the French held Canada, down to 1763, the trade with the Indians, and the collection of peltries, in the immense countries beyond the great lakes, was carried on partly by the French Canadians themselves, and partly by their northern neighbors, the English Hudson's Bay Company; all which invaluable trade, on the acquisition of Canada, fell into the hands of Great Britain. The Hudson's Bay Company was not long without a competitor in the Northwest Company of Montreal, formed in 1787. Their competition of trade induced deadly feuds, fatal to their own peace and prosperity, while they distracted and corrupted the Indians. A new turn was given to the course of events by the travels of Sir Alexander MacKenzie, and the effects of his counsels after his return to England. A brief extract from his book, published in 1801, will explain this:

"Experience has proved that this trade, from its very nature, cannot be carried on by individuals. A very large capital, or credit, or indeed both, is necessary; and, consequently, an association of men of wealth to direct, with men of enterprise to act, in one common interest, must be formed on such principles as that, in due time, the latter may succeed the former, in continual and progressive succession. The junction of such a commercial association with the Hudson's Bay Company is the important measure which I would propose; and the trade might be carried on with a very superior degree of advantage, both public and private, under the privilege of their charter. By enjoying the privilege of the company's charter, though but for a limited period, there are adventurers who would be willing, as they are able, to engage in and carry on the proposed commercial undertaking, as well as to give the most complete and satisfactory security to Government for the fulfilment of its contract with the Company. It would, at the same time, be equally necessary to add a similar privilege of trade on the Columbia river, and its tributary waters."

"By the waters that discharge themselves into Hudson's bay, at Fort Nelson, it is proposed to carry on the trade to their source at the head of the Saskatchewan river, which rises in the Rocky Mountains, not eight degrees of longitude from the Pacific ocean. The Columbia flows also from the same mountains, and discharges itself in the Pacific, in latitude 46 degrees 20 min. Both of them are capable of receiving ships at their mouths, and are navigable throughout for boats."