

CORRESPONDENCE

RELATING TO THE

NORTH AMERICAN BOUNDARY.

No. 1.

Viscount Palmerston to Mr. Fox.

Extract,

Foreign Office, June 3, 1840.

I SEND you herewith, three copies of the Report and Map, presented to Her Majesty's Government by Colonel Mudge and Mr. Featherstonhaugh, the Commissioners who were employed last year to survey the disputed Territory.

You will immediately transmit to Mr. Forsyth two copies of the report and of the Map, saying, that it is only within the last few days that these documents have been in the hands of Her Majesty's Government. That it will of course be the duty of Her Majesty's Government to lay this Report before Parliament; but that Her Majesty's Government wish, as a mark of courtesy and respect towards the Government of the United States, that a document, bearing upon a question of much interest and importance to the two countries, should, in the first place, be communicated to the President. You will further state that the British Government continues to feel an unabated desire to bring the long pending questions about the Boundary between the United States and the British Possessions in North America, to a final and satisfactory settlement.

It is obvious that these questions must be beset with various and considerable inherent difficulties, or they would not have remained open ever since the year 1783, notwithstanding the many and earnest endeavours made by both Governments to bring them to an adjustment.

But Her Majesty's Government do not abandon the hope, that the sincere desire which is felt by both Parties to arrive at an amicable arrangement, will at length be crowned with success.

The best clue to guide the two Governments in their future proceedings may perhaps be derived from an examination of the causes of past failure; and the most prominent among these causes has certainly been a want of correct information as to the topographical features and physical character of the district in dispute. This want of adequate information may be traced as one of the difficulties which embarrassed the Netherland Government in its endeavours to decide the points submitted to it in 1830.

It has been felt by the British Government, by the United States Government, and even by the Government of the contiguous State of Maine.

The British Government and the Government of the United States agreed therefore two years ago, that a survey of the disputed Territory, by a joint Commission, would be the measure best calculated to elucidate and solve the questions at issue.

The President accordingly proposed such a Commission, and the British Government consented to it; and it was believed by the British Government, that the general principles upon which the Commission was to be guided in its local operations, had been settled by mutual agreement, arrived at by means of a correspondence which took place between the two Governments in 1837 and 1838.