

ble than any suggested by the Senator to our title to any portion of the territory of Oregon. I do not propose, Mr. President, to go into the question of title; all that has been said by me on that point has been extracted by the remarks which fell from the Senator from Maine, (Mr. EVANS,) who omitted to state or notice the insuperable difficulties which Great Britain meets at every step in showing her title to any portion of the territory, and contented himself with suggesting the difficulties in our way.

Before entering upon the discussion of the question of notice, I must be permitted to submit a few remarks upon the course of the President in this whole matter. It was said by the Senator from Kentucky, (Mr. CRITTENDEN,) and the Senator from Delaware, (Mr. CLAYTON,) that the President would be held to the strictest responsibility by them; that he would "encounter a responsibility weighty enough to sink a navy," if war should grow out of this matter. Now, with all the due submission to the opinions of older and abler Senators, I may be permitted to say, that if war shall come, the responsibility of it will not and cannot rest upon the President of the United States. In all that he has said in his message, in all the measures that he has recommended, he has done what his official position required at his hands. Not only did he do that which was right in itself, but in doing it, he followed in the footsteps of his illustrious predecessors. The language employed by him is almost identical with that used by one of the most eminent of all our Secretaries of State, (Mr. Clay.) In speaking both of our own title and of the British claims, Mr. Clay uses nearly the same words. That this may not rest upon mere assertion, I will compare a few of the passages in the documents of both. The President, in his message, tells us that this "*like all the previous negotiations, was based upon principles of 'compromise;'*" that when he came into office, though "*entertaining the settled conviction that the British pretensions of title could not be maintained to any portion of the Oregon territory upon any principle of public law recognised by nations;*" yet, in "*deference to what had been done by his predecessors, and especially in consideration that propositions of compromise had been thrice made by two preceding administrations to adjust the question on the parallel of 49°;*" and notwithstanding "*the extraordinary and wholly inadmissible demands of the British government,*" and the rejection of the proposition made in deference alone to what had been done by his predecessors, and "*the implied obligation which their acts seemed to impose,*" afford satisfactory evidence "*that no compromise which the United States ought to accept can be effected.*" With this conviction, the proposition of compromise which had been made and rejected, was by his "*direction subsequently withdrawn, and our title to the whole territory asserted, and, as is believed, maintained by irrefragable fact and arguments.*"

Here we have the declaration that the President feels himself bound by the acts of those who had gone before him, as the acts of