

opinions have been industriously emitted throughout this controversy, and, in some instances, by persons in authority, of a description so much calculated to mislead the public mind that I think it may be of service to offer a few observations.

I do not of course complain of the earnest adherence of partisans on either side to the general arguments upon which their case is supposed to rest ; but a position has been taken, and facts have been repeatedly stated, which I am sure the authorities of the Federal Government will be abundantly able to contradict, but which have evidently given rise to much public misapprehension. It is maintained that the whole of this controversy about the Boundary began in 1814 ; that up to that period the line as claimed by Maine was undisputed by Great Britain ; and that the claim was avowedly founded on motives of interest to obtain the means of conveniently connecting the British Provinces. I confine these remarks to the refuting this imputation, and I should indeed not have entered upon controversy, even on this, if it did not appear to me to involve, in some degree, a question of national sincerity and good faith.

The assertion is founded on the discussions which preceded the Treaty of Peace signed at Ghent, in 1814. It is perfectly true that a proposal was submitted by the British Plenipotentiaries for the revision of the Boundary Line on the north-eastern frontier, and that it was founded on the position that it was desired to secure the communication between the provinces, the precise delimitation of which was at that time imperfectly known. The American Plenipotentiaries in their first communication from Ghent to the Secretary of State, admit that the British Ministers expressly disclaimed any intention of acquiring an increase of territory, and that they proposed the revision for the purpose of preventing uncertainty and dispute—a purpose sufficiently justified by subsequent events. Again, in their note of the 4th of September, 1814, the British Ministers remind those from America, that the boundary had never been ascertained, and that the line claimed by America, which interrupted the communication between Halifax and Quebec, never could have been in the contemplation of the parties to the Treaty of Peace of 1783. The same view of the case will be found to pervade all the communications between the plenipotentiaries of the two countries at Ghent. There was no attempt to press any cession of territory on the ground of policy or expedience, but, although the precise geography of the country was then imperfectly known, it was notorious at the time that different opinions existed as to the boundary likely to result from continuing the North Line from the head of the River St. Croix. This appears to have been so clearly known and admitted by the American Plenipotentiaries, that they, in submitting to the conference the project of a treaty, offer a preamble to their 4th Article in these words :—

“Whereas, neither that part of the highlands lying due north from the source of the River St. Croix, and designated in the former Treaty of Peace between the two Powers, as the north-west angle of Nova Scotiæ, nor the north-westernmost head of the Connecticut River has yet been ascertained, &c.”

It should here be observed that these are the words proposed, not by the British but by the American negotiators, and that they were finally adopted by both in the 5th Article of the Treaty.

To close my observations upon what passed on this subject at Ghent I would draw your attention to the letter of Mr. Gallatin, one of the American Plenipotentiaries, to Mr. Secretary Monroe, of the 25th December, 1814. He offers the following conjecture as to what might probably be the arguments of Great Britain, against the line set up by America : “They hope that the river which empties into the Bay des Chaleurs, in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, has its source so far west as to intervene between the head waters of the River St. Johns, and those of the streams emptying into the River St. Lawrence ; so that the line north from the source of the River St. Croix will first strike the heights of land which divide the waters emptying into the Atlantic Ocean (River St. Johns), from those emptying into the Gulf of St. Lawrence (River des Chaleurs), and afterwards the heights of land which divide the waters emptying into the Gulf of St.