

How can we bring the controversy to an end without a sacrifice? It is to aid in solving this problem that I have recited the history of the controversy with reference to Oregon and the San Juan island imbroglio. But the recital is not complete. It remains to be told how Lord Aberdeen was brought to make a proposal to our government in which he abandoned the British contention for the Columbia river boundary. In the presidential campaign of 1844 the Democratic party declared itself in favor of holding all of Oregon to the line fifty-four-forty or fight, and on the faith of that pledge the Northern states gave enough votes to James K. Polk to defeat Henry Clay. The congress elected at the same time, in fulfillment of the pledge, passed a resolution directing the president to give the notice required to terminate the agreement for joint occupancy. The president accordingly gave the notice and withdrew our offer to compromise on the forty-ninth parallel. On the 22d day of May, 1846, Lord Aberdeen acknowledged receipt of the notice in London, and on the 15th of June the treaty was consummated in Washington. As this was before the existence of the Atlantic cable, you see, results came swiftly when the Americans showed a disposition to be firm in maintaining their rights. There could have been no trouble over San Juan island if there had been no such temporizing policy as appeared when President Pierce instructed Gov. Stevens to restrain the county officers from collecting taxes and enforcing laws on that island. From the history of the past we are taught the lesson that so long as diplomatic discussion can be kept up, and while the United States can be induced to assent to the joint occupancy of her own territory, these controversies cannot be brought to a close. We must make a compromise and a sacrifice, or else, by submitting to arbitration, invite some outsider to give a share of the territory and the commercial advantages, which are rightfully ours, to the Canadians, or else we must do what, under the circumstances, is the right thing to do; that is, to end the discussion by withdrawing all propositions which our government has submitted and rejecting all which have been made to us, and retain the whole of Alaska and its waters, which are now in our possession, and say no more about it. Our right is perfect; we are in possession; it would be foolish and wrong to sacrifice or submit to arbitration the birthright of American citizens who now inhabit the cities on Lynn canal. Three years ago I heard the lord chief justice of England, Lord Russell of Killowen, in an address before the American Bar Association on