

"ART. 1. 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 from the date of the signature of the present convention, to the vessels, citizens, and subjects of the two powers: it being well understood that this agreement is not to be construed to the prejudice of any claim which either of the two high contracting parties may have to any part of the said country, nor shall it be taken to affect the claims of any other power or State to any part of the said country: the only object of the high contracting parties, in that respect, being to prevent disputes and differences among themselves."

*Convention between the United States and Great Britain, signed at London, August 6, 1827.*

"ART. 1. All the provisions of the third article of the convention concluded between the United States of America and his Majesty the King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, on the 20th of October, 1818, shall be, and they are hereby, further indefinitely extended and continued in force, in the same manner as if all the provisions of the said article were herein specifically recited.

"ART. 2. It shall be competent, however, to either of the contracting parties, in case either should think fit, at any time after the 20th October, 1828, on giving due notice of twelve months to the other contracting party, to annul and abrogate this convention; and it shall, in such case, be accordingly entirely annulled and abrogated, after the expiration of the said term of notice.

"ART. 3. Nothing contained in this convention, or in the third article of the convention of the 20th October, 1818, hereby continued in force, shall be construed to impair, or in any manner affect, the claims which either of the contracting parties may have to any part of the country westward of the Stony or Rocky mountains."

If she had no right to it then, she certainly has none now. Yet she pretends to the sovereignty in Oregon. If (said Mr. Y.) I had doubts as to our title to Oregon, I would have gone to the correspondence of Mr. Calhoun with the British minister, which was marked by his usual ability, and was conclusive beyond a reasonable doubt. And not still fully convinced, (said Mr. Y.) I would have resorted to that of the able and distinguished Secretary of State, who has placed it beyond the possibility of doubt.

I venture to say that there is not one individual in a thousand, who has read that correspondence, that is not convinced by it. It is possible, that by blunders in negotiations in former propositions to compromise, this government may have give up a part of the territory.

But Mr. CALHOUN did not talk about stopping at 49. Nor has any gentleman who has spoken in this debate shown, or endeavored to show, that the 49th is the proper line. The offer of that parallel was intended, and made, merely in respect to former administrations, as is fully and fairly stated by Mr. Polk, as will be better understood by reference to the following extract from his message.

"When I came into office, I found this to be the state of the negotiation. 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 my 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 forty-nine degrees, and in two of them yielding to Great Britain the free navigation of the Columbia, and that the pending negotiation had been commenced on the basis of compromise, I deemed it to be my duty not abruptly to break it off. In consideration, too, that under the conventions of 1818 and 1827, the claims and subjects of the two powers held a joint occupancy of the country, I was induced to make another effort to settle this long pending controversy in the spirit of moderation which has given birth to the renewed discussion."

I ask why this line of 49 is proposed? Where is the claim or title that fixes that line as the true boundary? Or where is the plausible reason given by Great Britain for the Columbia as the proper and true boundary? There is none, sir, that I have heard offered, except that two preceding administrations had offered to compromise at 49, and that therefore we were in good faith bound to accept it now, if offered. To that I have only to remark, that if our title to the country was clear and indisputable, the government had no right or authority to cede it away; and as the proposition was rejected by England, and withdrawn by the President, we are neither honorably or equitably bound now to accept it if offered. Our title to Oregon is not weakened by the offer or rejection. I am sure the President will not renew the proposition; and if it should be made by Great Britain, I have confidence enough in the administration and the Senate to believe that the interests and honor of the country will be maintained.

If we claim by contiguity, or by Spanish title, there is no reason for settling at 49, or at the Columbia river, save on principle of compromise merely; there can be no other ground for selecting that line. I tell gentlemen now that they may settle this boundary, but they never will unless they give this notice; every thing depends upon it. Give the notice, and you will settle your boundary; neglect to give it, and you will be begging and supplicating Great Britain for years to come to do that which you have a right yourselves to do, without giving offence. We might as well meet the question now, and settle it at once; delay will only endanger the peace of the country.

Mr. Y. said, I now predict, if this notice is not given, which I believe to be a peaceful measure, and will result in an amicable adjustment of all our difficulties upon the subject, I tell this committee that the people at the next election will settle it for themselves; that they will come upon you like an avalanche, and demand the whole of Oregon up to 54° 40'. And they will not only extend your laws over the country, but they will take possession of it even at the hazard of a war; and if that policy is pursued, it needs no prophet to foretell that war is inevitable. Then, I say to the peace party in this House, and out of it, that to avoid a war you must abrogate this joint occupancy, and bring this matter to a close, before the country becomes irritated and angry. The country is already sufficiently excited on this question, and though they reluctantly acquiesced in the President's offer to compromise at 49°, they excused him, under the circumstances; but they now feel that you must not renew that offer.

I am willing to say the same thing to the President; I excuse him for making the offer, but he must not do it again, and shall not with my consent. I will not ask whether we can now get what we might have got before. I would demand our just rights, and then enforce them, peaceably if we could, forcibly if we must.

When once I am satisfied of my rights, I will insist upon having them; and if Great Britain should declare war in twenty-four hours, let her do it; rather than a sacrifice of interest or honor, let the war come. We have whipped her twice, and we can whip her again.

Mr. Y. said we were told that the question was one in which sectional feelings were brought to bear—that the West was pressing this matter, as if she alone was interested. Not so, sir; the West