

expression "Atlantic Ocean" in the treaty was an accidental error on the part of the American Commissioners, which rendered the meaning of the treaty so obscure that it became indispensably necessary to agree on a conventional boundary. I claim that those who take a contrary view should not shrink from a discussion of all the points which I have stated. It has been the invariable practice for Canadian writers to represent the British diplomatists as outmanœuvred, but it is nevertheless the fact that all the difficulty experienced in regard to the Maine boundary was caused by the use of the term "Atlantic Ocean" in the treaty of 1783 negotiated by the "astute Franklin, Adams and Jay." Again, the claim to San Juan was based on the language of the treaty which, instead of defining the boundary to be the channel between the Island of Vancouver and the territories of the United States, which clearly was the proper description, defined it to be the middle of the channel separating Vancouver Island from the continent, the United States negotiators being apparently unaware of the existence of the Islands in the channel, all of which, being south of the 49th parallel of latitude, were in American territory. I will merely observe, in conclusion, that the subject which I have brought before you is one of great historical interest, and that there can be no doubt whatever that Mr. Webster gave expression to the prevailing opinion in the United States when he stated to Lord Ashburton that: "few questions have ever arisen under the Government in regard to which a stronger or more general conviction was felt that this country was in the right, than this question of the north-eastern boundary." Under the circumstances, Sir Robert Peel's Government adopted the wisest policy it could have done in selecting Lord Ashburton to endeavour to settle the various disputes then unadjusted, and I shall only add that I am surprised that any one who has read, as I have done, the various letters and minutes of Lord Ashburton could write of him otherwise than with the most profound respect.