

question which would arise upon the treaty. He thought then, and he thought so still, that if the question were to be settled in that manner, great danger might arise from these public discussions, because it would be recollected that it took but nineteen of them to defeat any treaty; and if the discussion became extended, as was very likely, there was danger that nineteen senators might become so committed before the whole country in regard to the title, and differing from the Executive, why, then, was it not obvious that their consideration of the treaty would be seriously trammelled? On the other hand, he thought then, and thought still, that if discussed in executive session, no such difficulty could occur; no man would be then committed before the country. But open discussion was attended with the danger of so many men committing themselves on some parallel of latitude different from that presented in the treaty.

Mr. DIX then proceeded with his remarks, and said:

I beg the senator from Delaware to be assured that nothing would give me more pain than to mistake any senator on this floor; and I accept with great pleasure the explanation which he has made. I desire also to say, in justice to him, as well as to the senator from Ohio, that I did not use the term "peremptoriness" in referring to the manner in which they had insisted that the question of title ought not, in their opinion, to be discussed. I said they had taken the position in equally strong language.

I now resume the consideration of the important question on which I had the honor to address the Senate yesterday; and in doing so, I cannot withhold the expression of my sense of the kind indulgence which has been extended to me. I will endeavor to afford the Senate a substantial proof of that sense of obligation on my part, by bringing my remarks to a close in the briefest possible period of time.

The historical sketch which I was making when the Senate adjourned of the discoveries and establishments in Oregon yesterday, ended with the year 1792.

The discovery of Bulfinch's harbor and the Columbia river by Gray, and the explorations of Galiano, Valdes, and Vancouver, in the strait of Fuca, in that year, terminated the series of maritime discoveries in the disputed territory, which had commenced two centuries and a half before. From that time to the present, nothing has been done on the coast but to fill up the smaller details of the great outline completed by the labors of these navigators.

In the same year, (1792,) Mackenzie, leaving Fort Chippewyan, on the Athabasca lake, in the 58th parallel of latitude, and nearly midway between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, proceeded westward to the Rocky mountains, where he passed the winter. The next spring he resumed his journey, struck the Tacoutche Tasse, in the 54th parallel of latitude, (now Frazer's river,) and descended it some 250 miles. He then continued his course to the west, and reached the Pacific in north latitude 55° 20'—about a degree north of the island of Quadra and Vancouver. Frazer's river, which takes its rise near the 55th parallel of latitude, was for nineteen years supposed to be the northern branch of the Columbia; but in 1812 it was ascertained by Frazer to debouche in the strait of Fuca, at the 49th parallel of latitude. It waters the district of country immediately west and north of the valley drained by the upper branch of the Columbia. This district is a part of the great section of the northwest coast bounded on the east by the Rocky mountains, and on the west by the Pacific, of which the main chan-

nels of access had been laid open by previous discoveries.

In 1804, Captains Lewis and Clark set out on their expedition to Oregon; and in 1805, after incredible hardships and labors, they established themselves on the north side of the Columbia river, near its mouth, and subsequently on the south side, and passed the winter there. In the spring of 1806, they commenced their journey homeward, and reached the Mississippi in the fall of that year, having travelled over 9,000 miles. This expedition was fitted out under the direction of the government of the United States, and executed by officers in its service at the public expense. It was undertaken on the recommendation of the President, communicated in a message to Congress in 1803. One of its objects was to examine the country watered by the Columbia river, which had been discovered by a citizen of the United States; and it resulted in a survey—necessarily cursory—of the main southern branch of the river, of the principal stream to its mouth from the junction of the latter with it, and of a portion of Clarke's river, which empties into the northern branch between the 48th and 49th parallel of latitude. This was the first exploration of the Columbia made subsequently to 1792, when it was ascended by Gray, its discoverer, some twenty miles, and five months after by a detachment from Vancouver's party, under Broughton, about one hundred miles from its mouth.

It is also to be considered that the expedition of Lewis and Clarke was undertaken immediately after the cession of the territory of Louisiana to the United States by France—a territory admitted to include all the country drained by the Mississippi and its tributaries to their head waters. It was also the understanding at the time that it was separated from the British possessions in North America by the 49th parallel of latitude extended westward from the Lake of the Woods indefinitely. Mr. Monroe in a paper presented to Lord Harrowby in 1804, at London, stated that it had been so settled by commissaries appointed by France and England under the treaty of Utrecht; and the statement was not impugned or objected to. I am aware that a doubt exists whether such a line was agreed on; but after nearly a century and a half, it is questionable whether an arrangement which had been acquiesced in [Col. Bantox here added—and acted on] as having been made by the competent authority at the proper time, can be denied even though no authentic record of the meeting of the commissaries can be found.* Other persons were employed by the government to survey the southern portions of Louisiana, and these cotemporary expeditions must be regarded by the world as a public manifestation of the intention of the United States to assert all the rights she might justly claim by discovery or otherwise to the sovereignty of the country between the Mississippi and the Pacific ocean.

In 1806 Mr. Frazer, an agent of the Northwest Company, formed an establishment on Frazer's lake in the 54th parallel of latitude; and this was the first establishment ever made by British subjects west of the Rocky mountains.

In March, 1811, the Pacific Fur Company, of which John Jacob Astor of N. York was the principal, formed an establishment at Astoria, on the south bank of the Columbia river, about ten miles from its mouth, having first established themselves on the north

*See an elaborate examination of this question in Greenhow's Oregon, page 276.