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# MR. WEBSTER'S VINDICATION

OF THE

TREATY OF WASHINGTON OF 1842;

IN A SPEECH

DELIVERED IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES,

ON THE 6TH AND 7TH OF APRIL, 1846.

Mr. WEBSTER rose and said: It is altogether unexpected to me, Mr. President, to find it to be my duty, here, and at this time, to defend the treaty of Washington of 1842, and the correspondence accompanying the negotiation of that treaty. It is a past transaction. Four years have almost elapsed since the treaty received the sanction of the Senate, and became the law of the land. While before the Senate, it was discussed with much earnestness and very great ability. For its ratification, it received the votes of five-sixths of the whole Senate—a greater majority, I believe I may say, than was ever before found for any disputed treaty. From that day to this—although I had had a hand in the negotiation of the treaty, and felt it to be a transaction with which my own reputation was intimately connected, I have been willing to leave it to the judgment of the nation. There were, it is true, sir, some things of which I have not complained, and do not complain, but which, nevertheless, were subjects of regret. The papers accompanying the treaty were voluminous. Their publication was long delayed, waiting for the exchange of ratifications; and, when finally published, they were not distributed to any great extent, or in large numbers. The treaty, meantime, got before the public surreptitiously, and, with the documents, came out by piece-meal. We know that it is unhappily true, that away from the large commercial cities of the Atlantic coast, there are few of the public prints of the country which publish official papers on such an occasion at large. I might have felt a natural desire, that the treaty and the correspondence could have been known and read by every one of my fellow-citizens, from East to West, and from North to South. But it was impossible. Nevertheless, in returning to the Senate again, nothing was farther from my purpose than to renew the discussion of any of the topics discussed and settled at that time; and nothing farther from my expectation than to be called upon by any sense of duty to my own reputation, and to truth, to make, now, any observations upon the treaty, or the correspondence.

But it has so happened that, in the debate on the Oregon question, the treaty, and, I believe, every article of it, and the correspondence accompanying the negotiation of that treaty, and, I believe, every part of it,