

SPEECH
OF
MR. WILLIAM W. CAMPBELL,
OF NEW YORK,
ON THE OREGON QUESTION,

Delivered in the House of Representatives, U. S., January 27, 1846.

The House having resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole upon the state of the Union, and the following resolution, reported from the Committee on Foreign Affairs, being under consideration, to wit:

"Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the President of the United States forthwith cause notice to be given to the Government of Great Britain, that the convention between the United States and Great Britain, concerning the territory of Oregon, of the 6th of August, 1827, signed at London, shall be annulled and abrogated, twelve months after the expiration of the said term of notice, conformably to the second article of the said convention of the 6th of August, 1827."

Mr. INGERSOLL proposes to amend by erasing all after the word "shall," and insert the following:

"Shall be annulled and abrogated at the expiration of the term of twelve months from and after said notice shall be given, conformably to the 2d article of the said convention of the 6th of August, 1827."

Mr. W. W. CAMPBELL, of New York, obtained the floor and said—

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I approach the discussion of this subject with diffidence and under a deep sense of responsibility; with diffidence, because I have no experience as a parliamentary debater; under a sense of responsibility, because I represent on this floor probably the largest district in the Union—a district, numbering over one hundred and twenty thousand inhabitants—a district, rich in this world's goods, rich in intellectual wealth, and engaged in a commerce which is literally vexing every sea with its keels, and whitening every ocean with its canvass. I have said it is a district rich in this world's goods. Among my immediate constituents is that distinguished man who, more than half a century ago, came a poor and friendless boy to seek a home in this western world; who, by great energy and industry, attended with almost unparalleled success, has placed himself, as far as wealth is concerned, among the princes of the earth; the man who planted the first American settlement upon the banks of the Columbia—I mean John Jacob Astor. I have said the district is rich in intellectual wealth. Among the numerous men of distinction, of learning, of fame, is that other celebrated man who, more than half a century ago, came to make his abode with us, and who, under our fostering laws and free institutions, rose to great eminence as a legislator and statesman, who has filled many posts of honor and trust with great credit to himself and to the land of his adoption, and whose name is intimately connected with the early negotiations relative to the Oregon territory—I mean Albert Gallatin. Both these venerable men are now far down the vale of life; their heads are whitened with the frosts of more than eighty winters; and they have retired from the strifes and turmoils of active life; but they are looking with interest upon the scenes now enacting at this Capitol by the councils of the nation.