

Boundary negotiation, and to state that Her Majesty's Government were willing to transfer the negotiation to Washington should the United States' Government object to London.

Historical Note.

1843, 1844.

In October instructions were sent to Mr. Everett, the United States' Minister in London, to treat with Her Majesty's Government for the adjustment of the Boundary. In the meantime Mr. Pakenham had been appointed Her Majesty's Minister to the United States in succession to Mr. Fox. Before his appointment had been gazetted, Mr. Everett informed Lord Aberdeen orally that he had received powers to negotiate the Oregon question in London. Lord Aberdeen, however, stated to him that a new Minister had already been appointed by Her Majesty to negotiate at Washington.

In consequence of this arrangement the negotiations were removed to Washington, and Mr. Everett stated in a despatch to his Government* that he would use his best efforts to produce such an impression on Lord Aberdeen's mind as to the prominent points of the question as might have a favourable influence in the preparation of the instructions to be given to Mr. Pakenham.

In an interview with Lord Aberdeen, Mr. Everett urged that the boundary should be carried along the 49th parallel to the sea. Lord Aberdeen said that this proposal had been made in 1824 and 1826 and rejected, and that there was no reason for believing that this country, more than the United States, would then agree to terms which had been previously declined, and that consequently there must be concession on both sides, on which principle Lord Aberdeen expressed himself willing to act.

In December Mr. Pakenham was authorized to re-open negotiations at Washington on the Oregon question. He was directed to make substantially the same proposals for the settlement of the boundary as had been made by Great Britain in 1826.

He was authorized to add, should that proposition be found to be unacceptable, that Her Majesty's Government would be willing to convert into a free port any harbour, either on the mainland or on Vancouver's Island, south of the 49th parallel, which the United States' Government might desire.

Further, if he should think that the extension of the privilege would lead to the final adjustment of the question, he was authorized to declare that Her Majesty's Government would be willing to make all the ports within De Fuca's Inlet and south of the 49th parallel, free ports.

Should these proposals be rejected, he was then to propose that the whole question should be referred to the arbitration of a friendly Sovereign State.

In the event of the United States' Government refusing to agree to arbitration, he was then to propose that the Treaty of 1818-27 should be renewed for a further period of ten years.

In the event of negotiations being broken off, he was then to declare to the United States' Government that Her Majesty's Government still asserted and would maintain an equal right with the United States to the occupation of the whole of the territory in dispute, and that as Her Majesty's Government would carefully and scrupulously abstain and cause Her Majesty's subjects to abstain from any act which might be justly considered as an encroachment on the rights of the United States, so they expected that the Government of the United States would exhibit and enforce on their part an equal forbearance with respect to the rights of Great Britain, which rights, believing them to be just, Great Britain would be prepared to defend.

1844.

In February, 1844, Mr. Pakenham addressed a note to the United States' Secretary of State proposing a renewal of the negotiations, which proposal was favourably received by him.

On 22nd August, Mr. Pakenham received a notification from Mr. Calhoun, then the Secretary of State, that he was prepared to proceed with the negotiation.

At a conference on the 26th, Mr. Pakenham laid before Mr. Calhoun the proposal authorized by his instructions relative to a free port either on the mainland or on Vancouver's Island, south of the 49th parallel.

This proposal was declined by Mr. Calhoun. He afterwards presented a paper (dated September 3) stating his reasons. The paper began thus:—

"The Undersigned American Plenipotentiary declines the proposal of the British Plenipotentiary, on the ground that it would have the effect of restricting the possessions of the United States to limits far