

resort to arbitration is the most prudent, and perhaps the only feasible step which could be taken, and the best calculated to allay the existing effervescence of popular feeling, which might otherwise greatly embarrass the efforts of both governments to preserve a friendly understanding between the two countries.

The government of the United States will see in the proposal, which the undersigned is thus instructed to make, a proof of the confidence of the British government in the justice of their own claim. They will also see in it a proof of the readiness of the British government to incur the risk of a great sacrifice for the preservation of peace, and of their friendly relations with the United States. It is made in a spirit of moderation and fairness, of which the world will judge.

The British government confidently hope that the government of the United States will not reject a proposal made with such a friendly intention, and for a purpose so holy.

There is nothing in it, they are convinced, not perfectly compatible with the strictest regard for the honor and just interests of both parties, particularly when it is considered of what small value to either is the portion of territory which in reality forms the subject of controversy, compared with the importance of preserving a state of peace and good will between two such nations.

The undersigned takes advantage of this opportunity to renew to the Hon. James Buchanan the assurance of his high consideration.

R. PAKENHAM.

HON. JAMES BUCHANAN, &c., &c.

Mr. Buchanan to Mr. Pakenham.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
Washington, January 3, 1846.

The undersigned, Secretary of State of the United States, has the honor to acknowledge the receipt of the note of Mr. Pakenham, her Britannic majesty's envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary, dated the 27th ultimo, by which, under instructions from his government, he proposes to the government of the United States "the expediency of referring the whole question of an equitable division of that (the Oregon) territory to the arbitration of some friendly sovereign or State."

The undersigned has submitted this note to the President, who, after having bestowed upon it that respectful consideration so eminently due to any proposition emanating from the British government, has instructed him to give to it the following answer :

The British government do not propose to refer to arbitration the question of the title to the Oregon territory, claimed by the two powers, respectively. It is a proposition to refer to a friendly sovereign or State merely the partition or "equitable division" of that territory between the parties. It assumes the fact that the title of Great Britain to a portion of the territory is valid ; and thus takes for granted the very question in dispute. Under this proposition, the very terms of the submission would contain an express acknowledgment of the right of Great Britain to a portion of the territory, and would necessarily preclude the United States from claim-