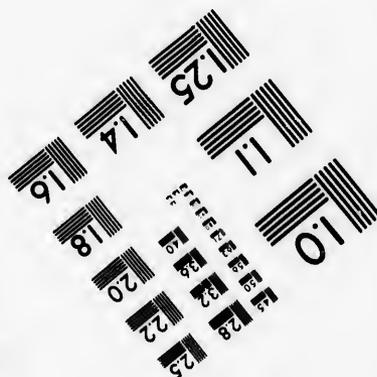
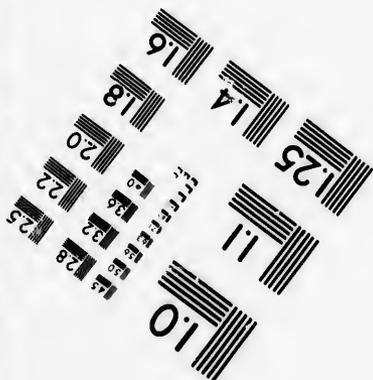
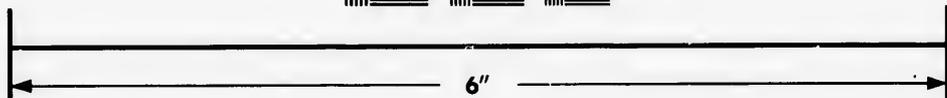
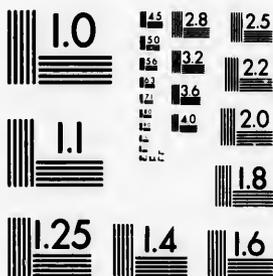


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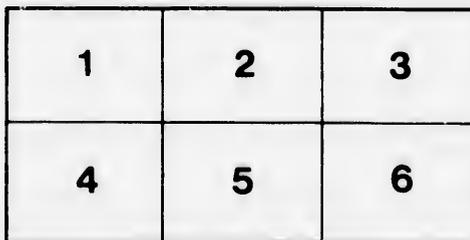
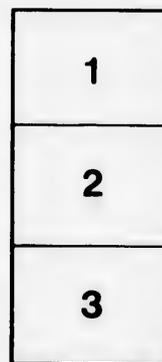
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SPEECH

OF

MR. TRUMAN SMITH, OF CONN.

ON

THE OREGON QUESTION.

Delivered in the House of Representatives, U. S., February 7th, 1846.

WASHINGTON:

J. & G. S. GIDEON, PRINTERS.

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SPEECH.

The House being in Committee of the Whole, and having under consideration the joint resolution reported by the Committee on Foreign Affairs, directing the President to give notice to Great Britain that the United States will terminate the convention between the two Governments, providing for the joint occupation of the Oregon territory, at the expiration of twelve months—

Mr. TRUMAN SMITH, of Connecticut, obtained the floor, and said—

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I do not know that it will be in my power to aid essentially the deliberations of the committee on this important subject. But having, unexpectedly to myself, been constituted a member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, having turned my attention most anxiously to the consideration of the present critical state of our relations with Great Britain, arising from the Oregon controversy, and particularly to the question of notice involved in the resolution on your table, I ask the indulgence of the committee while I give an exposition of the reasons and motives which will control my action on the present occasion. I am the more desirous to declare my sentiments, because, from the outset of the session, I have indulged lively apprehensions that this unfortunate controversy would involve the two countries in a collision at no distant day. I did not doubt but that the authorities on both sides of the Atlantic entertained, in a general form, purposes of a pacific adjustment, but I feared that one or both of them would, by the current of events, be swept into a position from which retreat would be so difficult as to render a conflict certain. Unless wiser and better counsels shall prevail at both ends of the avenue, than those which the last few weeks have made manifest, the Government of the United States will, in my judgment, within a brief space, find itself in that category.

The territory of Oregon has been in dispute between the two Governments ever since 1818. Not being able to adjust it then, they, by the convention of that year, in effect, agreed to adjourn it over for the period of ten years, providing, in substance, that the country of Oregon, with its harbors, bays, and creeks, and the navigation of all rivers within the same, should be open for the period named, to the vessels, subjects, and citizens of the two powers, reserving the rights of any other state or power to the territory, and declaring that their sole object was to prevent disputes and differences among themselves.

In 1827 it was deemed expedient to extend the convention of 1818 indefinitely, with the proviso that either party might abrogate the convention at any time after the 20th of Oct., 1828, on giving twelve months' notice.

Under these conventions the citizens of both countries acquired the right of access to the waters of Oregon—the right of commerce with the aborigines of the country, and the right of entering on the territory, and of making settlements at pleasure.

It is said that the conventions of 1818, and 1827, should not be denominated treaties of joint occupation; but such is the character which both Governments have given to them for many years, it is now too late to recede;

and, besides, I do not see how a mere change of phraseology can vary the rights of Great Britain or the United States.

I suppose that both parties have enjoyed the rights of commercial intercourse over the whole territory—American citizens in some degree—British subjects much more; but in the matter of settlements the parties have so exercised their rights, that Great Britain may now be said to be substantially in possession of all the territory north of the Columbia river, and we of all south of the same river.

I am of the opinion that British subjects are in the enjoyment of more of the territory in dispute than their Government, on a fair consideration of its pretensions, can justly claim; and I will uphold the existing Administration in all suitable efforts to vindicate the American claim, and to reduce the possessions of Great Britain to their proper limits.

No member of this committee, nor citizen of the country, can be more deeply impressed than I am with the necessity of bringing this controversy to a speedy close. The irritation existing, both here and in Great Britain, is getting to be excessive. It will assume a more and more aggravated form. And the affair will result in the most disastrous consequences, unless it is promptly adjusted.

It is now proposed to give the notice provided for by the convention of 1827, and the resolution on your table declares, that the President should forthwith take the proper steps to abrogate the treaty at the expiration of twelve months. The President, in his message, at the opening of the present session of Congress, says, in substance, that the notice ought now to be given, and adds: "I recommend that provision be made by law for giving it accordingly, and terminating, in this manner, the convention of the 6th of August, 1827."

I have considerably modified my opinions on the subject of notice, during the progress of this discussion. In the first instance my impression was, I ought not to vote for it at all; but more mature reflection has brought me to the conclusion, that it is expedient, if not indispensable, to abrogate the convention of 1827, and that I ought to vote for a qualified notice, or in a modified form. But I cannot vote for the proposition on your table to confer absolute power on the Executive, nor for notice in the form of any one of the numerous modifications which have been proposed, unless that offered by the honorable gentleman from Alabama, (Mr. DARGIN,) be an exception. I think favorably of that proposition. The honorable member proposes to commence at the Pacific, and run the line through the middle of the straits separating Vancouver's Island from the main land, (called the Straits of Fuca,) and to proceed from thence to a point on the coast, south of the mouth of Frazer's river, at the parallel of 49°, and from thence in that parallel to the Rocky Mountains, giving to the United States all south and to Great Britain all north, of that parallel. This proposition concedes to Great Britain the lower end of Vancouver's Island, as an equivalent for the navigation of the Columbia river, and would make the basis of adjustment substantially what has been repeatedly offered by our Government. I desire to thank the honorable member, not only for his able speech, but for his truly statesmanlike proposition.* Conceived in a spirit of moderation and equity—proffering to Great Britain the olive-branch, and securing to the Republic all that is important or essential in the territory of Oregon, w

*One of the resolutions submitted by Mr. Dargin was at one time adopted by the Committee of the Whole, by a vote of 101 to 98. It was afterwards set aside. If it had ultimately received the sanction of the Committee and of the House, I should have considered it my duty to vote for the notice.

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should acquire, by such an arrangement, nearly all the country drained by the waters of the Columbia river, and in Port Discovery, Admiralty Inlet, Hood's Canal, and Puget's Sound, a series of harbors more magnificent than any other in the western world. I do not insist, however, that we should advert to any precise line, but I do contend, that in authorizing or recommending the notice, we should, in some emphatic form, make known to the President the wish of Congress that the controversy should be adjusted on the basis of a just and equitable compromise, and then, in my opinion, there would be an end of the matter in one month. The reasons why I cannot vote for the power of notice, unless it be qualified, I must postpone to a subsequent part of my argument.

And here, Mr. Chairman, permit me to say, that, in my action on this subject, I intend to be governed by no other considerations than such as appertain to the subject itself. I have been apprehensive that this question of Oregon might become the mere football of party. I have heard it intimated that there is a good deal of *political chequer-playing* going on in regard to this matter, and that men of high aspirations are making a stalking-horse of the subject to ride into the Presidency. I will refrain from expressing the feelings which such a suggestion is adapted to awaken in every honest mind, and content myself with the expression of a hope that there is yet enough of rectitude and of patriotism left in our public councils to checkmate such detestable purposes, if any such exist. Nor can I consent that the dispute about Oregon shall be mixed up with the question of Texas. If any one desires to know my opinion on the subject of Texas annexation, I refer them to the sentiments of my State, not only as made known by the exercise of the elective franchise, but as often declared to Congress by resolutions of our general assembly, conceived in the strongest terms of opposition and repugnance; one set of which was submitted by my colleague (Mr. ROCKWELL) at the present session; or, if I ought to be more explicit, I am willing to declare that I regard the measure as a palpable violation of the Constitution of the United States, more so than any other which has occurred since the organization of the Government in 1789, and is, besides, highly objectionable on other grounds. But it is said that it would be right and just to involve the country in war with Great Britain, to the end that peculiar calamities may be inflicted on the South for what we at the North call "the Texas iniquity." But I will not recognise any such motive of action. I am not prepared to say that the Southern States are much, if any, more responsible for this enormous wrong than the free States. I cannot forget that, while the free States gave a majority of no less than forty-five electoral votes in favor of Polk and Texas, the slaveholding States gave a majority of only twenty votes. Besides, if fire, desolation, and the sword, are to be carried into the South, I ask, what is to be done with those States which opposed Texas annexation? What is to be done with Delaware, Maryland, North Carolina, ever glorious Kentucky, and patriotic and noble-minded Tennessee? What is to be done with our gallant friends in Georgia and Louisiana, who, under circumstances of great difficulty, stood by the Constitution, and were at last overcome only by frauds, more stupendous than were ever before committed in this or any other country? The truth is, that this project of Texas annexation was started by the late President Tyler, in furtherance of his ridiculous pretensions to the Presidency, (by re-election,) an idea which never obtained a lodgement any where out of the Presidential mansion. The demagogues all over the country immediately seized hold of the scheme, and, after practising awhile upon the credulity and shallowness of its author, wielded

it with success in promoting the election of President Polk. If the *slave-holding predilections* of the South are responsible, in some degree, for this wrong, I hold that the *spoils-grasping propensities* of the North are equally so; and therefore I will never consent to have the United States involved in war under the idea of inflicting disasters on the former section of the country. If any man is to be invested with the powers of retribution, in reference to this subject, he can hardly confine his labors to the South—he will doubtless take the circuit of the whole Union, scattering every where, to the right and left, “fire-brands, arrows, and death;” and perhaps he may think that equal and exact justice requires him to reserve a few bolts for a certain party at the North, who, from a mistaken sense of duty, threw away, at the late Presidential election, their votes on a third candidate, and thus contributed effectually to extend “*the area of freedom*” in the southwest.

But it is said we ought to lay our hands on the whole of Oregon, to be converted into free States, to countervail the gain to the slave States by the acquisition of Texas. What is meant by this? Is it that we should claim the whole of Oregon, independent of our right to the whole? If the entire territory is truly ours, then we must stand up for our rights, irrespective of any question about Texas; but if we have not a just claim to the whole, the American people will hardly undertake a robbery of territory in one quarter to match a robbery committed in another, and that, too, on mere calculations of domestic advantage. Besides, the party on whom the operation is to be performed is a burly old gentleman of the name of BULL, who is likely to make a much stouter resistance than the poor MEXICAN DON, whom you may victimize at any time with impunity. I insist, therefore, this is a question by itself—that it is a broad national question, to be taken up and considered calmly and dispassionately, with a view to a just appreciation of the rights of the republic, and to assert those rights with all the firmness which a high sense of patriotic duty must inspire.

And here, Mr. Chairman, I will advert for a moment to what I understand to be the position of those with whom I usually co-operate in this matter in regard to the pending controversy. We wish it to be distinctly understood, that we shall throw no factious opposition in the way of the Administration; we are disposed to co-operate with the Executive in efforts to assert our rights, and to resist the policy of Great Britain, promptly and effectively, so far as it is aggressive. We are disposed to do entire justice to the President and Cabinet, and appreciate highly the zeal and ability displayed by a late, and the present, Secretary of State, in the correspondence laid before Congress. But, if the Administration shall wantonly or unnecessarily involve us in a war with Great Britain, we believe the American people will hold them to high responsibilities. However imprudent the Executive may be, we intend to rally in support of the country—and, whether in public or private life, will do all in our power to repel aggression, and vindicate the honor of our flag. But we intend to hold the Administration to the performance of three rigid conditions—first, that they prosecute the war with vigor; secondly, with ability; and thirdly, with success; we shall allow them no margin—will not abate one hair—and if they fail, we shall endeavor to place the Government in the hands of better and more competent men, who will concentrate upon the contest all the energies of the American people, and conquer for the Republic, at an early day, a glorious peace.

But, sir, I desire to approach a little nearer to the great question before us. In the first place, in connexion with the ground taken by the Administration, I shall recur to the late correspondence between the two Govern-

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ments, upon some of the features of which it is important to fix the attention of the country. It is now said, that we not only have the best title to the whole of Oregon, but that it is expedient to push our claim to that extremity. But this is a new view of the subject, to which our Government has arrived since the 4th of March, 1845—whether in the light of the celebrated Baltimore resolution, declaring "our title to the whole of the territory of Oregon to be clear and unquestionable," I leave others to judge. But it will be observed, that the negotiations have ever been conducted between the two Governments on the basis of compromise, neither party indicating, until recently, a wish to exclude the other wholly from the territory. Such was the fact in the negotiations preliminary to the convention of the 18th of October, 1818. The same basis was acted on in the correspondence intermediate and preliminary to the convention of the 6th of August, 1827. The negotiations were resumed and prosecuted under the auspices of Mr. Calhoun upon that idea. This distinctly appears from the protocol of the 23d of August, 1844, signed by Mr. Calhoun and Mr. Pakenham, in which they recognised the authority of each "to treat of the respective claims of the two Governments to the Oregon territory, with a view to establish a permanent boundary between the two countries westward of the Rocky mountains, to the Pacific ocean," the plenipotentiaries interchanging assurances of a desire on both sides "to approach the question with an earnest desire, and in the spirit of compromise, to effect an adjustment consistent with the honor and just interests of either party." Thus the parties substantially admitted that each had a better claim to some part of the territory, and that there should be an equitable division between them. We had three times previously, in attempting to adjust the controversy, that is to say, in 1818, 1824, and 1826, offered to Great Britain to divide the territory by the parallel of 49°, and in 1818 and 1826, we offered, in addition, the navigation of the Columbia river south of that parallel. In July, 1821, Great Britain offered to the United States, to divide the territory by extending the parallel of 49° to the northeasternmost branch of the Columbia river, and from thence down the middle of that river to the Pacific ocean. In addition to that, in December, 1826, she offered us a detached territory of near one hundred miles square, situated on the Straits of Fuca, in which is a valuable harbor, called Port Discovery. Under these circumstances the negotiation was opened by Mr. Calhoun and Mr. Pakenham, on the 23d of August, 1844, which, so far as the former gentleman is concerned, terminated with his retirement from the State Department on the organization of the present Administration in March last. While the subject was in the hands of Mr. C. the British plenipotentiary made two propositions for an adjustment of the dispute:

1. The British minister, on the 26th of August, 1844, repropoed the basis of 1826; that is to say, the line of 49° and the Columbia river, with the same detached territory; and, in addition, offered to make free to the United States any port or ports which the American Government might desire, either on the main land or Vancouver's island, south of latitude 49°. This seems to have been promptly rejected by our Government.

2. On the 15th of January last, the British Government offered to the United States to refer the differences between them to arbitration, suggesting that, under the circumstances, no more fair or honorable mode of settling the question could be adopted.

This proposition Mr. C. waived, but did not positively decline, expressing the hope that the controversy might be settled by the negotiations then pending between the two countries.

During the administration of the State Department by Mr. C., no direct proposition was made on our part for an adjustment of the question; but Mr. C., it is believed, in the discussion, satisfactorily proved that we were entitled to all that part of the territory which is drained by the waters of the Columbia river, and thus indicated an opinion that the country should be divided by the parallel of 49.

Under these circumstances, the negotiation fell into the hands of Mr. Buchanan, who, on the 12th of July last, addressed to the British minister his first letter, and offered a division on the parallel of 49°, withdrawing the navigation of the Columbia river, comprised in our last offer, to wit, that of 1826.

This was promptly rejected by the British minister, he using the tart expression that he "trusts the American plenipotentiary will be prepared to offer some further proposal for the settlement of the Oregon question, more consistent with fairness and equity, and with the reasonable expectations of the British Government."

Mr. Buchanan then withdraws the proposition of the 49th parallel, (an act that would seem to be superfluous, as the British minister had already rejected it,) totally repudiates the basis of compromise, and goes peremptorily for the whole territory of Oregon.*

In this state of things, the subject is submitted for the consideration of Congress, and there are three features which mark the case which I think should attract the attention of the American people.

1. While Great Britain, in the late negotiation, has made a more favorable offer to us than she ever did before, we have made to her one less favorable than we did before. She has added to her offer of the 1st of December, 1826, free ports either on Vancouver's island or the main land below the parallel of 49°; while we have withdrawn the navigation of the Columbia river. It is this circumstance which attracted the attention of the honorable member from New York, (Mr. KING,) early in the session, who, in remarking on this subject, said he believed that the *Administration knew that this offer would be rejected when they made it*; and afterwards, explaining, he added, all he meant was, that *any man of common sense must have known that the British Government would reject it*. The first category made the Administration knaves, the second fools; but I shall not be so indecorous as to call them either the one or the other. But why did the gentleman say, that any man of common sense must have anticipated a rejection? It was simply because, while Great Britain was advancing towards us, we were retreating from her—the title being precisely the same now that it was in 1826. It is difficult to see why the Administration, if disposed to withdraw the navigation of the Columbia, did not offer an equivalent to the British Government. How can the world think that we are seeking a solution of this question in the spirit of peace, if we persist in such conduct?

2. It is an extraordinary fact, that the offer made by Mr. Buchanan (in his letter of the 12th of July last) was neither submitted to the British Government as an *ultimatum*, nor was it returned as such; or, in other words,

*Immediately after my remarks were made in committee, the President communicated a recent correspondence between the two Governments, from which it appears that Great Britain has offered again to submit the matter in dispute either to a neutral power, or to competent citizens of such power, or to a commission of eminent citizens of the two countries, and that our Government have rejected arbitration in any and every form. If our title to the whole of Oregon is so very clear, it is strange that the question cannot be safely confided to such a man as Chief Justice Taney and some high judicial functionary of Great Britain? Is there not some danger, under such circumstances, that the world will think that we are not very honest or sincere in our pretensions.

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Mr. B. did not give the British plenipotentiary to understand that the 49th parallel was the only proposition he could or would make, or the only terms on which we could adjust the controversy. On the contrary, the British minister was distinctly told, that "the President had determined to pursue the negotiation to its conclusion upon the principle of compromise in which it commenced." No doubt Mr. Pakenham supposed the proposition of Mr. B. was a mere bid; and as it was a retreating bid, he unfortunately rejected it. At this the President and his Secretary seem to have taken fire. They instantly determined to break up the negotiation. They snatched back the offer they had made, and then pushed the American claim up to 54° 40'. If the Administration were resolved not to concede to Great Britain any more favorable terms than the parallel of 49°, why did they not say so explicitly? Why did they not return that parallel as an ultimatum? If this had been done, Mr. Pakenham would have been obliged to send the proposition to his Government, and possibly the controversy might have been ere this adjusted.

3. But there is another circumstance, equally remarkable, to which I wish to direct the particular attention of the committee, which consists in the fact that the argument, best adapted to convince the British minister of the justice of our proposition, was withheld till after he had rejected it. The President says, that he caused the offer to compromise on the 49th°, which had been rejected, to be subsequently withdrawn, and "our title to the whole Oregon territory to be asserted; and, as is believed, maintained by irrefragable facts and arguments." Why were not these irrefragable facts and arguments put forward in the first instance? Surely an argument adapted to prove that our title to the whole territory is "clear and unquestionable" would operate powerfully to convince the British Government that they ought to accept of 49°. Every one who looks over the papers cannot fail to see that our case is presented in Mr. Buchanan's last letter. Whatever title we have to the whole territory is contained in statement J. B. 2, drawn up with great vigor and distinguished ability. The reservation of "the irrefragable facts and arguments" till after the rejection of our offer, is to me incomprehensible. Surely it could not have been the purpose of the Administration, by crooked and disingenuous diplomacy, to break off the negotiation, and thus involve the two countries in imminent danger of war. I cannot suspect gentlemen, for whom personally I cherish sentiments of high respect, of so base a purpose; and yet it is difficult to see how they could have adopted a course better adapted to that end than the one in fact pursued.

And this would seem to me to be the proper place to inquire into the cause of all these difficulties. How comes it about that our relations with Great Britain were, immediately after the accession of the present Administration to office and power, involved in so much embarrassment? Why has there gone forth, throughout the country, so much agitation and alarm; and why have our public councils, and the whole American people, been so entirely engrossed, for many weeks, in anticipating all the revolting scenes of a direful war. The germ of all the evils, present and anticipated, date from the 30th day of May, A. D. 1844, and had its origin in a political assemblage which was then in session in the city of Baltimore, and engaged in nominating, for one of the great parties of the Union, a candidate for the Presidency. This assemblage usurped jurisdiction over the question of Oregon—they entered upon a new experiment in diplomacy, and undertook to make political capital out of a question which had been pending over a quarter of a century, which had occupied the attention of several Administrations, and engrossed a large share of the best talents of the coun-

try. This presumptuous body, after passing through scenes of turbulence and violence, such as was never before witnessed in the country, plunged headlong into the midst of this dispute, and undertook, by an inflammatory appeal, to establish a title in our people to the whole of Oregon. What a humiliating spectacle! and how adapted to make our country and its institutions the laughing-stock and derision of the world! We had long seen the malignancy of party pervading all branches of our domestic relations, debauching public and private morals, and overthrowing nearly all the great interests of the country. At last this fell spirit has invaded the sanctuary of our foreign relations, and upon its footsteps will come, ere long, should any miracle enable us to escape now, ruthless war, with our coast ravaged, our commerce swept, our cities burnt, myriads of treasure squandered, and oceans of blood poured forth. Such are the legitimate fruits of permitting party animosity to dabble in foreign affairs. In the mean time, the Baltimore resolution has fulfilled its mission, and J. K. Polk, in accordance with the forms of the Constitution, is proclaimed duly elected President of the United States. He leaves his abode in the State of Tennessee, where he had been in retirement several years, to take his place at the head of the Government. We soon find him on the eastern front of our capital to assume fearful responsibilities. He was about to occupy a station which had been filled by a Washington. One would suppose he would feel above responding to the sentiments of a caucus. If he had no respect for his immediate predecessor, he must at least be disposed to treat the distinguished statesman, who had just retired from the Department of State, with ordinary decency—he must have some regard for the cause of peace, identified as it is with the best interests of the country; but not so; political capital was to be made, and therefore he throws a fire-brand by re-echoing the Baltimore sentiment, that “our title to the whole of Oregon is clear and unquestionable;” and then to make the embroilment the more certain, he added a menace to Great Britain, that it would be his duty to maintain, by *all constitutional means*, the right of the United States to the territory in dispute. This was understood on the other side of the Atlantic to be a menace; it was palpably so. It will be observed that at the time Mr. P. made this summary disposition of the Oregon question, he had not been duly constituted President of the United States, he had not taken the oath of office. However well informed the President may have been at that time about Oregon generally, it is certain he was not familiar with the negotiations on the subject; and, at any rate, he could not have understood the existing state of such negotiations. In his message he uses language which sufficiently indicates that such was the fact. In that document he says, in effect, “my attention was early directed to the subject;” and then, after giving the details, he adds, “when I came into office, I found this to be the state of the negotiation.” He finally informs Congress that he had offered to divide the territory on the parallel of 49°, “in deference to what had been done by his predecessors.” Why did he not feel that deference at the time he delivered his inaugural address? Will it be said he did not then know what they had done? If so, how came he to commit himself so rashly on a subject of so much delicacy? Why act in the dark? Why not wait till he was surrounded by his cabinet, and had had time to look at the subject in all its bearings?

But the words “clear and unquestionable” had gone out from Baltimore, and he must respond to them, he must assume a gallant bearing before the American people, and therefore the pregaant allusion to “all the constitutional means” with which he was to be invested, to be used in asserting our right to the whole of Oregon. This, notwithstanding my respect for the President, I deem the height of imprudence; it was pre-eminently adapted

ences of turbulence to embroil us with Great Britain, and is believed to be the principal source
 of country, plunged of existing difficulties. The President soon found that treating with a great
 an inflammatory power like that of Great Britain was an affair quite unlike responding to the
 Oregon. What a sentiments of a party caucus, or making appeals with a view to popular
 country and its insti impression. He found it would not quite do to come up to the scratch of
 We had long seen 54° 40'. He began to feel all at once a *profound deference* for his pre-
 domestic relations, decessors, and incontinently offers to surrender to the British Government
 nearly all the great nearly one half of the territory. If we really own the whole territory, how
 and the sanctuary of came the President to offer to give away one half of it? How could mere
 long, should any "deference for predecessors" impose an obligation to make such a sacrifice?
 coast ravaged, Or was it his object to curry favor with the British aristocracy? No doubt
 squandered, and they would be hugely delighted with a democratic President, who should
 suits of permitting make them a present of such a vast territory, especially when our title is
 in time, the Balti "clear and unquestionable." But having offered this magnificent boon, how
 in accordance with came he to withdraw it? Why was his generosity so evanescent? If the
 President of the interests of the American people required the offer of the 49°, no possible
 Tennessee, where he reason can be assigned for withdrawing it. Those interests are the same
 at the head of the now as then—the hazards of war, and the importance of maintaining ami-
 our capital to as- cable relations with Great Britain, are the same now as then. Why has the
 station which had conduct of the Administration been so unstable, wavering, and inconstant?
 could feel above re- It is, I affirm, owing to the fact that they have all the while been under the
 spect for his im- dominion of different and wholly repugnant influences—the one a desire
 the distinguished to maintain amicable relation with Great Britain; and the other, a desire to
 of State, with maintain the same relations with their own party. There has been a con-
 cause of peace, stant struggle between these antagonistical principles ever since they came
 not so; political into power. When the former has the ascendancy, the negotiation is car-
 and by re-echoing ried forward on the only ground which can bring the dispute to a peaceful is-
 Oregon is clear and sue, to wit, a compromise; when the last, that basis is totally abandoned, and
 more certain, he the Administration go for "the whole of Oregon or none." In short, we are
 to maintain, by *all* trying an entire new experiment in diplomacy. The Administration, in their
 territory in dispute. motives of action, have been mixing up "foreign affairs" with "domestic
 be a menace; it affairs." We are trying to see how diplomacy and party politics will jump
 made this sum- together. In the case of such an imbecile power as Mexico it may do, but
 duly constituted when you are dealing with such a character as John Bull, it is quite another
 of office. How affair. I shall watch the progress and result of this novelty with deep interest.
 ne about Oregon Having thus presented to the consideration of the committee the promi-
 ions on the sub- nent features of the negotiation between the two powers, I turn to a topic
 ing state of such which should have been made prominent in this debate, and which has
 ciently indicates attracted comparatively little attention. I refer to the question of title. It
 "my attention is said that we can really and truly advance pretensions of title to the whole
 g the details, he of Oregon. If so, I go for the notice in any form, no matter how un-
 of the negotia- qualified. It is with surprise, I have seen many honorable members rise on
 divide the terri- this floor and make eloquent and able appeals to this committee in opposi-
 done by his pre- tion to the notice, and yet declare their belief that we had the better title
 me he delivered to the whole of Oregon. I regard every speech of this character as futile
 y what they had and negatory. The American people will never consent to surrender an
 a subject of so inch, if they are convinced that we really own Oregon up to 54° 40'. If
 e was surround- such is the state of the case, I would abrogate the convention to-morrow. We
 all its bearings? must then look into this question, and endeavor to ascertain the true state of
 rom Baltimore, the title. What! methinks I hear some one exclaim, are you about to go
 ring before the over to the British side of the argument? No, sir, I shall endeavor to
 all the constitu- place myself on truly American ground—on the maxim, which has been
 in asserting our sanctioned by our wisest and best men—"to claim," in our intercourse with
 respect for the foreign powers, "nothing except what is clearly right, and submit to nothing
 nently adapted which is clearly wrong." How can we ascertain what is "clearly right,"

in regard to this matter, unless we enquire into the title. I affirm it is not only proper to institute the enquiry, but our duty to prosecute it with all the integrity and impartiality of the judicial character. We are placed in a very trying situation—obliged to judge in our own cause, and liable to be swayed from the path of rectitude and honor by passion, prejudice, and self-interest. Let then moderation and a sense of justice characterize our consultations, and then we may hope for a peaceful issue. At any rate, we shall have conscience and the blessing of Heaven on our side, and should the result be an appeal to arms—the *ultima ratio reipublicæ*—then a united, a patriotic, and a just people could not fail to come triumphantly out of the contest.

If it be admitted that both parties have just pretensions of title to some part of the territory, then it is plain neither party can claim, as a matter of strict right, that it should be divided by any precise line. It is a wild, savage, and, in a great degree, uninhabited country. We can see on this hypothesis that Great Britain owns one part, and we the other; but where the line should be drawn can only be determined by estimating, as well as we can, the value of the respective pretensions of the two Governments, which is merely a matter of opinion, and the case must inevitably be settled by compromise, if settled peacefully. If the American Government have title to all that part of the territory drained by the waters of the Columbia river, and the British Government to that part drained by Frazer's river, then it is certain that the 49th parallel is not the true line. In such case the true line would commence as high up as the 52d parallel, and would run in a southwesterly direction on the high lands dividing the waters of the two rivers, and would strike the coast at some point between the mouth of the Columbia and the mouth of Frazer's river. I insist, therefore, that the 49th parallel can only be proposed as a compromise line, and I must confess it has ever seemed to me to constitute a proper basis for the adjustment of the differences between the two Governments; unless, indeed, we can properly take the ground that Great Britain has no claim whatever to any part of the territory.

Whether we should attempt to exclude that power wholly from Oregon, depends, in my judgment, on the force and effect which we are authorized to give to the Spanish title which we acquired by the treaty of Florida in 1819. There is no pretence that we have any claim whatever to the territory above the parallel of 49°, except by virtue of our Spanish title, on which several remarks should be made.

1. It consists in mere naked discovery, without exploration, unless it be coastwise, and without settlements. It is certain that Spain never made any thing like a settlement in any part of the territory except at Nootka, which she, as Mr. Buchanan admits, abandoned in 1795. Besides, a settlement at Nootka would have given Spain Vancouver's Island only. A settlement on an island, says Mr. Callhoun, gives the party making it a claim to the whole island upon the principle of continuity, but certainly not to a continent adjoining. But I suppose the settlement of a continent would carry with it adjacent islands, upon the ground that the principal takes with it all accessories. Mr. Buchanan admits, substantially, that our Spanish title consists in discovery only, when he says, in his statement marked J. B., 2, that the Spanish navigators "landed at many places on the coast, from the 41st to to the 57th degree of latitude; on all which occasions they took possession of the country in the name of their Sovereign, according to a prescribed regulation, celebrating mass, reading declarations asserting the rights of Spain to the territory, and erecting crosses with inscriptions to commemorate the event." Now, I affirm, this was discovery only—the ordinary forms ob-

I affirm it is not served by the Spanish navigators on such occasions, conferring rights to a certain extent, of which I will speak directly.

2. It is doubtful whether the Straits of Fuca were really discovered in 1592, by the Greek captain of that name in the Spanish service. Mr. Galatin says, on this point, in his recent letters to the public: "Unwilling to adduce any doubtful fact, I abstained from alluding to it in the statement of the American case in 1826." So that, in the opinion of that distinguished diplomatist, the discovery of those important straits by the Greek captain to which Mr. Buchanan has attached so much importance, is, at any rate, doubtful; and this, in my judgment, shakes, in no small degree, our supposed title by Spanish discovery. If the straits were not first discovered by Fuca in 1592, then they were indisputably so by the English Captain Berkley, in 1787. This it seems to me would turn the title by discovery, so far as the upper part of the territory is concerned, decidedly against us.

3. But however this may be, so little was there of publicity and authenticity given to the Spanish discoveries, if really made, that the two points of the coast by far the most important, the Columbia river and the Straits of Fuca, had to be re-discovered—the former by the American Captain Gray, in 1792, and the latter, as before remarked, by the English Captain Berkley, in 1787. What can be the value of discoveries which have to be re-discovered? The eulogies which, in this debate, have been passed upon the name and character of Gray, and the high appreciation which gentlemen seem to have of his great exploit in discovering the Columbia, is proof conclusive that the mere discovery of the mouth of that river by Heceta, in 1775, was valueless. The world did not positively know that there was, in fact, any such river till Gray's discovery put the question at rest. The English navigators searched for it in vain until Gray, by a fortunate hit, in connexion with other facts, conferred upon us an undoubted title to far the better part of Oregon. I insist, that discoveries, which are not authenticated, where no landmarks are given, no charts published, and no means furnished of identification, are not worthy of a moment's consideration. They add nothing to the geography of the world, and nothing to the resources of commerce or business. It is well known that the application of the steam-engine to navigation had been suggested, and, to some extent, attempted, long before Fulton, by making that matter, practical conferred the richest blessings upon his country and the world.

4. The English, by McKenzie, undoubtedly discovered and explored Frazer's river in 1792, and established trading posts upon it by the Northwest Company in 1806. No American citizen made any discovery, exploration, or settlement, in that part of Oregon, prior to the convention of 1818; nor am I aware that any such citizen has occupied one foot of it, though fully entitled to do so, under the convention, from that day to this.

5. We discovered the Columbia river, as before remarked, by Gray, in 1792—explored it by Lewis and Clarke in 1804 and '5, and established trading posts upon it by Astor in 1811. The English have made many settlements in the valley of the Columbia since 1818, but from these they can draw no benefit, as, by the convention of that year, the title is to be settled between the two Governments on the state of things then existing.

Under such circumstances, it would seem to me there can be no difficulty in estimating the value of our claim to so much of our territory as is situated above the parallel of 49°. I repeat, it is found wholly on Spanish discovery, running back into the dark ages, and doubtful on important points. Nothing is more clear, than that mere discovery of a savage or an uninhabited country, never gives a title, unless followed by exploration and settle-

ment within a reasonable time. This is admitted by Mr. Buchanan in a statement marked J. B. He says:

"If the discovery of the mouth of a river, followed up within a REASONABLE TIME by the exploration both of its main channel and its principal branches, and appropriated by the first settlement on its banks, do not constitute a title to its territory drained by its waters in nation performing these acts, then the principles consecrated by the practice of civilized nations, ever since the discovery of the new world, must have lost their power. These principles were necessary to preserve the peace of the world. Had they not been enforced in practice, conflicting claims to new discovered territory, and perpetual strife among the nations, would have been the inevitable result."

7 This is strong language, but not more strong than true. What are the principles consecrated by the practice of civilized nations? Not that discovery alone, but that discovery, followed up, within a reasonable time, by exploration and settlement, gives a good title to wild and savage countries. Not a settlement was made by the Spaniards on this coast from the first supposed discovery by Fuca, in 1592, to 1818, unless the trading post at Nootka be considered such; and that, as before remarked, was abandoned in 1795. Over two centuries and a quarter elapsed, and nothing done. Was not that a reasonable time to make settlements? How much time would our honorable Secretary of State allow to this poor, degraded, and inert race of men, to effect such an object? Without enterprise, industry, or vigor of character, the Spaniards would not have settled Oregon at the end of time. I contend that no nation has a right to hold a wild country vacant for ages, under pretence of discovery. There lies at the bottom of all this a great law of our nature, which was enstamped upon humanity at the era of the garden of Eden, when man was enjoined to "be fruitful, and multiply and replenish the earth, and subdue it." The Spaniards, Mexicans having failed to comply with this law, the Anglo Saxon race, either of its branches, had a right to treat the country as vacant—to enter and take possession.

But there are other difficulties in the way of this Spanish title which are equally serious, among which, that arising out of the convention entered into between the British and Spanish Governments in 1790, usually designated the Nootka Sound convention, is by no means the least. It is well known that, some time prior to that date, a serious controversy arose between Great Britain and Spain touching the northwest coast, the country now in dispute between us and the former power; Spain claimed the exclusive right to it, but this Great Britain denied; and the dispute was on the point of being brought to the issue of arms, when Spain yielded the point and agreed to restore the buildings and lands of which British subjects had been dispossessed, and to make reparation in damages for acts of violence. Both parties stipulated not to molest or disturb their respective subjects, either in navigating these seas, or in landing on the coast "for the purpose of carrying on their commerce with the natives of the country, or of making settlements there." In this manner the Spanish Government recognized the British subjects a good and perfect right to land on the coast and make settlements in Oregon. I am sensible the honorable Secretary of State has given two answers to this objection—first, that the arrangement was temporary in its character; and secondly, that the convention was abrogated by the war which, at a subsequent period, broke out between the two powers. Temporary! What is meant by this? Was it to last for ten, twenty, fifty years, or at the pleasure of the parties? Nothing of this sort is to be found in the convention itself; and, besides, the word "settlements" imports something more than a temporary arrangement. But whether the convention was or was not temporary, and whether it was or was not abrogated by the subsequent war, one thing is certain, that it involves a distinct admission

Mr. Buchanan in Spain that the country was then *vacant*. Indeed, that was the precise point of the dispute between Great Britain and Spain. The latter power then claimed title to the whole northwest coast, and on that ground dispossessed British subjects, and drove them away from Nootka. This Great Britain resisted; she insisted it was a wild country, unoccupied, and that her subjects had as good right to frequent it, and to make settlements there, as Spanish subjects. To this pretension Spain ultimately yielded, and the treaty of 1790 proceeds on that basis. In this point of view it is wholly immaterial whether the convention of Nootka was or was not temporary, for the force of her admission is not thereby weakened in the least. And it is equally immaterial whether the treaty of 1790 was or was not abrogated by the subsequent war; for, although war usually does abrogate all treaties or conventions between the belligerent powers, yet it never does abrogate the *admission of a fact*. Truth is ever the same, war or no war.

In addition to this, we have, by our conduct, emphatically, in connexion with the valley of the Columbia, admitted the same thing. By virtue of the discovery of Captain Gray, we claimed the right to enter, explore, and settle, so much of Oregon as is drained by the waters of the Columbia river. By these acts we, in substance, affirmed that the country was vacant. We disaffirmed the Spanish claim. We treated it as a puff of empty air. But Mr. Buchanan says, that a man having a title in his own right may purchase a title outstanding in the name of another person, and use both. But we have no title in our own right to the upper part of Oregon. We there stand wholly on our Spanish title; and our proceedings in the lower part of the territory amount to an affirmation that the Spanish title, as a whole, is a nullity. If we could say, prior to 1819, to Spain, that your title, by discovery is, in the valley of the Columbia, by reason of our explorations and settlements, naught, surely Great Britain can say the same, when that title has got into our hands, for the same reasons, in regard to the valley of Frazer's river. In both cases, it is re-discovery, exploration, and settlement, against original discovery; and it is in both the indomitable energy of the Anglo Saxon race, against the sloth and inertia of the Spanish character. Who can doubt which should prevail? I have no difficulty in coming to the conclusion that our Spanish title is of little worth. Possibly some use can be made of it to fortify our claim to the valley of the Columbia; for that purpose I am willing it should be used. When, however, this Administration is guilty of the ultraism of pushing our claim up to 54° 40', on such feeble grounds, every American citizen has a right to complain. Such was not the course of Mr. Calhoun when at the head of the Department of State. He insisted strenuously in our claim to all that part of the territory drained by the waters of the Columbia river, looking obviously to the parallel of 49° as the basis of settlement. In his first statement he concludes as follows: "The undersigned, plenipotentiary, abstains, for the present, from presenting the claims which the United States may have to other portions of the territory." In reply, the British plenipotentiary called on Mr. C. to define the nature and extent of such claims. In answer to this Mr. Calhoun merely says, that the claims which the United States have to other portions of the territory "are derived from Spain by the Florida treaty, and are found in the discoveries and explorations of her navigators, and which they must regard as giving them a right to the extent to which they may be established, unless a better can be opposed." How guarded is this language! The extent to which they may be established!! Unless a better can be opposed!!! He knew well what could be opposed to *this old rickety Spanish title*—discoveries by British navigators, and explorations and settlements on Frazer's river by British subjects, long after the Spaniards had lost all

their rights, (if they ever had any,) by non-user. It is certain that Mr. Calhoun was fully convinced that our Spanish title could not stand by itself for on no other supposition can we account for his manner of treating the subject.

I have already said that neither party can, on any of the grounds adverted to, claim that the territory should, as a matter of strict right, be divided by any precise line, but that the division must be made on a compromise line: but there is a ground of claim which will give us, as a right, the 49th parallel, and that is the principle of continuity. I think much more highly of this ground of claim than many honorable members seem to think. On this principle the line of the 49th parallel, and our territory south of it, and east of the Rocky mountain would be carried continuously westward to the Pacific ocean. This doctrine of continuity was distinctly acknowledged in many of the colonial charters, and should at any rate be dear to the people of my State, for upon the strength of what we have acquired, and are now enjoying, the benefits of a magnificent school fund of over \$2,000,000. By the ancient charters of the colony of Connecticut the first of which bears date as early as 1630, the limits thereof were made to extend from the Narragansett river, on the east, by the breadth designated "throughout the main lands there from the Western ocean to the South seas." In the Connecticut, and several other charters, the British Government asserted the right to extend, upon the principle of continuity, their colonial possessions to the Atlantic coast across the continent to the Pacific ocean. This, in the judgment of our Connecticut ancestors, was not a mere paper title, but a substantial right, and they asserted it in the celebrated Wyoming settlement, in northern Pennsylvania, which was a Connecticut settlement, organized under the authority of our State, represented in our State Legislature, and protected and defended under commissions emanating from our government, and with all the vigor and heavenly reliance which the pious legend of our flag, "quæ transtulit sustinet," was adapted to inspire. This right was further asserted by our people in 1786, by reserving, from the cession of our wild lands to the United States, territory in northern Ohio, immediately west of the State of Pennsylvania, of the breadth of our State north and south, and extending east and west one hundred and twenty miles. Hence, northern Ohio, usually called the Western Reserve, or New Connecticut—a country which was settled mainly by emigrants from our State, and which is represented on this floor by several patriotic members, and which every where exhibits the best evidences of a happy and prosperous state of society. It was by the sale of these reserved lands that we acquired our school-fund, which has conferred the richest blessings on our people, and indirectly upon the whole Union. Having ceded our wild lands to the Union, we have had no occasion to pursue our title any further west than the Reserve; but if honorable members choose to carry our chartered limits over the Rocky Mountains, they will find that the larger portion of them fall within Northern California; and should it be proposed in the spirit of the Baltimore Resolutions, to *re-occupy* that country, all that we of Connecticut will have to do, will be to *repudiate* the cession of 1786, and enter and take possession! So much for the doctrine of continuity, as comprised in the ancient charters of Connecticut. In addition to this, it will be recollected, that great force was given to the principle of continuity in the war of 1763 between Great Britain and France, usually called the old French war, by which continuity was made to over-ride both discovery, exploration, and settlements, and to carry the British possessions over the Alleghanies to the Mississippi river. It is certain, that Mr. Calhoun attaches very considerable importance to our claim to all that part of Oregon situated south of the parallel of 49, on the principle under consideration; for, in treating of the claim which France had to Oregon, by virtue of her possession of Louisiana, in the statement marked A, he says:

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of her possession of

Louisiana, and the extinguishment of the right of England, by the treaty of 1763, to the whole country west of the Rocky mountains, and lying west of Louisiana, as against Spain, which England had to the country westward of the Alleghany mountains, as against France—with this difference, that Spain had nothing to oppose to the claim of France at the time, but the right of discovery, and even that England has since denied; while France had opposed to the right of England, in her case, that of discovery, exploration, and settlement. It is, therefore, not at all surprising that France should claim the country west of the Rocky mountains, (as may be inferred from her maps,) on the same principle that Great Britain had claimed and dispossessed her of the regions west of the Alleghany; or that the United States, as soon as they had acquired the rights of France, should assert the same claim, and take measures immediately after to explore it, with a view to occupation and settlement."

In this form Mr. Calhoun has, with sufficient distinctness, expressed the opinion that the claim by continuity is superior to a claim by mere discovery, especially when the latter is not consummated in the proper manner, and within a reasonable time. I therefore arrive at the conclusion, that upon this ground we can properly claim all that part of the territory which is situated south of the 49 degree; but the same principle will give the British Government all north of the same parallel. Indeed, the claims of both Governments—that of the American Government, to the valley of the Columbia, by discovery, exploration, and settlement, and that of the British Government, to the valley of Frazer's river, by the same ingredients of title—are greatly strengthened by this doctrine of continuity. I cannot discover any plausible excuse for the extravagance of this Administration in pushing our claim up to 54 degrees 40 minutes. This they have done in face of four distinct offers by our Government to divide the territory by the parallel of the 49th degree, conceding, in two instances, privileges important to Great Britain in addition. How can we, under such circumstances, claim the whole territory? Is it wise, is it just? Does this policy conform to our great maxim of diplomacy, not to claim, in our intercourse with foreign powers, any thing except what is clearly right? I am fully convinced that the 49th parallel is all that the true interests of the American people require. Have gentlemen forgotten that Northern California is open to us, and that we can and shall acquire it without committing another outrage on the rights of Mexico?

Having examined the question of title, I am now prepared to assign the reasons why I cannot vote for the unqualified proposition of notice now before the committee. The President, in his message, takes distinctly the ground that there is an end of all negotiation; and that this Government should henceforth claim the whole of Oregon. He characterizes the demands of Great Britain as extraordinary, and wholly inadmissible. Adding, that he sees in the conduct of that power "satisfactory evidence that no compromise which the United States ought to accept can be effected." He then informs us that the proposition which he had caused to be made on our part, and which Great Britain had rejected, had, by his directions, been withdrawn. And, finally, he concludes in the usual style of bellicose documents:

"At the end of the year's notice, should Congress think it proper to make provision for giving that notice, we shall have reached a period when the national rights in Oregon must either be abandoned or firmly maintained. That they cannot be abandoned without a sacrifice of national honor and interest is too clear to admit of a doubt."

So it is, in effect, proposed that we should direct the notice to be given, to enable the President to grasp the whole of Oregon—or, in other words, that we should co-operate with the Executive in involving this Republic, at the end of twelve months, if not sooner, in a desolating war with Great Britain.

Mr. Chairman, I cannot so co-operate. I can have no agency in producing a collision between the two powers in the existing posture of the subject. If the Administration would say to us, that we desire to resume the negotiation on the basis of compromise, and to pursue it in the spirit of peace, I would vote the notice. But on the record the President, in substance, stands committed to a war with Great Britain. I purposely refer to the record, as I shall directly insist that the conduct of the Executive has been so extraordinary and so equivocal, that no one can tell precisely what his policy is, or will be. But I choose

to take him, for the present, as he presents himself to the country and the world in his message. The ideas there grouped are: "no compromise which the United States ought to accept can be effected—I have withdrawn the proposition which I made in deference to my predecessors—I now go for the whole territory, it is ours by clear and unquestionable right, which cannot be surrendered without dishonor." The President desires us to invest him with the power of notice, to the end that he may, at the expiration of twelve months, take possession of the whole country, or, in other words, make war on Great Britain. I am amazed to hear gentlemen aver that even a forcible seizure of the whole country will not involve the United States in a war with that power. I am as certain we shall have war, if we push our claim to that extremity, as if we were to send a fleet of steamers into the Thames to capture the palace of St. James. I admit that giving the notice is not per se a belligerent act—it furnishes no *casus belli*, for it is a right secured by treaty—but I object to voting the notice in connexion with the declared purpose of the Executive to lay hold of the whole of Oregon. So I insist the matter stands on the record. If the President is right in the assertion that we in truth and in fact own the whole territory, then, the moment the treaty is abrogated, it will become his sworn duty to execute the laws of the United States over the whole of Oregon; and that I maintain is war!—open, flagrant war. You will in effect invest the President with the power to bring the question in dispute, at any moment he pleases after the treaty is annulled, to the arbitrament of the sword. I will not consent to part with the war power, if giving the notice is an exercise of that power, as many insist, in the form of a notice to quit to be served on Great Britain. This power is a trust involving every thing dear and sacred to men, which the Constitution has wisely put into the hands of Congress, and which should be guarded with ceaseless vigilance.

But suppose we look out of the record; how does the matter then stand? Can any honorable member tell us what is the real policy of this Administration? Is it their purpose irrevocably to stand on the parallel of 54 deg. 40 min. I must confess, that their conduct has been so inconsistent, I find it impossible to form any satisfactory opinion on the subject. Without dwelling on the inconsistency of claiming at one moment the whole territory, and at the next of offering to surrender one half of it to Great Britain, what are we to think of the fact of their recommending no measures to strengthen either the defences or the finances of the country? The appropriations suggested by the department are all peace appropriations. Our army is a skeleton—our fortifications are unarmed and unmanned—and our navy (in comparison with that of Great Britain) is insignificant. I know it is said that a republic can never prepare for war till after it breaks out. If by this it be meant that we cannot in peace be prepared for an aggressive war, I admit it; but we can, and should, in critical circumstances, prepare in advance for a defensive war. If I knew that this Administration are resolved to exclude Great Britain wholly from Oregon, I would, if I could, instantly put every thing on the war establishment. The whole energies of the American people, and resources of our vast country, should be consecrated to that object. I should deem it to be an imperative duty to augment greatly the resources of the treasury; for money, after all, is the sinews of war. We should place the credit of the republic on high ground, and the Government beyond the possibility of financial disgrace. We have men in abundance, brave, patriotic, and devoted; but we should be in a condition to command the entire pecuniary means of our own country, and, if need be, of continental Europe. I should be prepared, in such case, to come into this Hall and here encamp till these objects are accomplished. But this Administration, so far from strengthening the finances, (as, for example, by laying duties on the free articles, such as tea and coffee,) propose to give them a fatal blow by the overthrow of the present tariff; and not only that, but to rush us into a war with Great Britain on a sub-treasury scheme! An independent treasury! What a glorious engine of war! Why, your war would not be declared three months before your Government

would have to resolve itself into a Bank of the United States. It would immediately commence issuing treasury notes. Most, if not all the State banks, would stop specie payments, and shin-plasters would cover the land. If we are to have a war, I shall, myself, be in favor of a metallic currency, but it will consist mainly of *lead and iron*; and you will need a pretty good supply of paper, if for no other purpose, at any rate for wadding. Besides, what are we to think of the imprudence of this Administration, of involving the country in a conflict with Great Britain, while our controversy with Mexico is unsettled? The moment I ascertained the position of this Oregon question, I predicted that the difficulties with Mexico would never be settled until we effected an adjustment with Great Britain.

It seems to me that the policy of this Administration is adapted to bring on us three wars at one and the same time. 1. A war with Great Britain. 2. A war with Mexico. And 3. A war with all the Indian tribes on our western and northwestern frontier. And if to these we add a war on the industry of the country by a destruction of the existing beneficent tariff, a war on the currency by the re-enactment of an oppressive sub-treasury scheme, and also a servile war, (which some gentlemen seem to anticipate,) we shall introduce into the political caldron the elements of innumerable evils; and if it does not prove to be a case of "toil and trouble" to the American people, I shall be greatly mistaken.

I am sensible that it is useless for me to stop for a moment to calculate the cost of such a contest. It is useless to speak of the destruction of credit, national, state, and private—of the interruption of our works of internal improvement, the annihilation of our commerce, the prostration of our manufactures, (for it seems we are to have war and free-trade combined,) and the overthrow of our agricultural interests—of the multitude made poor and the few rich—of taxation in every form—of a crushing national debt, and of the thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, who will be sent to a premature grave, because the answer to all this will be, in the language of the honorable member from Massachusetts, (Mr. ADAMS,) "*the war will be a short and a glorious war.*" I believe in the *glory*, but not in the item of *brevity*.

In conclusion, I wish to notice for a moment what has been said on the *destiny* of this great republic. The most gorgeous pictures have been drawn in this debate of that destiny. It has been assumed as a certain fact, that we are to remain a free and a united people—that a vast population, under the ægis of our institutions, is to pour across this continent, and, reaching the Pacific, is to spread up and down the coast, everywhere building up cities and villages, and establishing the seats of commerce and the arts, and spreading everywhere the blessings of republicanism, civilization, and christianity. But honorable gentlemen must not forget that these glorious results can be attained only on certain conditions, the principal of which are public and private virtue. If we rejoice in the prospects before us, let us rejoice with fear and trembling. Let us undertake at once the purification of public morals—let us crush at once the monster party and the infamy of spoils—let us introduce more disinterestedness into our public councils, spread everywhere the blessings of education and of sound christian principles, and especially let us keep clear of that greatest of all curses to republics, unnecessary wars, and then the brilliant anticipations adverted to may be realized.

Having thus given a faithful exposition of my views, I must commit the result to the Executive, to the judgment of Congress, and to an overruling Providence; if it shall be a pacific result, I shall rejoice—but if otherwise, we must stand by the country, and every man, in his proper place and station, must do his duty.

