

of the Treaty of 1783, by which the United States acquired, not only their independence from British thraldom, but an absolute right to the soil within the limits of their claim, we can safely point to the treaties by which we acquired Louisiana and Florida, as well as that by which the North-eastern boundary between the United States and the British Provinces was established, as precedents, clearly indicating the recognized powers of the Executive, upon all questions, which relate to boundaries between us and foreign governments. Your committee have not, therefore, hesitated in coming to the conclusion that, if practicable, this question should be left to the unembarrassed action of the Executive, to the full extent of the power vested in him by the Constitution of the United States.

But while your committee look in the first instance to the Executive Department of Government to settle and adjust questions of this description they have not been unmindful of the difficulties which recent events have thrown in the way, of an efficient and satisfactory termination of the question now under consideration by Executive negotiations. From an attentive consideration of all the documents to which they have had access, it seems that the Executives of the two countries cannot agree upon a boundary or dividing line. The United States, with a claim of title "to the whole of Oregon," a claim, which your committee must say, if not "clear and unquestionable" is yet, by far the most reasonable and just, have nevertheless proposed to Great Britain to divide the territory in dispute, by the forty-ninth parallel of north latitude. This has been done by our Government upon no less than four occasions. In 1818, and 1824 by Mr. Monroe, then President, with Mr. Adams as his Secretary of State. In 1826 by Mr. Adams, who was then President, and in 1845 by the present incumbent.

Upon two of these occasions the United States proposed to concede also the free navigation of the Columbia river. By the line of the forty-ninth parallel of north latitude, the Southern portion of the Columbia river from its mouth, where it empties into the Pacific ocean up to its intersection with Flat bow river, extending a distance of nearly five hundred miles, will belong to the United States, while the entire river north of that line, extending a distance of nearly two hundred miles to its source in the Rocky mountains, will belong to Great Britain. By the same line of parallel the Southern portion of Vancouver's island, and the harbour in the straits of Juan-de-Fuca, which is deemed to be one of the best, if not the best on the Pacific coast, will belong also to the United States—but by the propositions recently made by this Government, this and all other ports on Vancouver's Island south of this parallel are offered to be made free to Great Britain. It is true that the last proposition by our Government did not include the offer of the free navigation of the Columbia river, but it conceded what had never been offered before, the use of the free ports on the southern portion of Vancouver's Island. With