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CONGRESSIONAL DEBATE.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 12, 1853.

BRITISH WONDERS.

By unanimous consent, the personal explanations upon the subject were resumed. Mr. STANTON, resumed his speech, which will be published hereafter. Mr. PEARCE. I do not propose to go at large into the debate. I entered into it originally for the purpose of defending a late Secretary of State (Mr. Clayton) from the charge which the Great Britain, subsequent to the ratification of the treaty, he had done away with what some gentlemen in this body understood to be the true purport and intent of the treaty; and nothing which he had said to shake my conviction that the Secretary has been successfully defended. England, by that treaty, as I understand it, renounced no right which she had in British Honduras, and neither that treaty nor Mr. Clayton's letter undertook to fix the character of the rights which Great Britain might have in that region of the world.

But there are other gentlemen in this body who think that the intent of that treaty was to sweep British occupation from the entire Central America, including British Honduras. So do not I think. I think the intention was to limit the territory of Great Britain to the territory which she had in that region of the world.

It will be seen that this treaty does not propose to take from the United States any territory, or to give to any other power the right to occupy any territory in the United States. It is a treaty of commerce, and not a treaty of territory.

Mr. PEARCE. Will the gentleman inform me what message it is that from which he quotes? Mr. DOWNS. The message of the 22d of April, transmitting the treaty to the Senate. It is published in the message of the President.

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CITY OF WASHINGTON, FRIDAY MORNING, JANUARY 14, 1853.

"LIBERTY, THE UNION, AND THE CONSTITUTION."

routes of communication were proposed to be constructed. That is all. It is true he says that it was his object in negotiating this treaty "not only to secure the passage across the isthmus to the government and citizens of the United States, by the construction of a great highway connecting the two oceans, but also to maintain the independence and sovereignty of all the Central American republics."

Mr. PEARCE. I do not perceive any discrepancy between the senator and myself, certainly not as regards the Mosquito coast, which I have refrained from speaking of, or of the rest of the States of Central America; but there is a difference between the senator from Louisiana and the senator from Michigan, and other gentlemen, in their views upon the subject.

Mr. DOWNS. Mr. President, there are some documents, published for the first time this morning, which, in my opinion, throw light upon this subject, and corroborate very fully and completely the positions taken by the senator from Michigan, and myself, and others, to-wit: that in the general provisions of the treaty, British Honduras was included. It is important that every fact should be well understood in relation to this matter; and it is as well now, while this question is fresh in our minds, to state the country, that the contents of these documents should be known.

Mr. PEARCE. I repeat, if the construction of the senator from Michigan is right, and that treaty was intended to sweep from the whole of Central America all British occupancy, why is it that that senator, learned and astute as he is, has never, from the day of the ratification of that treaty, made any objection to the occupancy of the British in British Honduras, which, in his view of the treaty, was a violation of it?

Mr. DOWNS. I will reply presently. Mr. SHIELDS. Will the gentleman who has been presented to the Senate by the honorable senator from Louisiana, (Mr. SOULE,) to add anything to what he has said, and the only reason that I use at this time, is not to interfere in this regard with the construction of the treaty, which is a mere matter of opinion, and, perhaps, of misunderstanding. When I have already stated in the Senate—and I repeat that statement now—is this: that whether you give to the treaty the meaning that the language imposes or not, it has been violated by the occupancy of the British in British Honduras, and is a violation of the treaty.

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From New Hampshire, [Mr. HALE.] I can say, as a senator, that I never treated this treaty as if it included from any quarter, that any right which Great Britain might have, or claim to have, outside of that which properly constitutes Central America, came within the scope of the treaty at all.

Mr. HALE. Well, I have not let out much by saying that all I have to say is that I will stop. Let the public make as much out of that as they please.

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