

Illinois, of the Missouri, and of the Wabash. The first serious attempt to interfere with the French in this part of the continent was made in 1749, when a company, called the Ohio Company, was chartered, and obtained from the British Crown a grant of 600,000 acres on the River Ohio. In 1750 the French heard of this, and the Governor of Canada wrote to the Governors of Pennsylvania and New York to complain, but complaints being useless they seized, in 1751, some American traders found West of the Ohio, and built two forts, one on the south side of Lake Erie and one on Beef river. In 1753, Major (afterwards the celebrated General) Washington was sent by Virginia to M. de Contrecoeur, the French Governor of these two forts, to summon him to retire, who replied "that the country belonged to the King of France, and that therefore he would according to orders, seize and send prisoner to Canada every Englishman that should attempt to trade upon the Ohio or any of its branches." In 1754, a battle took place in that vicinity, and Washington, attacked in his entrenchments at Fort Necessity, capitulated.

The course taken by Canada and Nova Scotia during the American Revolutionary war is a matter of general history, which we need not dilate upon in this place. Suffice it to remark, that their loyalty deserved a better reward than the indifference subsequently shewn by Britain in the fixing of their boundaries. Young remarks, in his "North American Colonies," that: "Language cannot be found too condensed and too severe to characterize the terms of the first Provincial Treaty of Peace, in 1782. Mr. Oswald, our Plenipotentiary, who adjusted it with Franklin and Jay, after his return to England, when waited upon by the merchants of London, that they might inform him of the concessions and sacrifices he had made, both confessed his ignorance and wept, it is said, over his own simplicity." Lord Stormont, in the year of the Treaty, spoke of Mr. Oswald as "that extraordinary Geographer," and said on the other hand of the American Commissioners, in language of which we now, on close acquaintance with such agents, can fully recognize the biting truth, that "they have enriched the English Dictionary with new terms and phrases—reciprocal advantage, for instance, means the advantage of one of the parties; and a regulation of boundaries, accession of territory."

The provisional arrangement made by Mr. Oswald was that the eastern boundary of the States should run along the St. John river, from its source to its mouth in the Bay of Fundy, and that the northern boundary should be a line to be drawn from the north-west angle of Nova Scotia, along the highlands which divide these rivers that empty themselves into the River St. Lawrence from those which fall into the Atlantic, to the north-westernmost head of Connecticut river; thence down along the middle of that river to the 45th degree of north latitude, and thence due west to the north-westernmost side of the River St. Lawrence; thence straight to the Lake Nipissing, and thence straight to the River Mississippi.

This agreement was too absurd to be made part of the Definitive Treaty, for it would have given up nearly half of New Brunswick, and almost all of Upper Canada. The Treaty itself (1783) was, however, sufficiently disgraceful in its terms. It established the boundary in the following language:—

Art. II. And that all disputes which might arise in future on the subject of the boundaries of the said United States may be prevented, it is hereby agreed and declared, that the following shall be their boundaries, viz.: from the north-west angle of Nova Scotia, viz.: that angle which is formed by a line drawn due north from the source of the St. Croix river to the highlands; along the said highlands which divide those rivers that empty themselves into the River St. Lawrence from those which fall into the Atlantic Ocean to the north-westernmost head of Connecticut river; thence down along the middle of that river to the 45th degree of north latitude; from thence by a line due west on said latitude, until it strikes the River Iroquois or Cataraugy; thence along the middle of said river into Lake Ontario, through the middle of said lake until it strikes the communication by water between that lake and Lake Erie; thence along the middle of said communication into Lake Erie, through the middle of said lake until it arrives at the water communication between that lake and Lake Huron; thence along the middle of said water communication into the Lake Huron; thence through the middle of said lake to the water communication between that lake and Lake Superior; thence through Lake Superior northward of the Isles Royal and Phelepeaux to the Long Lake; thence through the middle of said Long Lake and the water communication between it and the Lake of the Woods to the said Lake of the Woods; thence through the said lake to the most north-western point thereof, and from thence on a due west course to the River Mississippi; thence by a line to be drawn along the middle of the Mississippi until it shall intersect the northernmost part of the 31st degree of north latitude. South by a line to be drawn due east from the determination of the line last mentioned in the latitude of 31° north of the Equator, to the middle of the New Appalachicola or Catabouche; thence along the middle thereof to its junction with the Flint river; thence straight to the head of St. Mary's river; and thence down along the middle of St. Mary's river to the Atlantic Ocean. East by a line to be drawn along the middle of St. Croix, from its mouth in the Bay of Fundy to its source, and from its source directly north to the aforesaid highlands which divide the rivers that fall into the Atlantic Ocean from those which fall into the River St. Lawrence, comprehending all islands within twenty leagues of any part of the shores of the United States, and lying between lines to be drawn due east from the points where the aforesaid boundaries between Nova Scotia on the one part, and East Florida on the other, shall respectively touch the Bay of Fundy and the Atlantic Ocean; excepting such islands as now are or heretofore have been within the limits of the said Province of Nova Scotia.

Now the region between the sources of the St. Croix and the Connecticut rivers, as well as that to the westward of Lake Superior, were then uninhabited, and the physical features of the interior of the continent were but imperfectly known. Some ambiguity in the terms of the treaty might on these accounts have been expected, yet not so much as actually existed. British statesmen, usually slow to impute improper motives to any public men, have therefore not hesitated to say that the American plenipotentiaries contrived to have the wording of the treaty as loose as possible. Its ambiguity consisted chiefly in these points:—The proprietorship of the islands in the Bay of Fundy was not defined; the position of the north-west angle of Nova Scotia was not fixed; the islands in the St. Lawrence were not apportioned, or those in the Detroit river.

Difficulties arose almost at once on all these points. It was even attempted to envelop in mist the River St. Croix itself, and when Commissioners met at St. Andrews, in 1796, to decide the matter, the Americans claimed the Maguadavic to be the St. Croix, and an adjournment for a year was the result. This point was finally settled in 1798; but the north-west angle was destined to remain undecided for another generation.

At the Treaty of Ghent, 1814, the other boundary questions were dealt with one by one, and we will follow them in order. Our south-eastern boundary is settled by Art. IV. as follows:—

Whereas it was stipulated by the second article in the treaty of Peace of 1783, * * * that the boundary of the United States should comprehend all islands within twenty leagues of any part of the shores of the United States, and lying between lines to be drawn due east from the point where the aforesaid boundaries between Nova Scotia on the one part and East Florida on the other, shall respectively touch the Bay of Fundy and the Atlantic Ocean, excepting such islands as now are, or heretofore have been, within the limits of Nova Scotia; and whereas the several