

line starting from the mouth of the Moroco to the junction of the River Barama with the Waini, thence up the Barama to the point at which that stream approached nearest to the Acarabisi, and thence following Sir R. Schomburgk's line from the source of the Acarabisi onwards.

A condition was attached to the proffered cession, viz., that the Venezuelan Government should enter into an engagement that no portion of the territory proposed to be ceded should be alienated at any time to a foreign Power, and that the Indian tribes residing in it should be protected from oppression.

No answer to the note was ever received from the Venezuelan Government, and in 1850 Her Majesty's Government informed Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Carácas that as the proposal had remained for more than six years unaccepted, it must be considered as having lapsed, and authorised him to make a communication to the Venezuelan Government to that effect.

A report having at the time become current in Venezuela that Great Britain intended to seize Venezuelan Guiana, the British Government distinctly disclaimed such an intention, but inasmuch as the Government of Venezuela subsequently permitted projects to be set on foot for the occupation of Point Barima and certain other positions in dispute, the British Chargé d'Affaires was instructed in June, 1850, to call the serious attention of the President and Government of Venezuela to the question, and to declare to them "that, whilst, on the one hand, Great Britain had no intention to occupy or encroach on the disputed territory, she would not, on the other hand, view with indifference aggressions on that territory by Venezuela."

The Venezuelan Government replied in December of the same year that Venezuela had no intention of occupying or encroaching upon any part of the territory the dominion of which was in dispute, and that orders would be issued to the authorities in Guiana to abstain from taking any steps contrary to this engagement.

This constitutes what has been termed the "Agreement of 1850," to which the Government of Venezuela have frequently appealed, but which the Venezuelans have repeatedly violated in succeeding years.

Their first acts of this nature consisted in the occupation of fresh positions to the east of their previous settlements, and the founding in 1858 of the town of Nueva Providencia on the right bank of the Yuruari, all previous settlements being on the left bank. The British Government, however, considering that these settlements were so near positions which they had not wished to claim, considering also the difficulty of controlling the movements of mining populations, overlooked this breach of the Agreement.

The Governor of the Colony was in 1857 sent to Carácas to negotiate for a settlement of the boundary, but he found the Venezuelan State in so disturbed a condition that it was impossible to commence negotiations, and eventually he came away without having effected anything.

For the next 19 years, as stated by Mr. Olney, the civil commotions in Venezuela prevented any resumption of negotiations.

In 1876 it was reported that the Venezuelan Government had, for the second time, broken "the Agreement of 1850" by granting licences to trade and cut wood in Barima and eastward. Later in the same year that Government once

more made an overture for the settlement of the boundary. Various delays interposed before negotiations actually commenced: and it was not till 1879 that Señor Rojaz began them with a renewal of the claim to the Essequibo as the eastern boundary of Venezuelan Guiana. At the same time he stated that his Government wished "to obtain, by means of a Treaty, a definitive settlement of the question, and was disposed to proceed to the demarcation of the divisional line between the two Guianas in a spirit of conciliation and true friendship towards Her Majesty's Government."

In reply to this communication, a note was addressed to Señor Rojaz on the 10th January, 1880, reminding him that the boundary which Her Majesty's Government claimed, as a matter of strict right on grounds of conquest and concession by Treaty, commenced at a point at the mouth of the Orinoco, westward of Point Barima, that it proceeded thence in a southerly direction to the Imatica Mountains, the line of which it followed to the north-west, passing from thence by the high land of Santa Maria just south of the town of Upata, until it struck a range of hills on the eastern bank of the Caroni River, following these southward until it struck the great backbone of the Guiana district, the Barima Mountains of British Guiana, and thence southwards to the Pacaraima Mountains. On the other hand, the claim which has been put forward on behalf of Venezuela by General Guzman Blanco in his Message to the National Congress of the 20th February, 1877, would involve the surrender of a province now inhabited by 40,000 British subjects, and which had been in the uninterrupted possession of Holland and Great Britain successively for two centuries. The difference between these two claims being so great, it was pointed out to Señor Rojaz that, in order to arrive at a satisfactory arrangement, each party must be prepared to make very considerable concessions to the other, and he was assured that, although the claim of Venezuela to the Essequibo River boundary could not, under any circumstances, be entertained, yet that Her Majesty's Government were anxious to meet the Venezuelan Government in a spirit of conciliation, and would be willing, in the event of a renewal of negotiations for the general settlement of boundaries, to waive a portion of what they considered to be their strict rights if Venezuela were really disposed to make corresponding concessions on her part.

The Venezuelan Minister replied in February, 1881, by proposing a line which commenced on the coast a mile to the north of the Moroco River, and followed certain parallels and meridians inland, bearing a general resemblance to the proposal made by Lord Aberdeen in 1844.

Señor Rojaz' proposal was referred to the Lieutenant-Governor and Attorney-General of British Guiana, who were then in England, and they presented an elaborate report, showing that in the 35 years which had elapsed since Lord Aberdeen's proposed concession, natives and others had settled in the territory under the belief that they would enjoy the benefits of British rule, and that it was impossible to assent to any such concessions as Señor Rojaz' line would involve. They, however, proposed an alternative line, which involved considerable reductions of that laid down by Sir R. Schomburgk.

This boundary was proposed to the Venezuelan Government by Lord Granville in