



increasing in numbers, more private interests are involved, and the region in dispute becomes more valuable to either claimant. There is great indifference to the question on our side of the line, but in the Dominion it is well understood, and Parliament and public opinion have taken their stand. Canadian maps now differ from United States maps of that northwestern region, and this boundary question promises to provoke more international bitterness than the present Bering Sea dispute concerning the interests of a single company of fur-traders.

By his ukase of 1821, forbidding all foreign vessels from approaching within one hundred Italian miles of his possessions on either shore of the North Pacific, the Emperor of Russia purposely brought about the conferences of 1824 and 1825. Then were adjusted the claims of Russia, England, and the United States to various sections of the northwest coast of America. As the result, Russia was secured in the possession of the coast and adjacent islands, from the Arctic Ocean down to the line of $54^{\circ} 40'$, on the ground of Russian discovery and settlement, together with the northernmost third of the uninhabited and useless interior.

All overtures from England for the purchase of "the thirty mile strip" of coast accorded to Russia and now known as Southeastern Alaska were refused, but the tract was leased by the Russian government to the Hudson's Bay Company until 1867, when the Treaty of Washington, consummating the Seward purchase, once more defined its boundaries:

ARTICLE I.

His Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias agrees to cede to the United States, by this convention, immediately upon the exchange of the ratifications thereof, all the territory and dominion now possessed by his said Majesty on the continent of America and in the adjacent islands, the same being contained within the geographical limits herein set forth, to wit: The eastern limit is the line of demarcation between the Russian and the British possessions in North America, as established by the convention between Russia and Great Britain, of February 28-16, 1825, and described in Articles III and IV of said convention, in the following terms:

"Commencing from the southernmost point of the is-

land called Prince of Wales Island, which point lies in the parallel of $54^{\circ} 40'$ north latitude, and between the 131^{st} and the 133^{d} degree of west longitude (meridian of Greenwich), the said line shall ascend to the north along the channel called Portland Channel, as far as the point of the continent where it strikes the 56^{th} degree of north latitude; from this last-mentioned point, the line of demarcation shall follow the summit of the mountains situated parallel to the coast as far as the point of intersection of the 141^{st} degree of west longitude (of the same meridian); and finally, from the said point of intersection, the said meridian line of the 141^{st} degree, in its prolongation as far as the Frozen Ocean.

"IV. With reference to the line of demarcation, laid down in the preceding article, it is understood—

"1st. That the island called Prince of Wales Island shall belong wholly to Russia" (now, by this cession, to the United States).

"2d. That whenever the summit of the mountains which extend in a direction parallel to the coast from the 56^{th} degree of north latitude to the point of intersection of the 141^{st} degree of west longitude shall prove to be at the distance of more than ten marine leagues from the ocean, the limit between the British possessions and the line of coast which is to belong to Russia as above mentioned (that is to say, the limit to the possessions ceded by this convention) shall be formed by a line parallel to the winding of the coast, and which shall never exceed the distance of ten marine leagues therefrom."

The first contention as to the position of the boundary line between Alaska and British Columbia arose in 1873-74, when thousands of miners of different nationalities rushed to the Stikine River and the Cassiar region at its head-waters. Gold commissioners, customs officers, and sheriffs were alike defied; mining camps on the Stikine were first under one flag and then under another; the custom house was moved from place to place, and criminals escaped trial upon mere technicalities, until a temporary and approximate line on the thirty mile basis was agreed upon by the British Columbian officials and the United States military authorities, then in control of Alaska. The custom house and Hudson's Bay Company's post still remain, as then placed, at a distance of sixty miles from the mouth of the winding river.

Since 1878, prospectors, often to the number of five hundred in a single season, have crossed the Chilkat Pass to the rich placer regions along the Upper Yukon. Coarse gold and dust to the value of \$40,000 or \$50,000 have been carried out each year. A few seasons since, the Canadian gold commissioner visited the camps on Forty Mile Creek to collect fees and prevent unlicensed miners from working. The men claimed that they were within Alaskan boundaries, and as they were a rough and muscular set the commissioner retreated, and the question of miners' licenses in that region was waived until the two governments should determine and mark the line of the 141^{st} meridian, which there forms the international boundary line.

The official Canadian map of 1887 places Forty Mile Creek that many miles within British limits. Although no official publication has been made, returning miners have brought word that the Turner and McGrath parties of the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey have determined that the meridian line crosses the Yukon almost at the mouth of Forty Mile Creek, leaving those rich placers in Alaska.

During the sessions of the Fisheries Conference at Washington, 1887-88, an informal discussion of this boundary question was arranged by Secretary Bayard and Sir Charles Tupper. Dr. W. H. Dall of the Smithsonian Institution and United States Geological