

been claimed, by the United States Government is that the seals which frequent the islands in Behring Sea possessed by the Americans, frequent that sea for the purpose of breeding, and that some kind of right over these animals is acquired by the United States Government, in consequence of their resort to those islands for breeding purposes, and there are other pretensions in the reference which I think I might venture to characterize without desiring to be offensive in any way, as of a somewhat shadowy character. But the real pretension—the substantial contention of the United States has subsided to this point, that it is the protection of the seals against extinction that they seek. It is possible that some kind of measure for the purpose of preventing the total extinction of the race, is proper and should be adopted. And that is one of the subjects which the commissioners appointed by both Governments are now considering at Washington, and with which the arbitrators will eventually have to deal. So that in point of fact we stand now as we stood then. The controversy commenced by the seizure of our ships on the high seas by the American cruisers. That was remonstrated against, and finally in such an unmistakable tone that it was abandoned, and then the negotiations for this arbitration commenced. They have been very tedious—I do not know that they could have been shortened. I may say that throughout the whole of these negotiations we have been treated with the utmost consideration and courtesy by the home Government. We have been made acquainted with every step that has been taken—our opinions and advice have been asked upon most, if not all, the points that have arisen, and although they may not always, perhaps, have been taken, still, I think, as I said just now, that we have been treated with very complete consideration and courtesy by the home Government, and that in the natural course of events, in the whole line of which neither we or the British Government have changed our positions in the slightest iota, there will be a solution which, I trust, will be satisfactory, and I hope may not be long delayed. I am just following my hon. friend through the points that he made, and I am endeavouring to deal with them in the same spirit in which he discussed them. The mission to Washington, of which my hon. friend spoke, he claimed had not been very

prolific in results. Well, the results of those negotiations will be laid before the House soon, and hon. gentlemen will see exactly what took place there. We had an amicable discussion with the United States' Government respecting quite a number of matters in which we were often at issue with them, or not exactly agreed with them, and we did succeed in bringing several of those to a conclusion. My hon. friend says that we need not have gone there for the purpose of settling the boundary of Alaska—that the boundary is laid down clearly in the treaty and that the only difficulty is the expense of the survey. If my hon. friend had to conduct the arrangements for the delimitation of the boundary, he would form a different opinion on the subject. The parties who made that treaty knew, I fancy, very little about Alaska. They describe the line which is to be drawn from the point of an island to Portland channel and up Portland channel to its extreme point in the mountains, and, I think, from that to a parallel of latitude; then the line is to follow a range of mountains, at a distance not to exceed 10 marine leagues from the sea, until it reaches another parallel of latitude, which forms the northern boundary. Now, Portland channel, instead of running north, as the people who made the treaty supposed, runs practically east north-east. It has two passages, with a large and important island between them, and the very first question is, by which of these two passages does the line ascend Portland Inlet—by the southerly or the northerly passage? There is difficulty number one, for which the treaty affords no certain solution.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT — It says "ascends along Portland channel."

Hon. Mr. ABBOTT — The people who made that treaty did not know that there were two channels, having an island between them, and which of these two is to be adopted as the line is the first difficulty in settling that boundary. When the line comes to the top of that inlet, then it has to follow a range of mountains not more than 10 marine leagues from the sea. In order to reach such a range the line has to go back west again a considerable distance. It would appear, when that line is traced on the map, that it could scarcely meet the intentions of those who made the treaty. It is comprehensible that they thought Portland inlet ran northerly to a