

that he was equal to the occasion, supposing that he understood what had happened at Washington, congratulated him in this manner:

Your telegram has created better feeling amongst merchants here. Most important Washington authorities wire proper instructions, Skagway and Dyea; any delay will greatly prejudice Canadian trade. North bound steamers with full Seattle passenger lists leaving frequently.

But little did the people of the Pacific Coast understand the administrative capacity of the Minister of the Interior and his instinct for government, upon which he dwelt to the immense amusement of this House a short time ago, when he having botched and bungled the whole of this business from beginning to end, dared to rise in his place and sneer at the instinct of government possessed by Sir John A. Macdonald. When I heard that hon. gentleman, when I saw his scorn, feigned or unfeigned, in regard to the career of that great statesman, when I heard him discuss and criticise the statesmanship of Sir John A. Macdonald, I remembered the old adage that a live dog was better than a dead lion. On no other principle that I can conceive would the Minister of the Interior be warranted in the sneers and scoffs that he threw against that great name. Well, the people of Victoria soon learned to measure the value of our new plenipotentiary at Washington, soon understood how much the telegram of January meant. Remonstrances came from the coast fifteen days afterwards, he informed the people of that coast:

Saturday regulations being issued immediately, But still no cause of complaint, not a ground of complaint from the Minister of the Interior, we are to assume, had occurred. Remonstrances came from the coast having regard to this positive and unqualified statement, this unqualified assurance from a responsible Minister fresh from the negotiations at Washington, after business transactions had been based upon his assurance, remonstrances followed and followed quickly and daily. On the 20th January, this telegram went from the Minister of the Interior to the Board of Trade:

It was arranged that there should be no regulations at Stikine that would harass our trade, but not specifically provided that same regulations adopted at Dyea and Skagway should apply to Stikine.

Still no regulations; still the officers of the United States at the Sound, up on the Stikine, at Dyea and Skagway, everywhere that they could be found on that coast, were embarrassing every Canadian steamship company, stating that there were no instructions, received from Washington. Still, of course, those who had an abiding faith in the Minister of the Interior, and there were some even then on the coast, excused the Minister by stating that the instructions no doubt had been settled, but there had

not been time to communicate them to these outposts. In the meanwhile, our rivals in the United States ports, at Seattle and other ports on the Pacific, were clutching, and grasping, and controlling trade in connection with our own Yukon country. That was on the 20th. But again on the same day another telegram came from the Minister of the Interior:

'Am advised this morning by the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury that the collector of customs for Alaska would be in Washington in two or three days, and that regulations are held pending conference with him.

This shows the manner in which the Government acted, against which there is no cause of complaint! The hon. gentleman, acting as the representative of the British Crown, had exhibited the very best of faith. Everything he had assured the people at Washington would be done he had implemented to the very letter, which it was his bounden duty to do; and I can understand him resenting, even if he thought it was not politic to express it, the action of those authorities, but I cannot understand him, under the circumstances endeavouring to excuse this extraordinary conduct on the part of the United States Government, unless he was wholly erroneous, wholly inaccurate in regard to that telegram of January 3rd in which he stated that the arrangements and regulations had actually been completed. It was not necessary to bring from Alaska the collector of customs to discuss regulations that had been arranged and agreed to, according to the telegram of the Minister.

Again, we had another version from the Minister as to what happened. On 22nd January, he telegraphed to Captain Irvine in Victoria:

Arrangement was that instructions should be given which would do away with customs charges and inspection fees. Treasury Department has not yet issued instructions. Have been wiring them constantly. Last telegraph says they expect to close in a day or two. Have done everything possible; do not see what more I can do. Expect it is only a matter of a few days.

I am in the hearing of the hon. Minister of the Interior, and he knows he was grievously disappointed; that though he sent this telegram on 22nd January, it was not a matter of a few days but of weeks, and the matter was not settled until after 22nd January, when the Minister of Customs had to come down to the House first with regulations and instructions that concerned the Dyea and Skagway only, and afterwards he supplemented the statement by saying the Government would obtain further information and advice applicable to the case of the Stikine River. I therefore, join issue with the hon. Minister of the Interior, and I say we are doing our duty here in expressing our resentment against the treatment shown to a Minister of the Crown who went to Washington, and in good faith conducted these