

incumbent upon the United States of its own initiative to appoint a commission to draw the boundary, regardless of the British contention. It was in that connection that Secretary Olney declared that 3,000 miles of ocean "make any permanent political union between a European and an American state unnatural and inexpedient." His whole reference was to the situation in Canada. He contended that:

The United States is practically sovereign upon this continent and its fiat is law upon subjects to which it confines its interposition.

He contended also that this fiat reached north of the great lakes and the 49th parallel of latitude. It was then that President Cleveland and his secretary of state brought us to the verge of war with the neighbouring republic. Although I undoubtedly criticized and even condemned their claim to trace boundary lines for a British colony in another continent, I made no reflections upon the people of the United States.

Again, a few years later, there was a time when I criticized very freely the conduct of another president of the United States who threatened to draw another boundary line between British Columbia and Alaska. I happened to be in London in October, 1903, when the decision of the Alaskan boundary tribunal was rendered, and it became known in circles close to the British government that Lord Alverstone, the chief justice of England, who sat with two eminent Canadians as the British members of that tribunal, had within a few days of the date of that decision apparently changed his point of view under political pressure from the British government in order to avoid a threatened expedition into Canada by the military forces of the United States.

Older members may recall that Canada's claims with respect to the Alaskan boundary line were declared by President Theodore Roosevelt to be "an outrage pure and simple" and that the Canadians "acted in a spirit of bumptious truculence." The president was even reported to have suggested that north America should thereafter be "inhabited exclusively by citizens of the United States." Although the president had signed an arbitration treaty providing for the appointment as arbitrators of "six impartial jurists of repute," the Canadian public entertained no illusions as to the political prejudices of the three men whom he did appoint. When I was in London in October, 1903, it was alleged that President Roosevelt had notified the British government, through the United States ambassador, that if the boundary line, which the boundary tribunal might thereafter establish, was not in accord with his personal

[Mr. Cahan.]

views he would send into Canada a sufficient military force to draw the line as he saw fit. That correspondence has not been published, if it ever took place; and evidently if it did take place, it was excluded from the state papers of the United States.

But after the president had signed this arbitration treaty, we now know that Mr. Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, being then in London on a holiday, received a personal letter from President Roosevelt with a request that it be shown privately and unofficially to Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, then colonial secretary. That letter as published subsequently, contained the following:

But if there is a disagreement I wish it distinctly understood, not only that there will be no arbitration of the matter but that in my message to congress I shall take a position which will prevent any possibility of arbitration hereafter; a position I am inclined to believe, which will render it necessary for congress to give me authority to run the line as we claim it, by our own people, without any further regard to the attitude of England and Canada.

Mr. SLAGHT: Mr. Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The hon. gentleman is speaking to a motion for the approval of a recently made trade treaty. I submit that when he is going back forty-five and thirty-eight years and raking up the old bones of disagreement between our neighbours to the south and Canada and the empire over matters territorial, he is entirely out of order.

Mr. CAHAN: Mr. Speaker, I submit that there is no point of order. I am reviewing an address of the Prime Minister, in which he undertook to lay before the house the background of certain negotiations, and I am not exceeding the limits to which he went in making a personal attack upon me with regard to some former speeches which I had made.

Mr. SLAGHT: I ask for a ruling, Mr. Speaker, on the point of order I raised. My point of order is simply this—

Some hon. MEMBERS: Order.

Mr. SLAGHT: —that to discuss territorial differences is not dealing with the trade treaty.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: With regard to the point of order raised by the hon. member for Parry Sound (Mr. Slaght), while perhaps technically he may be right, I would hesitate to call the hon. member for St. Lawrence-St. George out of order because in this debate there has been allowed a wide latitude. Therefore I think the point of order is not well taken.

Mr. SLAGHT: He is taking a grave responsibility, Mr. Speaker.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Order.