

took place in 1871 they will find these words:

The British commissioners replied—(that is when the demand was put up for the navigation of the St. Lawrence)—that they would not admit the claims of American citizens to navigate the River St. Lawrence as of right, but that the British Government had no desire to exclude them from it. They however, pointed out that there were certain rivers running through Alaska which should on like grounds be declared free and open to British subjects, in case the River St. Lawrence should be declared free.

And we find that a provision was placed in the treaty of Washington which the Americans insisted should be reciprocal, giving them rights to use these rivers when they penetrated British territory in return for the rights we got when the rivers penetrated the territory of the United States. But there is another ground. Hon. gentlemen contend that we have lost the free use of these rivers. Hon. gentlemen say, having this right restored by the treaty of 1859, how was it then that we did not have it continued? Why was it receded from? The answer is that the cession of this country to the United States terminated these treaties. With regard to that I know my hon. friend will not agree with me; he will tell me what the rule of law is. I will tell him what precedent is, and I will tell him what occurred in other circumstances like these. I will point out to him what occurred in the case of the Island of Madagascar; Lord Salisbury made a speech only a few days ago in which he admitted that France had got the better of Great Britain as regards Madagascar. He said:

The French armies had invaded the island with the avowed intention of maintaining the protectorate. If they had adhered to their intention the British treaties with the Queen of Madagascar would have been safe, but when the French were masters of the situation they suddenly changed the protectorate to annexation, and with the latter the British treaties fell.

Here was Lord Salisbury's opinion; I am not going to set up my own opinion against my hon. friend the leader of the House, but I will, with all confidence, set up Lord Salisbury's judgment against his as an opinion at least equally worthy of weight. Then in the treaty of 1763 of England with France and Spain, England had the right of the navigation of the Mississippi River; when the territory passed to the United States, England lost that right and it has never been claimed since. Why did England lose it? If it was a territorial

right, England would have demanded it, but with the cession of Louisiana the British rights of navigation of the Mississippi River passed away. In 1863 the Ionian Islands were annexed to Greece. England had treaties with these islands for the freedom of ports of commerce, and after the cession it became necessary to make new treaties with Greece for the continuation of these free ports. Here we have illustrations, and I think I have some others in my notes that would equally prove the view that I take. If, however, the contention of the leader of the House is correct, the treaty of Washington could not abrogate or curtail our rights under the treaty of St. Petersburg, and we have still the free use of the Stikine River for all purposes. This is important, and more particularly since the hon. member from Halifax thought it necessary to dwell on it at considerable length, and went so far as to say that the distinguished gentleman who negotiated on the part of Canada the treaty of Washington had displayed ignorance. However, hon. gentlemen may have differed from him during his life, on political questions, I feel assured there is not a gentleman in this House or the country or anywhere else, who will doubt the great ability and the great information possessed by Sir John Macdonald—and when I heard my hon. friend from Halifax impute ignorance to Sir John Macdonald, I really would have given my hon. friend credit for a great deal better judgment. However, I am glad I have these facts in my hands, which I think are sufficient to show that Sir John Macdonald made no mistake whatever in 1871. I will now refer to the difficulties of navigation of the Stikine River and the bonding difficulty, and the difficulty about the location of the railroads. I will take this position, that I think this House and probably the country would risk a good deal and would be willing to expend a good deal of money to give a good all-Canadian route to that country. I am afraid that this contract and this plan that we have before the House is not going to effect that object; it cannot effect it inasmuch as without there is a provision that this road cannot be assigned or conveyed to foreigners, we are not assured that it will be a really all-Canadian route. But even with that there are difficulties in the way of navigation of this Stikine River, there are