

in to-day's Montreal "Gazette," with reference to the meetings and the proceedings of the International Commission. I will read a brief extract or two :

It can be stated that if the commission re-convenes it will only do so upon a complete abandonment of the old basis, which proved to be unsuitable to the erection of a complete agreement, and the United States Government will have some sort of assurance in advance of the nature and degree of the concessions that may be expected from the other side, the lack of which, it is said, caused the failure of the first negotiations. The negotiations have taken a new turn by the suggestion that the Alaskan boundary question be submitted to arbitration, independent of the other issues involved, thus leaving the commission free to resume its work on the many other pending questions.

Then, I read, in another despatch :

It has now been ascertained that when the commission adjourned, Sir Julian Pauncefote, the British Ambassador at Washington, and Secretary of State Hay had a conference at which it was decided that the topics under consideration by the commission should form the subject of private negotiations between the Ambassador and the Secretary, with the understanding that if a settlement was reached its details should be communicated to the commission, and formally promulgated as the official conclusion of its members. The negotiations have progressed steadily, and since Sir Julian Pauncefote's return to London, have made unusual rapid headway, as the Ambassador is able to consult daily with Lord Salisbury and Mr. Chamberlain concerning all questions of interest to the Foreign and Colonial Offices.

I would like to ask the First Minister, if it is true, that arrangements have been made for a commission to be appointed to settle the Alaskan boundary, and if the statements made in this despatch are correct.

The PRIME MINISTER (Sir Wilfrid Laurier). I have to say to my hon. friend, that the Montreal "Gazette" is evidently astray. The question is to-day in the same position that we left it at Washington. When we left it at Washington, as it has been stated on the floor of the House, and I can repeat now, substantial progress had been made upon most of the questions submitted to the commission, with the single exception of the Alaskan boundary. On that question, as the House knows, we could not come to an agreement, we could not agree to accept the terms which were laid down by our American fellow-commissioners, and we referred the matter to the two Governments interested, which have had it in hand ever since.

#### THE CASE OF MR. CHRISTIE.

Mr. ROCHE. Before the Orders of the Day are called, I move :

That all the papers brought down to the House relating to the case of Mr. Christie, lately an officer in the Inland Revenue Department at Winnipeg, be referred to the Committee on Public Accounts.

Mr. SPEAKER. This motion should be made under the head of motions.

Mr. FOSTER. That is true, but the committee are very eagerly waiting to be called together, and this business will be taken up at the first meeting.

The PRIME MINISTER (Sir Wilfrid Laurier). I have no objection ; but this is not the proper time.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. It is only by consent.

Motion agreed to.

#### FRIENDLY SOCIETY INSURANCE.

Mr. MONTAGUE. Two or three weeks ago, the Minister of Finance introduced a Bill dealing with the question of friendly society insurance. Since that time, we notice in the public press that the Canadian Fraternal Association, which represents all these societies, have made certain representations to the department over which the hon. gentleman presides. It has also been stated in the public press that the local Government of the province of Ontario have made representations, presumably upon the question of the powers of this Parliament to deal with the question referred to in the Bill. These matters have, no doubt, been under the consideration of the Government. The matter is of considerable importance to a great number of these societies, and, if the Bill is to be pressed, they desire to call their members together, and I should like to ask the hon. Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding), whether the Government have yet formed a policy upon this question, as to whether they intend to proceed this year with the Bill or not.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE (Mr. Fielding). Mr. Speaker, I shall be glad to avail myself of the hon. gentleman's question to make a statement upon the subject. It is correct, as the hon. gentleman has said, that I was waited upon by a deputation representing fraternal organizations, who stated to me that before further action on the Bill they desired an opportunity of calling their various bodies together to consider its provisions. It was represented that the calling of special meetings of these societies would entail considerable expense. In consideration of that I have decided not to proceed with the Bill during the current year. An announcement will be sent to-day to the gentleman at the head of the deputation which did me the honour to wait on me upon the subject. As to the second question of my hon. friend, I may say that the Government of Ontario did make representations on the subject touching the constitutionality of the measure. I think that they have some erroneous impression as to the aim and intention of the Bill. However, as we are not to proceed with it this session, no