

mountains situated parallel to the coast? and (2) what is the coast?

Without pursuing the inquiry too minutely or entering into many of its details, it is proposed to set down here briefly the British and American interpretations of this treaty, in so far as their respective contentions can be ascertained from the published views and utterances of public men in Canada and the United States, for neither Government has as yet given out an official statement of its claim.

Fortunately for our purpose, however, the Honourable John W. Foster, *ex-Secretary of State of the United States*, and a member of the International Joint High Commission, has taken the somewhat unusual course in a plenipotentiary, during the progress of a negotiation in which he is engaged, of contributing to a magazine \* an article—and a very full and interesting article it is—on the subject of the Alaska boundary. In view of General Foster's recognised position as a high authority on the subject of which he treats, this paper must be deemed to be an authentic, if informal, presentation of the case of the United States Government.

While no British commissioner has been so considerate as General Foster in this respect, Canada's claim can nevertheless be stated here with all needful accuracy.

At the outset it may be observed that there exists a very general agreement to the effect that the negotiators of the treaty of 1825 relied largely upon Vancouver's charts and the narrative of his voyages for their information respecting the physical features of the country with which they found themselves called upon to deal. Both parties concur in holding Cape Muzon to be the southernmost point of Prince of Wales Island, though, as a matter of fact, it is not on Prince of Wales Island at all, and both acknowledge that the body of water to-day known as Portland Canal is, despite the erroneous description in the treaty, the channel along which the line is to ascend. Here, however, agreement ends. The United States holds that the line should enter Portland Channel by what since 1853 has been known as Portland Inlet, which is a part of the waters named by Vancouver 'Observatory Inlet.' The British contention is that the Portland Channel of the treaty is the channel so marked on Vancouver's charts and described in his narrative in terms that leave no doubt as to the body of water to

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\* *The National Geographic Magazine*, November, 1899.