

# Messenger and Visitor.

THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER,  
VOLUME LXI.

THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR  
VOLUME I.

Vol. XV.

ST. JOHN, N. B., WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 9, 1899.

No. 32

## The Alaska Boundary.

A special correspondent of the 'New York Herald,' who is investigating the Alaska boundary question from a Canadian point of view, has sent to that journal a statement of the matter obtained from Hon. Mr. Mills, Minister of Justice in the Dominion Government. What Mr. Mills says shows how difficult of interpretation is that portion of the treaty of 1825 which assumed to define the boundary between British territory and the Russian possessions in Alaska afterwards acquired by the United States. We quote from Mr. Mills' statement as follows:

Under the treaty of 1825 the line drawn between the recognized territory of Russia and Great Britain was begun at the south-east of Prince of Wales Island, and from that point was to ascend north along the channel called Portland Channel. This could hardly be the channel, called Portland Channel in modern maps, because Portland Channel of this day lies due east from the southern extremity of Prince of Wales Island, a distance of 130 miles. The line was to ascend the channel to a point on the coast on the fifty-sixth degree of north latitude. Now, what is known as Portland Channel falls short of that point. The line was also to extend north in such a way as to leave Prince of Wales Island to Russia. If the boundary had started from the south extremity of Prince of Wales Island and run due east, it would have left the whole of the island to Russia, but if drawn north from the south extremity it would have cut off a small portion of the south-east end of the island. So the treaty would indicate a line drawn up that channel which is east of Prince of Wales Island to the fifty-sixth degree of north latitude, a point which could not be reached by what is now known as Portland Channel. So you see the initial point of the boundary is in controversy. The boundary when it reached the fifty-sixth degree was to follow the summit of the mountains, which extend in a line parallel to the coast from the fifty-sixth degree to the intersection with the 141st parallel, but when the mountains prove to be more than ten marine leagues from the coast, the limit between the British possessions and the coast was to be a line parallel to the winding of the coast, but which should never exceed a distance of ten marine leagues. It is clear that the makers of treaty assumed that there was a mountain range which for the most part was within ten leagues of the coast.

The most important point in dispute is as to the meaning of the words "a line parallel to the winding of the coast." The British-Canadian view is that the general coast line is meant, without reference to narrow arms of the sea or inlets—such as the Lynn Canal, while the United States' contention is that the boundary line runs inland ten leagues from the head of such inlets, unless a line of mountains parallel to the coast lies nearer. Mr. Mills says:

If a line were drawn around the head of Lynn inlet, as the United States contends it should be, the point where it passed that inlet would be at least 20 leagues from the coast. . . . The United States refuse to arbitrate unless we abandon our claim to the Lynn canal. Why should we abandon it? If it is ours, why should we not have it? The British commissioners offered to compromise. The United States rejected the offer, because it recognized our claim to Pyramid Harbor and a strip of territory leading therefrom to what is indisputably our territory in the Yukon. Under this compromise the United States would have held both Dyea and Skagway, which, we think are in Canadian territory.

## Sir James Edgar.

To the remarkably large number of our public men who have passed away during the present session of Parliament is now added Sir James Edgar, speaker of the House of Commons. Sir James Edgar had been in failing health for some time past, and his duties during the long session had been performed in much pain and weakness. Ten days before his death he went to Toronto and submitted to an operation, from

which good results were hoped for, but his strength proved insufficient to enable him to rally permanently and he passed away, at his home in Toronto, on the evening of Monday of last week. Sir James Edgar was a native of Lennoxville, Que., and was a lawyer by profession. He entered public life in 1872 as a member of the Ontario Legislature, and though not continuously in Parliament since that date, he was a man of large political and parliamentary experience. He stood well in his profession, was a man of much strength of character, possessed large political influence and commanded general respect both for his ability and his character. He had been a stalwart member of the Liberal party, and in 1896 he was elected Speaker of the House of Commons, which honorable office he filled with dignity and firmness and in a way to command the general respect of members on both sides of the House. Sir James Edgar was born in 1841 and was accordingly comparatively a young man. He is the sixteenth member of the House of Commons to be taken away by death during the present Parliament. Sir James Edgar's successor in the speakership is Mr. Thomas Bain, member for South Wentworth, who was chosen on the nomination of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, seconded by Sir Charles Tupper. Mr. Bain is of Scotch descent, a retired farmer 65 years of age and an experienced Parliamentarian, having represented his constituency in the House since 1872.

## The Transvaal Resolution.

It can hardly be said to be in line with the traditions of the Canadian Parliament that cognizance should be taken of the relation of the Imperial Government to a semi independent state, as was done on Monday last in the House of Commons in the "Transvaal resolution," moved by the Premier and (in the absence of Sir Charles Tupper) seconded by Hon Mr. Foster. It is, however, not unlikely that Mr. Chamberlain considers that such a resolution will not be without value in adding to the weight of that moral influence which the British Government is now bringing to bear upon President Kruger and his Volksraad in the interest of the Uitlanders. The resolution which was adopted unanimously by the House is as follows:

"That this House has viewed with regret the complications which have arisen in the Transvaal republic, of which Her Majesty is suzerain, from the refusal to accord to Her Majesty's subjects, now settled in that region, any adequate participation in its government;

"That this House has learned with still greater regret that the condition of things there existing has resulted in intolerable oppression, and has produced great and dangerous excitement among several classes of Her Majesty's subjects in her south African possessions;

"That this House, representing a people who have largely succeeded by the adoption of the principle of conceding equal political rights to every portion of the population in harmonizing estrangements and in producing general content with the existing system of government, desires to express its sympathy with the efforts of Her Majesty's Imperial authorities to obtain for the subjects of Her Majesty, who have taken up their abode in the Transvaal such measure of justice and political recognition as may be found necessary to secure them in the full possession of equal rights and liberties."

## A Firm Position.

It is evident that the Imperial Government has decided upon a firm policy in reference to the Transvaal difficulties. The situation would seem to be such that President Kruger must choose between making what Great Britain will approve as reasonable concessions to the Uitlanders, and war. Recent public utterances of Lord Salisbury and his prominent colleagues

indicate that the ministers are standing together in this matter. Lord Salisbury declared in the House of Lords that the Convention of 1881 provided for equality of treatment of the white races in South Africa and intimated that the Government would stand firmly by that principle. In line with this is a vigorous speech by Mr. Balfour before the Midland Conservative Association. Mr. Chamberlain would seem to have voiced the position of the Government very fairly when he said in the House of Commons: "We have come to the conclusion that the grievances of the Outlanders are substantial and the situation is a matter of Imperial concern. We have taken up their case, and we are bound to see it through. We shall not rest until a conclusion satisfactory in our estimation has been reached." From the line of policy thus indicated there appears to be no vigorous dissent either in Parliament or in the country. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's speech in the debate on the subject was regarded as being in support of the Government's policy, and other Liberal leaders were silent. Preparations for war on the part of Great Britain are still proceeding, though it is doubtless expected that the demonstration now given that the Colonial Secretary in his demands on behalf of the Uitlanders is vigorously supported by the Government and the British nation will prove a sufficient moral influence to secure reasonable concessions and make harsher measures unnecessary.

## France and the Dreyfus Case.

President Loubet appears to have found in M. Gallifet, the new Minister of War, the man whom the exigencies of the situation in France demanded,—a man possessing the wisdom and courage necessary to curb the arrogance of certain army chiefs whose high-handed disregard for truth and justice had brought the nation to the brink of calamity. All accounts indicate that M. Gallifet is administering the military affairs of France with an even-handed justice and strength that is commanding for the Government a respect of the best classes and which should prove most salutary for the army and for the nation. Among the acts of the new Minister of War is the deposition from the Council of War of General Négrier, a brilliant and very popular officer, because, after the decision of the Court of Cassation ordering Dreyfus back to France for retrial, he went about censuring the Government—and that in the presence of subordinate officers—for its failure to defend the army, and declaring that if the Government refused to interfere the army must act in self-defense. General Pellieux also has been dismissed from the military governorship of Paris, because of partizan action in the Dreyfus case and because of deliberate falsehood in a matter in which his honor was involved. In the new trial which Dreyfus is to have the sphere of investigation is to be strictly limited to the points upon which the accused was originally convicted, so that it will not be possible for his enemies to introduce new charges. The Minister of War has also announced the decision—against the contention of the anti-Dreyfus Military leaders—that military law is not independent of civil law and that the decisions of the Court of Cassation are authoritative with the court martial. This vigorous policy, adopted by President Loubet and his Minister of War, is naturally stirring up the anti-Dreyfus element in the country to fierce wrath and opposition, and all the basest arts known to demagogues are being employed to excite the populace against the Government. What the end is to be time will disclose. There appear, however, to be good grounds for hope that the cause of justice will be vindicated.