

The close of our work was soon followed by the purchase of the territory from Russia by the United States. For nearly sixteen years the immense region, thus acquired, hung in the political firmament, like Mahommed's coffin, neither a foreign country nor yet on the solid ground of a legally organized territory of the Union.

During this period, recently brought to a close by the establishment of a legal government, exploration continued more or less active. The agents of the general government visited many parts of the territory. The emissaries of the Smithsonian Institution, inspired by Baird and Henry, spared no endeavors to gather and record facts bearing on all branches of science.

The signal service established meteorological stations. The Army sent officers to determine the northeastern boundary on the Yukon. The Navy visited numerous ports and brought back precious documents and collections. The Revenue Marine contributed, through the researches of its officers, an immense mass of material and observation. The Coast Survey utilized to the utmost its opportunities and with satisfactory success.

Other agents of the United States, either as revenue or census officers, contributed their quota. Something was gained through the Arctic expedition of the unfortunate De Long and the others sent to rescue or discover the fate of his party.

The International Polar Station at Point Barrow, though planted upon the most inhospitable soil, has borne excellent fruit, some of which is yet to be made publicly accessible.

Even foreign lands have contributed to the work. The wonderful voyage of the Vega, with her wintering on the adjacent coast of Siberia, and subsequent visit to American shores, is known to every one. Pinart's philological tours, the admirable work done by the brothers Krause, and the indefatigable journeys of Capt. Jacobsen, cannot be overlooked.

In all this activity there was of course much inferior work done by persons unqualified either by training or habits of accurate observation. Numerous petty agents of the Treasury have reported from time to time, in documents of fortunately limited circulation, some of which reveal to the student official Bunsbyism of the purest breed.

The same observation has been repeatedly made, each time announced, in good faith, as new. Explorations over routes