

return for it, and the sooner we adopt a policy in this country on the line of the bill introduced by the hon. member for Shell River, the sooner our neighbours will learn that we are an independent people and capable of governing ourselves.

Hon. Mr. MILLER—It is rather an unusual thing to have a bill introduced under a notice of inquiry, but for my own part I heartily agree with the spirit and substance of the bill and should be glad to see the plain word "retaliation" applied to the United States in every matter where this country could properly apply it. We should give them a Roland for an Oliver in every instance in which they attempt to interfere with us unjustly. The sooner we do that and show them that we can assert our own rights, the sooner we will cease to be troubled with such legislation as we have recently seen enacted by the United States Senate wherever the least controversy arises. Under the Washington treaty the free navigation of the St. Lawrence was given over for ever to the United States, subject of course to the customs laws of Canada, just as the free navigation of the Stikine and the Yukon on the Pacific coast was continued to Canada as those privileges had been exercised when that country was owned by Russia. What would be thought of Canada—and I think the parallel not a far-fetched one—if this parliament were to pass a bill declaring that the United States would not have the free navigation of the River St. Lawrence unless they gave us permission to kill seal on the Pribiloff Islands? It would be almost the same as to say we shall not have the free navigation of the Stikine and Yukon under the same conditions as they enjoy the navigation of the St. Lawrence unless we give them up our rights to our fisheries on the Atlantic coast. What would be thought if we introduced such legislation as that and it passed this Senate even though it never became law? As the hon. Minister of Justice says, I do not think the bill which passed the Senate of the United States will ever pass both branches of Congress, much less do I believe that it will ever receive the signature of the president, but if we passed a bill of that kind here what would be said of us? Still it would be a parallel case to the action of the United States Senate in connection with the Stikine and Yukon Rivers.

SUBAQUEOUS LEASES IN THE YUKON DISTRICT.

INQUIRY.

Hon. Mr. MACDONALD (B.C.)—Inquired :

Have subaqueous leases in the Yukon district for more than thirty miles in length been granted to a certain Mr. Russell of New Brunswick, and a certain Mr. Mercier of Quebec—or to any other person or persons? If so, on what date were the leases executed? How many miles have been granted to each person or company? Has the amount of rental in full been paid in each case?

He said: Last session the rumour appeared that some parties were to get a lease of one hundred miles of the Stewart River, in the Yukon district, and a number of hon. gentlemen on this side of the House took objection to that, and said it was too much to give to any person or company. We have never heard anything more of that lease. This session, just before the House adjourned for two weeks, I called the attention of the hon. Minister of Justice to a report which appeared in the papers that a Mr. Russell had obtained a lease of some three hundred miles, and a Mr. Mercier a lease of some two hundred and eighty miles. At the time the hon. Minister of Justice could not give the information that I wanted, and that is why I put the inquiry on the notice paper. I hope the reports are not true, and that the government have not been guilty of giving away such large stretches of river to individuals or companies. The government themselves, by their own regulations, limit the extent of any lease to thirty miles.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—I am advised by the Minister of the Interior that 30 miles is the extreme limit granted to any party, and that neither Mr. Russell nor Mr. Mercier has been granted any such stretch of river as the hon. gentleman states. I am informed that no leases have yet been granted, though parties may have applied and paid in money. The better way would be for the hon. gentleman to move for the papers, and then we can get at the exact facts. It would appear, from what I have seen in the papers, that a number of persons have applied for leases.

Hon. Mr. MACDONALD (B.C.)—I merely wished to call the attention of the government to the fact and state that such leases should not be granted. If one man