

whether from the ocean or from the interior of the continent, shall for ever enjoy the right of navigating freely and without any hindrance whatever all the rivers and streams which in their course towards the Pacific Ocean may cross the line of demarcation upon the line of coast described in article three of the present convention.

We were put on just the same footing, the footing of complete equality, with Russia by that treaty; and when the United States took over Alaska from Russia, they took it over subject to the provisions of that treaty. Unfortunately some four years after the United States took over that country from Russia, a gentleman was sent from Ottawa to Washington to represent Canada at the deliberations which resulted in the treaty of Washington, and that gentleman knew so little about the previous history of the question that he accepted, instead of that complete and free use for all purposes of all the rivers running through this strip of country to the Pacific Ocean—he accepted the free use, for commercial purposes, only of three rivers. If we are in rather a box, the person responsible is the gentleman who was for so long a time the leader of the Conservative party.

Hon. Mr. MACDONALD (B.C.)—Is it not a fact that the rights granted under the Russian treaty fell entirely to the ground when Alaska was ceded to the United States, and we could only have rights under the treaty of Washington?

Hon. Mr. POWER—No. After the treaty of Washington had modified the terms of the treaty of St. Petersburg, I presume it would be useless to contend that we could go back to the treaty of St. Petersburg; but if the representative of Canada had been as familiar with what had taken place between Russia and Great Britain as he should have been, he should simply have held on to what we had already, and not given it away and taken something less.

Hon. Mr. MACDONALD (B.C.)—I remember very well in this House when the treaty of Washington came up for discussion and the navigation of the Yukon, the Porcupine and the Stikine Rivers was spoken of, hon. gentlemen laughed at the idea of those rivers being open for us. Now we are receiving the benefit of that bargain.

Hon. Mr. POWER—That only shows there were other people who were not very

wise as well as the gentleman who negotiated the treaty.

Hon. Mr. BOULTON—Our rights date from the Washington treaty.

Hon. Mr. POWER—They do now. One great advantage which the route selected by the government has is that it will not pass over any United States territory or over any waters to which the United States have exclusive rights. Another advantage is that if our neighbours act in an unfriendly manner, the railway can be continued from Telegraph Creek or Glenora to some port in British Columbia. In paragraph five of the contract provision is made for this contingency. As I have contended the route selected by the government has a great many advantages; now what are the drawbacks? One drawback is that it is open only for part of the year, but that same statement is true of every route from the Pacific Ocean to the Klondike region. It is also true that if our neighbours are disposed to be unreasonable—I trust they will not be so disposed—they may somewhat hamper our traffic. That also is true of every other route, but more so of other routes than of this one, because the only point where any difficulty can occur at all on this line is at the point of transshipment. We should look at the thing in a calm and deliberate way. I do not think that any hon. gentleman in the opposition here is anxious—I am sure no hon. gentleman ought to be anxious—to hurthistorical opponents by finding fault with an agreement which on the whole is a good one. My own honest feeling is that the government have chosen what is, under the circumstances, the best available plan for reaching the Klondike.

Hon. Mr. MACDONALD (B.C.)—We do not oppose the route at all. It is the payment we oppose.

Hon. Mr. POWER—I shall deal with that a little later on. We have very strong evidence of the fact that the government have chosen what, on the whole, was under the circumstances, the best available route for getting into the Klondike, in the fact that the leader of the opposition, a gentleman who is familiar with the question, who has been out in British Columbia and who has been interesting himself in the best method of getting into the Klondike region,