

Hon. Mr. MILLS—Does the hon. gentleman think that we ought to be content with a road from the head of Lynn Canal into our own territory?

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON—I shall come to that very soon.

Hon. Mr. MILLS—I thought my hon. friend had come to it and was passing it.

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON—I admit there are difficulties in connection with this coast strip, but I take this ground: I can see no reason for refusing permission to the people of the United States to build a railway into our country, if we get a reciprocal advantage of locating a railway over that coast strip, unless a provision is contained in the contract which is not yet in it that Mackenzie & Mann will be precluded for ever from passing their charter over to foreigners. What is the use of refusing permission to Americans to build a road over our territory if you leave the gate open to them to acquire or buy a railway for which we are giving a domain? I cannot see it. I think it is a most extraordinary thing that that contract should come down to us without a provision forbidding these contractors from assigning that property to United States companies.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—No; they will not have the opportunity of doing it.

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON—If the hon. gentleman leaves the door open to them, they will have an opportunity if they want it.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—They will not have the door left open; you need not be afraid.

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON—I have not such unbounded confidence in the hon. gentleman and his contractors that I would leave them the power to do what they choose. This is a dangerous thing, and I am not going to take the ground that we should not reserve to Canadians the trade of that country, by securing an all-Canadian route into it. I am inclined to believe that is what we ought to do, even though it should cost us a good deal; but I say it is extremely inconsistent for gentlemen of this government to say that they would not ask the Americans for permission to locate a railway on their territory, and refuse them to penetrate our country with railroads, while they leave

this contract without a provision for preventing the passing over of this railroad, that is going to cost us so much, into the hands of United States capitalists. The bonding system has also been discussed, and it appears that difficulties are met with in respect of these privileges, and perhaps some of the whispered arguments may refer to difficulties over the bonding system. There is also another difficulty with regard to transshipment, that difficulty will be met with, I think, more pointedly at the mouth of the Stikine River than perhaps at any other place, because it is a question of navigation which we would not meet at the head of Lynn Canal. I do not know whether we can get over the bonding system by the Stikine River route. It is certain we will meet this difficulty at the other point at the head of Lynn Canal, and I think it is likely we shall meet it at the Stikine as well. That brings me to the subject which was referred to by three hon. gentlemen who have spoken on the other side of the House. The Secretary of State gave an explanation to the House, and gave us some very interesting information with regard to the difficulties about this boundary. I followed him with close attention, and was pleased with the information which the hon. gentleman gave us with regard to the line of demarcation between the United States possessions and those of Great Britain on that coast; but he made this statement: that the Russians were simply allowed to use that coast on sufferance for the curing of their fish.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—I am sure I did not use the word sufferance.

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON—I may be wrong in using the word sufferance, but the hon. gentleman said it was for the purpose of curing their fish. As I understand the history of it, the Russians held that coast by right of discovery. There was no question about the right of Russia to that coast and their claim went even further south than the end of Prince of Wales Island, but while it was settled that that should be the southern limit of their possessions on that coast, the British held the interior of the country through the Hudson Bay Company and other British subjects pressing very near to the coast, and that accounts for the strip that was settled by the treaty of St. Petersburg of 1825. There was another point referred to very