

which is quite important. In the original treaty between Great Britain and Russia, in 1825, there was an express stipulation for all time to come, the words are "for ever"—that all the streams crossing Russian territory were to be free and open on equal terms to the people of both Russia and Great Britain. It was not simply the privilege of using the rivers for commercial purposes, it was an absolute right or equal interest in those rivers that Russia then had, and that was the position of matters down to 1866. Why it was that Great Britain or Canada made no protest at that time when the United States purchased Alaska with this provision which was guaranteed by Russia, and which was a part of a solemn treaty, and why it was not made also a part of the treaty between the United States and Russia when the sale took place, I am unable to explain. I know not who was to blame for it, or why attention was not called to it. Subsequently, in 1871, in the Treaty of Washington, provision was made that Canada should have the right of navigation for commercial purposes of the Yukon and the Porcupine and the Stikine, but hon. gentlemen will notice that that is a very much more limited interpretation of the terms of the original treaty than the language of the treaty itself. I do not know who is to blame, if any one is to blame, for all this omission, but there is the fact. The original treaty is clear and plain which gave us an equal interest in those rivers. Our interest now is somewhat restricted. We use those rivers simply for commercial purposes, as the United States use the St. Lawrence. As I said before, there were two companies incorporated to build railways from the coast: neither of those companies made any overtures or proposals to go on with the work. A gentleman representing a very wealthy English syndicate, Mr. Kersey, who had sent persons up into the section between the Stikine and Teslin Lake in order to examine the country with a view of building a railway, announced that this company were going to put steamers on the Stikine and on the waterways between the Stikine and Dawson and the Yukon River. After getting his reports, I understand he went to England a few months ago to confer with the people whom he represented. He returned to this country four weeks ago but made no direct proposition to the govern-

ment. He did express, unofficially a desire to secure the contract for the building of a railway, but he said that the company, in addition to any land grant, would require a money subsidy. We did not feel that it would be advisable or prudent to give a money subsidy. We know how uncertain mining interests are. For the present, while marvellous wealth has been found to exist in the Klondike and in Bonanza Creek, and in three or four other creeks in that region, there was no certainty that that extended over the whole territory, and therefore we hesitated about giving a money subsidy. We probably should have been censured, if we had done so, by the very gentlemen who say "Oh it would be much better to give a money subsidy than the land." We said "if this railway can be built without putting the people of Canada to any great expense it should be built." A land subsidy does not involve taxing the people. Hon. gentlemen regard it now as a valuable heritage. Two years ago they did not regard it as of any value, because it has no value unless it has a mineral value. It is simply bare rocks that have no possible value except for the minerals beneath the surface, and therefore we felt that if the road could be built and the country opened up by a land subsidy we should be amply justified in granting it. There were no contractors—I say it without any hesitation—that were superior to those men. They knew something about the country and knew where to lay their hands on bodies of men and plant. They were prepared to do the work and do it instantly, and put up a forfeit of a quarter of a million if they did not. There were not many men in Canada who would undertake to do that. They wanted a large land subsidy and a money subsidy as well, but we said "it cannot be done; we will not give you a money subsidy, we will not take the peoples money to develop that place yet; it is too uncertain a thing." It may be a good thing and we hope it will for the country but we cannot at present draw any such conclusion.

Hon. Mr. BOULTON—Why did you not take the land from the province of British Columbia?

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—We would have to confer with the province of British Columbia first. British Columbia has offered