

of entry and exit shall be secured during the coming summer. If the government did not do this they would be condemned, and condemned with a certain degree of justice. That is one point. There is no question about that. It is equally clear that no railroad could be secured during the present season without help from the government. There was some vague intimation from some hon. gentleman that there were companies who were ready to build without any help from the government; but there were two companies, one at any rate was supposed to be a very strong company, which received powers from this parliament last session—the British Yukon Company and another, which proposed to go in by the Taku Inlet, and the name of which I do not now remember; but neither of these companies, as far as I am aware, has done anything in the way of building a railway, and neither of them has made any offer to the government of a practical character. Now, hon. gentlemen, if public help was to be given to a road into the Klondike region, the road should be such as to confer the largest practicable benefit on Canada, Canadian farmers, manufacturers and business men, consistent with its being opened during the present year. Has that been provided for in the contract entered into by the government? I think it has. I say that, after giving the contract as careful consideration as I reasonably could. I think the contract if it is carried out will have that effect. There is only one danger, one serious interruption to navigation, between the head of Teslin Lake and Dawson City, and that is an interruption composed of three or four boulders in the course of the river, which I understand can be removed at a trifling expense.

Hon. Mr. BOULTON—What is stopping Major Walsh?

Hon. Mr. POWER—The cold weather. That, I am informed by a gentleman whose business it is to be informed on the subject, is the fact, that those three or four boulders are the only obstacles to navigation from Teslin Lake down, and that these can be removed at trifling expense, the figure mentioned being something less than \$10,000. Then, I am also informed by the same gentleman, that there are, when the water is high, over four feet and almost at all times

three feet of water in the Stikine River, so that the 150 miles of railway which are provided to be built under this contract, will connect with satisfactory navigation at each end; both the termini of this railway will be in Canadian territory; and the Stikine River is free to our commerce under the treaty of Washington. Hon. gentlemen may say that although it is free under the treaty of Washington, still we may be hampered in our use of it by our neighbours. That is possible, but can any hon. gentleman tell me any other route of which the same is not true, and of which the same is not more true than of this one? If you go up to the head of the Lynn Canal, or anywhere in that neighbourhood, you have to go for miles over United States territory. If you go up the Yukon, the navigation of which is made free to us, you have to spend a much longer time, and the difficulties are such that it would be impracticable to navigate the Yukon if the United States authorities interfered with our steamers getting fuel on the way up. The only difficulty in the case of the Stikine River is just the fact that there may be some little difficulty raised with reference to our goods being forwarded in bond, being transhipped at the mouth of the Stikine River, but I do not think there is reason to suppose there will be any serious difficulty in connection with that matter; and there is no other route which is less open to the raising difficulties by our neighbours than the route by the Stikine.

Hon. Mr. MACDONALD (B.C.)—The Portland Canal?

Hon. Mr. POWER—It will take more than one summer to build a railway to the Portland Canal.

Hon. Mr. MACDONALD (B.C.)—Yes, it will take two years anyway.

Hon. Mr. POWER—And in this case one of the things the government had to bear in mind was that the way should be opened during the coming summer. If we are hampered in the Stikine River, it may be well just to refer briefly to the reason why we are hampered. Under the convention of St. Petersburg between Russia and Great Britain signed at St. Petersburg in 1825, the sixth paragraph contains this provision:

It is understood that the subjects of His Britannic Majesty, from whatever quarter they may arrive