

sad fate to lose during the recess, and I thank him all the more because his kindly remarks have dispensed me from dwelling further on that subject.

I am glad also to join with my hon. friend in the congratulations and the generous tribute which he has paid to the mover and seconder of the address. My hon. friend from Haldimand (Mr. Thompson) and my hon. friend from St. John and Iverville (Mr. Demers) are still young members, and although their parliamentary careers have been short they have both taken high rank on the floor of this House. We have heard them before; we knew what they were and we knew what they could do. To-day we have had further cause for admiration, but we had no cause for surprise at what they said and how they said it.

I have, however, to take issue with my hon. friend (Mr. Borden) on the subject, matter of his speech, although as regards its tone and its language I think it was in excellent parliamentary style. On one or two points the hon. gentleman was hypercritical and perhaps even carping. But I must do the hon. gentleman the credit of saying that he is not half so bad as he makes himself out to be when he is speaking from his place on the opposite side of the House. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Borden) has been endowed by nature with a fair and judicial mind, and I readily believe that if he always spoke his own judgment from the seat which he now adorns, he would sometimes revise the opinions to which he gives utterance. But the hon. gentleman belongs to a party which a long possession of power has confirmed in the belief that they were born to rule; and so, regarding power as their own attribute they are ready to believe when they are defeated that they have been robbed of their own. Thus, whenever they have been deprived of power, they are more or less in a bad humour, and like Rachel mourning her lost children they refuse to be comforted.

My hon. friend has asked information from me on certain subjects, some of which are referred to in the speech and some of which are not. He has made an earnest appeal to me to give him a frank statement of the position which we occupy in regard to the Alaskan boundary. I shall answer that appeal in the spirit in which it was made.

At long last a treaty has been made for the settlement of that vexed question which has for years been pending. It is a question of great importance inasmuch as, if not settled, it could lead to very serious and even perhaps to very dangerous consequences. A treaty has been negotiated by His Majesty's ambassador at Washington and the Secretary of State of the United States for the settlement of that question. As to the treaty itself I am bound to say that in my opinion at all events—with the single

exception of a very slight blemish to which I shall allude presently—the treaty is eminently fair. The treaty provides for a reference of the boundary to a court to be composed of six impartial jurists of repute, that is to say, the commission has been entrusted with the task of determining what is the boundary as created by the treaty of 1825 between Russia and Great Britain. It is not a compromise; it is not an arbitration; there is no giving and no taking; but it is simply to have a judicial interpretation of what is the true boundary; each party agreeing in advance to accept the boundary as it may be declared, and whatever loss it may give to the other. This is a great victory. I consider, in one way, that we have obtained over the pretensions which have been hitherto advanced by the United States. Up to the present time the United States have refused, steadily refused any kind of reference of that question if the consequences were to entail to them any loss of territory. This is one of the questions which was referred in 1898 to the Joint High Commission. We had it before us on more than one occasion, and we had discussions of long duration with reference to it, but it always came to this at the end: that the United States would not agree to any terms except on condition that the possessions that they have at the present time were made theirs beyond doubt. The question has involved some serious consideration from the fact that it is possible, that the boundary, after it has been delimited by the commission, may perhaps show that some territory which now is occupied by one party really belongs to the other. Take for example the town of Skagway, which is now in the possession of the United States. It is possible that the boundary which is going to be delimited under this commission may show that Skagway does not belong to the United States but to Great Britain. Up to the present time the United States would not agree to any treaty whatever which might place their ownership of Skagway, and similar territories in jeopardy. They wanted to make it sure, that in any event, whatever the result might be, their possessions, including Skagway, should remain in the territory of the United States. The Joint Commission had proposed in 1898, and in 1899 when we sat at Washington, that as it was a case somewhat parallel to the case of Venezuela, the precedent of Venezuela should apply. The rule which had been laid down by the Venezuelan treaty under somewhat similar conditions to this was as follows:—there were three principles laid down but it is sufficient for the purpose of this discussion to cite only this one:—

In determining the boundary, if territory of one party shall be found by the tribunal to have been at the date of this treaty in the