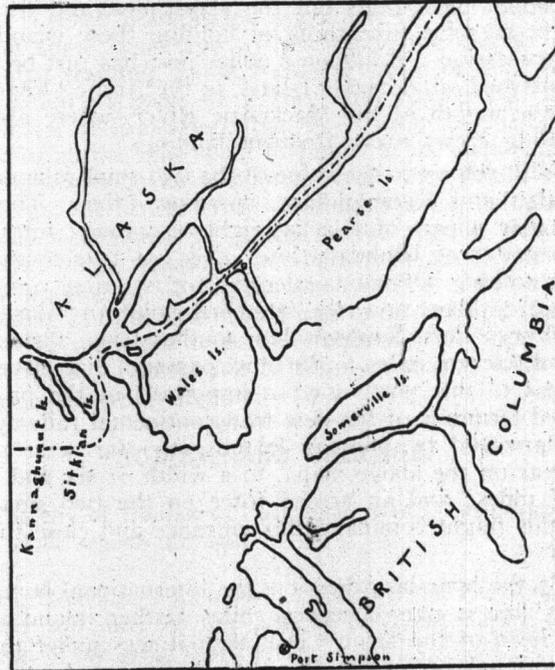


ities at Washington that it was time to go on with the project without the consent of Colombia. President Roosevelt was about to say, in his message to Congress, that the United States must forthwith take the matter into its own hands, when something happened at the isthmus. On the 3rd of November some revolutionists in the city of Panama, with the subsequent approval of the soldiers and the inhabitants in general, formed a junta, or provisional government, and declared Panama an independent state. On the 6th, the United States acknowledged the junta as the ruling power in the isthmus, and ordered its warships, which had been sent there in anticipation of the movement, to prevent the Colombian government landing forces to reestablish its authority. At this, Colombia protested; but, before the protest could reach Washington, the United States had recognized the independence of the State of Panama, and had concluded with its junta a new canal treaty on terms more favorable than those refused by Colombia. By this treaty, the United States is to have perpetual control of a strip of territory through which the canal will run, with limited control over the terminal cities of Panama and Colon. Many newspapers and public men in the United States condemn the dismemberment of Colombia, though the majority support the administration. Germany has been the first of the great powers of Europe to recognize the independence of Panama, which involves its right to grant concessions and to alienate its territory.

Panama was one of the nine departments of the Republic of the United States of Colombia. Its area, comprising the Isthmus of Panama, is about twice that of Nova Scotia; and its population about equal to that of New Brunswick. Its inhabitants are chiefly Indians and half-castes, who have equal political rights with the few white people; a state of affairs which accounts in some measure for the unrest that usually prevails there, as in all the neighboring Spanish American States. Panama, a seaport on the Pacific coast, with a population of 30,000, is the chief town, and the oldest European settlement in America.

Twice before, the State of the Isthmus of Panama has had an independent existence for a short time,—once in 1840, and later beginning in 1856, when it took advantage of a strange provision in the federal constitution of that date, granting to each province the right to declare itself independent. Though there have been many changes in the Colombian constitution since then, varying from the loosest aggregation to the most rigid federal union, Panama, after it rejoined the federation, had a greater amount of home rule than any of the other provinces. This was partly due to the fact that mountains and swamps make its territory inaccessible from the mainland except by sea; and it was also due to this fact that the presence of United States war vessels could now keep the government troops from coming to put down the secession movement.

Lord Alverstone, the Lord Chief Justice of England, whose agreement with the United States commissioners settled the Alaska boundary by a majority decision, seems to have reached the conclusion that Portland Channel enters the sea by two mouths, one lying north of Kannaghunut and Sitklan Islands, the other now known as Tongas Passage, between Sitklan Island and Wales Island; and, since the latter is the more important of the two, he decided that the boundary should follow Tongas Passage.



To this the Canadian members of the tribunal, Sir Louis Jette and Mr. Aylesworth, objected so strongly that they refused to sign the award and published their reasons for dissenting. They argue that, according to the terms of the treaty which they were to interpret, Alaska was bounded on the south by Portland Channel, and could not extend farther south across waters which are admitted to be a part of that channel and include the two islands awarded to the United States. They even charge that the Lord Chief Justice, in so deciding, was making a concession to the United States for the purpose of reaching a decision.

There is, undoubtedly, throughout Canada, a feeling that we have need to beware of our aggressive neighbors on the south. Hostile legislation, continued talk of the future absorption of this Dominion into their political system, and their successful insistence upon territorial claims that seemed to us to mean an injury to Canada, with but little corresponding benefit to themselves, are the cause. This feeling strengthens the Imperial Federation movement, with the argument that the only independence we can hope to maintain is independence within the Empire to which we belong.