

on condition that Senators Lodge and Turner were to be members of the commission. However, that is aside from the question I was about to discuss. It will probably be conceded that that is the most important question and it is of the highest consequence we should get rid of it. As years go on unless the question is now settled it will resolve itself into this, that the United States will get all they claim. I do not desire to say anything harsh, but we know the unfortunate policy which has prevailed in the past. We, in Canada who are at all familiar with the history of this country since 1782, since the recognition of the 13 colonies, know very well that we would be a much stronger power and would have a very much more territory on this continent to-day, had Great Britain considered that this part of the world was really worth holding. The United States at that time had no claim whatever on the Pacific. It was a remote region that they never thought about. We might just as well have had that coast, certainly as far as the State of Washington, had any proper appreciation of its value been entertained by British statesmen. There is a story, I do not know its truth, but it is quite in line with the policy adopted at the time. John Jacob Astor was hastening up to a point on the coast where he planted the United States flag at Astoria, the mouth of the Columbia river, which was then considered the extreme boundary, leaving all north of the Columbia river to Britain. An official was sent out by the War Office to survey the land. He went west and saw nothing in Oregon and Washington territory but sage brush. He was a follower of Isaac Walton and cast his line in Columbia river and finding the fish not biting that day he reported that the country was 'not worth a damn—even the fish would not rise to the fly.' I do not vouch for the truth of the story but it is an illustration of the indifference exhibited by British statesmen many years ago in regard to the importance of maintaining a country favourable to the British crown on this side of the Atlantic. It is within the memory of most of us that prime ministers and leading statesmen of the empire expressed the opinion that it would be very much better to let the colonies go—that they considered them rather a burden and tax on the empire, so little value was at-

tached to the great colony that now is looming up and occupying the position of a young nation on this side of the Atlantic, and which the British people themselves are beginning to recognize as likely to be one day a valuable adjunct to maintaining and sustaining the British flag on this side of the Atlantic. Now, in reference to Alaska, as I said before it is of the first importance that the line be defined no matter where that line may be. As honourable gentlemen know, when the subject came before the commission at Washington, one condition was that at least Dyea and Skagway, even if found within British territory, should be retained as United States cities. It was a good deal to yield, but even that we would have been prepared to concede had there been a possibility of a finality being reached. Hon. gentlemen know that within the last few years, with very few exceptions in the United States the press and public men have been educating the people in the view that Canada has no claims—that there is no justification for our demand. The prevailing notion has been that from the heads of all the inlets for a distance of ten marine leagues they were entitled to the territory. We did not concur in that view, because the treaty speaks of the territory on the Pacific as a fringe of country. Now a fringe of country does not contemplate any interior sovereignty. Russia recognized that Great Britain held the interior of the country by the Hudson Bay Company and the North-west Company. They were rivals with the Russian Company on the Pacific coast, and by the treaty of 1825, the understanding was that the Russian traders and fishermen should have the liberty of landing on the coast, in every way similar to what the French have on what is called the French shore on the coast of Newfoundland.

After the treaty of 1825, very little attention was paid to that country. It was too remote, and Canada was in too primitive a condition to think of making any settlement in that direction. When in 1867 Russia for reasons sold the whole territory of Alaska to the United States for \$7,000,000, the United States did not regard it as a very valuable acquisition. In 1872, I think it was, negotiations were first commenced by the government of the day, Sir John Macdonald's government, to define the boundary between the new acquisition of