

Although the following may be irrelevant to the subject-matter under discussion, nevertheless the tenour thereof is worthy of the attention of Canadians, when negotiations with the United States are contemplated for settling the Alaskan boundary.

In a public document, United States' Geological Survey, Bulletin No. 13, p. 20, is found:—

"The Treaty of Cession" (France to the United States) "which bears date April 30, 1803, describes the territory only as being the same as ceded by Spain to France by the Treaty of San Ildefonso.

"From this it appears that the territory sold to the United States comprised that part of the drainage basin of the Mississippi which lies west of the course of the river, with the exception of such parts as were then held by Spain. The want of precise definition of limits in the Treaty was not objected to by the American Commissioners, as they probably foresaw that this very indefiniteness might prove of service to the United States in future negotiations with other Powers. In fact, the claims of the United States to the area now comprised in Oregon, Washington, and Idaho, in the negotiations with Great Britain regarding the north-western boundary, was ostensibly based, not only upon prior occupation and upon purchase from Spain, but also upon the alleged fact that this area formed part of the Louisiana purchase. That this claim was baseless is shown not only by what has been already detailed regarding the limits of the purchase, but also by the direct testimony of the French Plenipotentiary, M. Barbe Marbois."

With the foregoing before us, it is not unfair to assume that, if the United States think (which apparently they do) that there is any "indefiniteness" in the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1825, they would also be inclined to foresee "that this very indefiniteness might prove of service to the United States.

Canada must zealously guard her interests.

The Boundary Survey.

As before stated, the boundary-line resolves itself into three parts:—

1. The water boundary, and the part from the head of Portland Channel to the 56th parallel.

2. The mountain boundary from the 56th parallel to the 141st meridian.

3. The line of the 141st meridian.

The second part is by far the most important for consideration. It is futile to lay plans for survey, if there is no definite understanding what is to be surveyed. Hence, before any satisfactory suggestions can be made regarding the survey of the boundary-line, Great Britain (or the more interested party, Canada) and the United States must come to a definite understanding on the three following principal points:—

1. The point of commencement of the line of demarcation or boundary-line.

2. What is Portland Channel or Canal as understood by the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1825?

3. Are there "mountains situated parallel to the coast" between the parallel of 56° north latitude and the meridian of 141° west longitude?

It is firmly believed that there are sufficient data to hand to settle these points without going in the field.

This could be done by the appointment of two Commissioners, one for Canada and one for the United States.

These Commissioners, after being vested with the necessary authority, to meet, discuss, and confer with each other on the points referred to.

After a full discussion, the Commissioners to make a joint Report to their respective Governments on such points as have been mutually agreed upon, besides making individual Reports to their respective Governments on those questions which have failed to receive a mutual solution.

These Commissioners should draft a plan for co-operation in the field, for co-operation will be necessary when the boundary-line question has reached that stage.

The Canadian Commissioner could ascertain too at Washington the details of the triangulation and astronomic work which has already been done on the coast of South-eastern Alaska, work upon which the boundary survey may be based for topography to a greater or less extent, and thereby avoid a repetition of observations and unnecessary cost.