

CORRESPONDENCE

RELATING TO THE

EASTERN BOUNDARY OF THE PROVINCE.

From Lieut.-Colonel D. R. Cameron, Royal Artillery, to the Right Honourable the Earl of Derby, K. G., Secretary of State for the Colonies.

LONDON, 29th October, 1884.

MY LORD,—With reference to the instructions communicated to me in letters of 29th July and 2nd September by the Under Secretary of State, I have the honour to inform Your Lordship that I have completed my examination of the papers tending to show the intention of Parliament as to the true location of the Eastern Boundary of British Columbia, and I have the honour to submit that the boundary intended runs the following course:—

Commencing at the intersection of the parallel of 49° north latitude with the line of watershed of the Rocky Mountains, northward along that line of watershed to its intersection with the meridian of 120° west longitude from Greenwich, thence northward by that meridian to its intersection with the parallel of 60° north latitude.

(Annexure 1)—British Columbia was first temporarily established as a Colony for five years, by the Act of 2nd August, 1858.

(Annexure 2 & 3)—Its boundaries were re-defined by the continuing Act of 28th July, 1863.

(Annexure 4)—It was united with Vancouver's Island, without alteration of its boundaries, by the Act of 6th August, 1866.

(Annexure 5)—And it was united to the Dominion of Canada by Order in Council of 16th May, 1871, with effect from 20th July, 1871, without change in its boundaries. Hence the Act of 6th August, 1866 (Annexure 4), governs the case under discussion.

The Bill of 1866 passed through all its stages in both Houses of Parliament without debate; and so far as it affects the boundaries of British Columbia may be considered a repetition of the Act of 1863 (Annexure 3).

(Annexure 3)—The continuing Act of 1863 was introduced by the Duke of Newcastle (Hansard, vol. clxxii., p. 54), who explained its objects to be to extend the Colony northward, and to continue the Act of 1858.

During a long debate which ensued, an allusion was made by the Earl of Donoughmore (Hansard, vol. clxxii., p. 54) to reported discoveries of gold at the head-waters of the Saskatchewan, i. e., to the east of the Rocky Mountains; but no suggestion was made by his Lordship, or by anyone else, to extend the Colony eastward, nor indeed even to vary the definition of the boundaries as submitted in the Bill.

The Bill passed through its subsequent stages to end through the House of Commons without any reference being made in debate to boundaries other than Mr. Fortescue's explanation (Hansard, clxxii., p. 1322)—“that its object was to extend the boundaries of British Columbia to the north, so as to include a tract of country in which there were indications of rich gold veins.” And on going into Committee, Mr. Fortescue's further remarks that “the Bill was merely for the continuance of an existing Act” (the Act of 1858 already referred to—Annexure 1) “and the annexation of a tract of country to the north of Columbia, and did not require much discussion.” No remark was made by any other Member of the House of Commons about the boundary, at this or at any future stage of the Bill.

Hence it is concluded that so much of the eastern boundary as was defined by the Act of 1858, was still intended to be part of the eastern boundary by the Acts of 1863 and 1866, or,