

thought that, under a treaty so greatly concerning the interests of Canada, and relating to a question which was more thoroughly understood in Canada than anywhere else, it would be a proper thing, especially on the invitation of the British government, to ask that three Canadian commissioners be appointed. And I may remark in passing that my hon. friend the Minister of the Interior (Hon. Mr. Sifton) who, I thought, spoke wisely on the question of the Alaskan boundary before the Canadian Club of Ottawa, remarked, in confirmation of my statement, that he would not have regarded it as revolutionary if the request had been made that three Canadian commissioners should be appointed. I agree with the Minister of the Interior that such a request would not be revolutionary. But, returning to the subject, I was discussing what took place in the proceedings of the Joint High Commission in connection with this question? My right hon. friend the Prime Minister laid before this House the protocols which were passed between the British commissioners and the United States commissioners, and the very first subject dealt with by the commission, according to these documents, was the Alaskan boundary. My right hon. friend wants Canada to negotiate her own treaties. But did not Canada on that occasion have the fullest possible opportunity to negotiate a treaty with regard to the Alaskan boundary? There are the protocols quoted in the speech of my right hon. friend two or three years ago, showing that this subject was first of all approached in the negotiations between the British and American commissioners. I would ask him, then, what greater treaty-making powers we could have than those conferred by the appointment of that commission? And what took place? After long delay, long deliberation, long negotiation, my right hon. friend and his colleagues surrendered to the foreign office of Great Britain the powers which had been conferred upon them in this matter. They themselves asked, as no agreement could be arrived at between the commissioners on either side, that the question should be relegated to the foreign office. And it was relegated to the foreign office. Well, while these negotiations were going on—I do not know whether they were going on before the commission or in the foreign office—a very important application was made by the United States. The United States desired Great Britain to make a certain modification of the convention known as the Clayton-Bulwer treaty. What was the position the British government took with regard to that? I will not quote again the language of Lord Lansdowne, which I have under my hand and which I quoted last year. Let it be sufficient to say that Lord Lansdowne, so

far as one could understand his language, took the ground that until some arrangement was made for the adjustment between the two countries of the Alaskan boundary, the British government did not see its way clear to yield to the suggestion of the United States with regard to the Clayton-Bulwer treaty. That was, in effect, the language of Lord Lansdowne, and if my right hon. friend denies that that was its effect, I will read what Lord Lansdowne said and leave the House to judge. Well, one would suppose that, in a situation like that the government of this country would at least have supported energetically and earnestly the government of the mother country. But, do we find that to be the case? No, Sir. We find that when this matter was brought to the attention of my right hon. friend in the House he declared that Canada had no direct interest in the Clayton-Bulwer treaty and there was no reason why the modification of that treaty should be delayed until the United States had come to some reasonable agreement with regard to the Alaskan boundary. I think my right hon. friend lost an opportunity there. Is not Canada directly interested in a canal across the Isthmus? Why is the United States interest in this matter regarded as direct and important? Because the United States has great possessions on the Atlantic and on the Pacific, and hopes in the future to grasp a very considerable portion of the trade with the Orient. But is not Canada in the same position? Has not Canada great possessions on the Atlantic and on the Pacific, and did not my hon. friend from North Ontario describe in glowing terms this afternoon the share that Canada is to have in the trade of the Orient? Well, the Clayton-Bulwer treaty was denounced. Denounced apparently with the approbation of this government, without any further effort being made than to have an adjustment of this Alaskan boundary. And then came the question of a treaty with the government of the United States respecting the Alaskan boundary. I went over this matter somewhat fully last year, and I shall not deal with it at length on this occasion. But there are one or two despatches to which I would invite the attention of the House. We have in the library of parliament correspondence respecting the Alaskan boundary which has been placed before the parliament of the United Kingdom, although it is not in full before this House at present. It is from the correspondence I am quoting. There is a despatch of this government to the colonial office on the 13th of January, 1903, which is, in part, as follows:—

Referring to the last proposed Alaska Boundary Treaty, a draft of which you submitted to me, my ministers are satisfied with the question to be submitted to the Tribunal, but they still