

The Alaska Trade

Washington, March 4.—After a debate lasting several days the senate late to-day passed the bill extending the homestead laws and providing for right of way for railroads in the district of Alaska. Comparatively little discussion of general interest was created by the bill. Section 13, providing for certain bonding concessions to Canada, in lieu of privileges to be extended by the Dominion government to this country, however, induced a pretty lively debate, as it brought into the controversy the old fisheries question on the New England coast, which has been pending between the United States and Great Britain for 100 years. The statement was made on the floor of the senate that there was every reason to believe that by the passage of the bill the fisheries question could be settled without great effort as assurances to that effect had been received from a large and influential element in Canada. The reading and amending of the bill, while long and tedious, was accomplished without particularly important debate until section 13 was reached. This provides for the extension to Canada of the bonding privileges on Alaska trade with Canada at the port of Wrangel, in Alaska, on condition that certain concessions are given this country by the Dominion, among them being the right of our fishermen to enter Canadian ports for the purchase of bait or other supplies.

THE BILL OPPOSED.

Mr. Turner, Washington, moved to strike out that part of the section which related to the entering of Canadian ports by United States fishermen. He did not, he said, make the motion because he was hostile to the New England fisheries, but because he deemed it unfair to burden this measure with a demand upon the Dominion government that it yield a contention it has made for one hundred years.

Mr. Hale, Maine, inquired if Mr. Turner did not think it would be of advantage to the United States to obtain the fisheries concession from Canada.

Mr. Turner replied that it would be of advantage if we could obtain it, but he did not believe it could be obtained.

Mr. Hansbrough, North Dakota, said that the committee on public lands was in possession of information that Canada would accept the conditions imposed by the section. He was firmly of the opinion that the Dominion government would yield on the fisheries question in view of the concession made to it by the bill.

Mr. Hoar, Massachusetts, expressed the hope that Mr. Turner would not insist upon his motion. The fisheries question was not a local one to New England, but a national question, a question too particularly applicable to the people of the Northwest, where the fisheries interest was annually becoming greater. He felt that the fisheries problem was of immense importance to the people of the Northwest and ought not to be stricken from the measure.

In supporting and supplementing what Mr. Hoar had said, Mr. Fry, Maine, said that the pending bill was of national importance. From a little town near where he lived in Maine 500 people had gone to Alaska, and many more, of course, had left the States for the Klondike. He thought

there was never a better opportunity to secure concessions from the Canadian government than at the present time, when the Canadian government wanted something from the United States. He did not think the motion ought to prevail, because we have long been giving Canada much and receiving little in return. Mr. Fry believed that if it were not for the captiousness of Canada, there would not be the slightest trouble between this country and Great Britain.

Mr. Wilson supported the contention of Mr. Turner, and thought it the height of absurdity to tack the fisheries question to a bill providing for the encouragement of railway construction in Alaska.

Mr. Carter agreed with Messrs. Hoar and Fry that the fisheries question, so far as it was considered in this bill, was of national importance. The fisheries industry in Alaska and the Northwest now yielded \$6,000,000 per annum and was growing in importance every year. Concerning the mineral resources of Alaska, Mr. Carter said he was satisfied not from government reports alone, but from the very best authority in this country, that the output of gold in a year or two would be larger from that district than from any other part of the earth's surface. One authority, in which he said he had the utmost confidence, estimated that in Alaska gold to the amount of \$10,000,000 a year would be produced in a comparatively short time. He said that if section 13 should be adopted as presented, Canada would be compelled to abandon that all-Canadian route and he believed that this country would obtain every concession which was demanded of Canada by the pending section.

Mr. Turner's motion to strike out the fisheries portion of the section was defeated by a yeas and nays vote 34 to 16. The section was adopted without division.

THE COERCION CLAUSE.

The bill was then passed without division. As agreed to section 13 is as follows. That under rules and regulations to be prescribed by the secretary of the treasury, the privilege of entering goods in warehouses and merchandise in bond or of placing them in bonded warehouses at the port of Wrangel, district of Alaska, and of withdrawing the same for exportation to any place in British Columbia or the Northwest Territories without payment of duty is hereby granted to the government of the Dominion of Canada and its citizens or citizens of the United States whenever and so long as it shall appear to the satisfaction of the President of the United States, who shall ascertain and declare the fact by proclamation, that no exclusive privilege of transportation through British Columbia or the Northwest Territory goods or passengers arriving from or destined for other ports in Alaska is granted to any persons or corporations by the government of the Dominion of Canada, and that the privilege has been duly accorded to responsible persons or corporations operating transportation lines in British Columbia or the Northwest Territory of making direct connection with transportation lines in Alaska and the government of the Dominion had consented to, and is allowing on behalf of the citizens of the United States the entry free of duty of all miners' outfits and supply of provisions and clothing, the whole not exceeding in quantity one

thousand pounds for each citizen of the United States proposing to engage in mining in British Columbia, or the Northwest Territories, and that the government of the Dominion of Canada has removed all unequal restrictions as to the issue of miners' licenses to all citizens of the United States, operating or intending to operate in British Columbia or the Northwest Territories. And, further, that fishing vessels of the United States, having authority under the laws of the United States to touch and trade at any port or ports, place or places in the British dominions of North America, shall have the privilege of entering such port or ports, place or places, for the purpose of purchasing bait and other supplies and outfits in the same manner and under the same regulations as may exist therein applicable to trading vessels of the most favored nations, and of transshipping their catch to be transported in bond through said Dominions without payment of duty in the same manner as other merchandise destined for the United States may be thus transported."

The Tea Tariff

St. Paul, March 4.—The managers of the Northern Pacific railway have complained to the state department at Washington that the Canadian discriminating duty of 10 per cent. on tea imported into Canada indirectly by way of the United States, works injury to the interests of United States railroads, and with corresponding benefit to the Canadian Pacific. The traffic manager of the Northern Pacific has asked the department that the matter be called to the attention of congress, with a view to heavy remedial legislation enacted. The state department will take no action, since it is not in its province to advise congress with respect to legislation on tariff questions, but has referred the matter to the treasury department.

According to the statement of the railroad officials, its loss of traffic on account of the Canadian discrimination cannot be very large, but its loss by the Canadian Pacific competition in the handling and regular transportation of entire cargoes of tea, raw silk, silk goods and other products of China and Japan to the eastern parts of the United States, must be very extensive. In the case of shipments of tea, the Northern Pacific is permitted to carry imports of the product to the amount of 24,000 pounds over Canadian territory, but is prevented from depositing broken packages along the line.

The state department officials have notified the Northern Pacific people that the advantage complained of as possessed by the Canadian Pacific can't be remedied by that department as it is not touched by any treaty agreement with Great Britain or agreement with the Canadian government, but is purely a question of trade regulations by tariff rates. It is not known what steps will be taken by the treasury officials in the matter.

Assiniboia.

J. A. Trussler, tailor, Qu'Appelle, advertises his business for sale. Lang & Campbell, harnessmakers, Wolcley, have dissolved. The business will be continued by Campbell.