

lations with the United States. We perhaps do not realize how important that is. We do not realize how completely that is a factor governing the position of England and the conduct of England with regard to questions arising between these two countries. Consequently, Sir, we should deal with these questions in a temperate spirit. We should deal with these questions with a full knowledge of the facts. We should deal with these questions, giving to England the benefit, when we are forming our judgment, of their environment, of the necessities that confront her, and of the difficulties that surround her. If we were to do this, perhaps in some cases our judgment would be modified to a very great extent.

In the course of the admirable speech of my hon. friend the leader of the opposition this afternoon, I noticed his remarks with reference to the Clayton-Bulwer treaty. As the position which my hon. friend took upon that matter has not been replied to, his remarks might go to the country with his assertions uncontradicted. The abrogation of the Clayton-Bulwer treaty was an unpopular move in the estimation of the Canadian public, no doubt. That treaty had existed for a good many years. It imposed restrictions and conditions upon the United States with regard to various matters that the public men of all parties in that country chafed under. It was a source of difficulty and created conditions of a threatening character. By the abrogation of that treaty Great Britain gave to the United States a free hand in the construction of the Isthmian canal; and, following the conditions which the abrogation of the treaty created, the United States have proceeded to take the initial steps towards the construction of the canal by the Panama route. Now, the question is, had Canada any reason or any right to say to the United States, you shall not construct that canal? Were we ready to construct it? Was Great Britain ready to construct it? Was the United States, in offering to construct that canal, trenching upon our rights or upon any scheme we cherished for opening communication between the waters of the Carribean sea, and the Pacific ocean? We have interests, of course, on both the Atlantic and the Pacific, and if we had been prepared to connect the two oceans by an Isthmian canal, there certainly would have been more reason for our finding fault with the arrangement made for the abrogation of the treaty. The United States possesses fifteen times our population; it possesses more than twenty-five times our wealth; it has vast interests on each coast; and its public men deemed the construction of that canal an essential requisite to the prosperity of the country and its progress in the future. It was a cherished scheme with the American people to open up what would practically be a communication between their territorial

possessions on the Pacific and the Atlantic. I was in Washington the day Lord Pauncefote signed that treaty. I called upon his lordship, and he expressed unbounded satisfaction upon having, as one of the last official acts of his life, signed a treaty that was to set at rest a vexed question between the two great branches of the Anglo-Saxon family, and was to render improbable what would otherwise have been probable—friction, bad feeling, or a collision between the two countries.

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). Did he say anything about the Alaskan boundary at the same time?

Mr. CHARLTON. The two questions were dealt with on their own merits. The Alaskan boundary has been dealt with since; I will reach that question soon. But I will say, in answer to my hon. friend that Lord Pauncefote was not in a position to dictate to the United States government what their course of conduct should be; and if they were unwilling to couple the Alaskan boundary with the settlement of the Clayton-Bulwer treaty question, I do not suppose Lord Pauncefote had it in his power to compel them to meet his wishes, and I doubt whether it would have been a politic thing for him to terminate the negotiations because he could not have his way entirely. The two questions stood distinct from each other, and were treated on distinct bases.

With regard to the Alaskan boundary question, as the premier told us this afternoon, the Joint High Commission at Washington in 1899 were unable to agree upon that question. It was the difficulty which broke up the sittings of the commission. The British commissioners refused to continue negotiations unless that question was set at rest. The American commissioners desired to let it stand in abeyance and go on with the other questions which had been referred to the commission. The British commissioners refused to do that, and the commission broke up. We had tentative agreements on many points which would have given this country a fairly desirable treaty. It was a fortunate thing, however, that we did not go on, that the British commissioners terminated the sittings of the commission and went home, because the condition of sentiment in the United States to-day is so much more favourable as regards the question of concessions to Canadian interests, that we shall now, in all human probability, get a very much more favourable treaty than we could have got at that time. Consequently, the deferring of the negotiations before the Joint High Commission will prove to be entirely in the interests of Canada.

With regard to this boundary commission, I was asked by my hon. friend the leader of the opposition, if Lord Pauncefote had