

tersected the Yukon and the Porcupine, and Forty Mile Creek, and other prominent points. Mr. Ogilvie during the last two or three years—I believe since 1895—was engaged in that service, and the United States commission also attended there. The honourable gentleman from Victoria is quite right in saying that there was but a slight difference between Mr. Ogilvie and the United States engineers at the Yukon River. Practically there can be no dispute about that, as I understand. The difference would be only a few feet. The line has been cut for a considerable distance on each side of the river. It has not been cut through; it was not considered necessary, because it would probably involve a very large sum. So that in reference to that portion of the line of demarcation between the two countries, there ultimately will be no difficulty. It is a matter purely of mathematical demonstration as to the location of the 141st meridian, and therefore there will be no dispute on that subject, but as to the boundary along the coast, there necessarily must be a reference to an independent tribunal to define the words of the treaty to which I have adverted—that is the treaty made between Russia and Great Britain in 1885—because it is open to a very wide interpretation as to what is the meaning of the range of mountains along the coast, and what is the meaning of the windings of the coast from which, in the absence of a range of mountains the ten marine leagues are to be calculated. No doubt under the best arrangements and most friendly feeling between the two countries where there are ambiguous words in a treaty, there can be no fairer way of deciding an important question of that kind than by such a reference. That it is a very important question to Canada, no one at the present moment can deny. Our approach to our own country, practically, at the present, must be through this United States strip of territory. It would take a very long time to reach it if you were to ascend north from British Columbia. There are, as far as I am advised, at present no ocean ports below the end of this range of territory. As my hon. friend from Victoria stated, the line starts from the southern point of the Prince of Wales Island, which island then belonged to Russia and now to the United States, and the line, according to our reading of the language of the treaty, went north

through the channel to the east of the Prince of Wales Island. According to the United States reading, although it is a departure from the language of the treaty, to carry out their contention the line would have to come practically east or rather south of east in order to reach what is called Portland Canal. The whole difficulty arises from the fact that there was not a Portland Canal at that time. There was, in the opinion of those who have given a great deal of study to the question, also a channel considerably to the north of it known as the Portland Channel. That name unfortunately was dropped after the treaty of St. Petersburg. Of course very little attention was given to that country for more than half a century. In the meantime, the United States construed Portland Canal to mean Portland Channel, and they adopted a line running to Portland Canal. To reach Portland Canal, as I have said, you must proceed south of east, and then as the treaty says the dividing line is north to the head of Portland channel to the 56th degree of north latitude. From the 56th degree of north latitude it is governed entirely by the other words of the treaty which provide that the range of mountains along the coast shall be the boundary line, subject only to the condition that where the range of mountains was further off, the ten marine leagues should be the absolute limit of the Russian territory. Honourable gentlemen will understand that in order to readily get into that country it was necessary to pass through the United States boundary. As the hon. gentleman from Victoria knows, in November and December, when crowds of people were attracted by the rumors of gold in the Yukon, the people of Seattle and Portland, and San Francisco put a pressure, no doubt, upon their representatives to insist upon terms and conditions for crossing their territory, which became exceedingly oppressive and onerous. It became a matter of negotiation, and here I may say that my hon. friend the Minister of Justice, in answering the question of the hon. senator from Brandon, (Mr. Kirchhoffer) was I think guilty of no discourtesy, and I am quite sorry if my hon. friend has so misconstrued it. He stated that there were a number of subjects connected with this that could not be made public. He must recognize that where two powers are discussing a delicate subject of this kind it does not help the ultimate arrangement