

369 K.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIO,
OTTAWA, August 11, 1897.

To His Excellency
The Governor General in Council.

The undersigned has the honour to acknowledge the receipt of the reference from council, dated the 5th instant, P.C. No. 369 K. of a communication under date of July 22 last, addressed to Your Excellency by the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for the Colonies, to the effect that in the event of any amendment being made in the Alaska Boundary convention, Your Excellency's Ministers will be consulted before it is agreed to by Her Majesty's Government.

Respectfully submitted,

CLIFFORD SIFTON,
Minister of the Interior,

Mr. Chamberlain to Lord Aberdeen.

No. 250.

CANADA.

DOWNING STREET, July 22, 1897.

MY LORD,—I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch No. 187 of June 23, together with an approved minute of the Dominion Privy Council respecting the amendment of the Alaska Boundary Convention which is said to be contemplated by the United States Senate with regard to that part of it which defines a portion of the line by reference to the peak of Mount St. Elias.

In reply, I have to assure your Ministers that if any modification of the treaty is made by the United States Senate, your Ministers will be consulted before it is agreed to by Her Majesty's Government.

I have, &c.

CHAMBERLAIN.

1667 K.

Mr. Chamberlain to Lord Minto.

(Copy).

CANADA.

Very Confidential.

DOWNING STREET, November 1, 1899.

MY LORD,—I have the honour to acquaint you, for the information of your Ministers, that Her Majesty's Government have had under their consideration the present position of the Alaska Boundary question.

They have had the advantage of conferring on the subject with Sir Louis Davies, who has furnished a full statement of the case of your Ministers for the interpretation of the boundary Articles of the Treaty which is maintained by Canada.

I need scarcely say that Her Majesty's Government share the views of your Ministers as to the interpretation of the Treaty of 1825, and have, as you are already aware, been urging the United States Government to agree to the reference of the dispute to a Tribunal of Arbitration on the lines adopted in the case of the boundary dispute between this country and Venezuela, but hitherto without success.

The main difficulty arises from the position of the two towns of Dyea and Skagway at the head of the Lynn Channel. The United States Government maintain that these towns were established by them on what they had every reason to believe was undoubtedly American soil, that they were so established largely in the interests and for the convenience of Canadian trade, that no protest or objection was made by Her Majesty's Government on behalf of Canada against their action in the matter, and that until the meeting of the Joint High Commission they had no reason to believe that any claim on the part of the Dominion to the headwaters of the Channel was seriously entertained.

I do not propose now to examine how far these statements are warranted, but there can be no doubt that the United States Government are convinced of their validity, and consequently refuse to entertain any proposals for an arbitration which would place the position of these towns in question, and though the discussion is still proceeding, it is improbable that they will modify their attitude on this point.

They are so far justified in differentiating the present dispute from that with Venezuela, in that in the controversy in the latter case extending over a long period, the claims of Venezuela had been repeatedly and distinctly formulated and supported