

States that vast territory of Alaska for 37,000,000 francs, people in Europe wondered what could have induced such action. 'The explanation offered, says Elisée Reclus, was the desire on the part of Russia, then unfriendly to Great Britain, to show her sympathy for the United States, and to lay the foundation for future strife between two neighbouring states.' Two serious disputes have already arisen out of this cession: One relative to the Behring sea fisheries, has been, fortunately, settled; the other, relative to the boundaries, is now pending.

I am sure the House has learned with satisfaction that a treaty had been signed having for its object the settlement of this dispute. Statements have appeared in the newspapers to the effect that the treaty was one-sided, but no evidence has been furnished to support these statements. It has been said that the treaty had not been passed in good faith on the part either of the United States or of the mother country; that in virtue of a secret understanding, the jurists appointed by the United States were not to render any decision contrary to the interests of their own country, while the representatives of Great Britain were to concede everything. However, the provisions of the treaty, as I read them, seem to exclude the possibility of such an understanding. By submitting the question to three jurists from each country who are bound under oath to give their decision in accordance with the facts, neither of the contracting parties could have in mind to deceive the public. To make such a supposition is gratuitously to insult two great nations. Why should they resort to such shameless trickery, the result of which would be to debase them both in the eyes of the world, as well as the members of the court appointed by them? Could they not have resorted to arbitration? Secret instructions may be given to arbitrators, not to jurists. Such are the reasons which make me believe that the treaty was initiated in good faith. Let us hope that it will be carried out in the same spirit. Let us hope that the press in both countries will show a spirit of fairness and refrain from any attempt at influencing the court.

The hon. member for Haldimand (Mr. Thompson) who takes special interest in military matters, has recalled an event which has been a cause of rejoicing throughout the country. I refer to the happy termination of the war in South Africa. The best minds were at variance as regards the justice of this war, a point which future generations will be in a better position to decide than we. However, the terms of peace, in the opinion of all, have been such as the world would expect the victor to grant to a courageous foe. The time is no longer when the conqueror could haughtily proclaim: 'Vae victis.' The enemy who has laid down arms is entitled not only to life, but to all that makes life worth living,

that is to say, honour and liberty. By doing homage to a fallen foe, by pardoning generously, by closing its ears to suggestions of vengeance and listening only to the voice of mercy, Great Britain has at once regained the sympathy which she had lost at the outset of hostilities; so true is it that justice elevates nations.

That generous treaty was the forerunner of an event equally glorious. I mean the coronation of His Majesty King Edward VII. In congregating so readily to witness this great celebration, British subjects realized that it was not so much the apotheosis of one man for whom they have the greatest admiration, they saw in it the bright symbol of the union which is to bind the king with the nation. Indeed, when the king appeared before his people in Westminster Abbey and was met by that loud acclamation: God Save King Edward, a new compact was entered into. On the one hand there was the king pledging himself to observe the usages of the kingdom; on the other, there was the people of Great Britain renewing their faith in her governmental institutions; there was the people living in the colonies, proud of the liberty and self-government which they enjoy, asserting their loyalty to the British flag. Whatever was of a nature to enhance the friendly relations existing between the colonies and the mother country and between the various colonies, was a thing to be fostered. Whatever would alter the nature of these relations, was a thing to be avoided. Our government understood it so. More than once it had proven its devotion to the mother land; but at the same time as it accepted the invitation to take part in the Colonial Conference, it refused to discuss the question of contribution to the war expenditure of the empire, making clear its determination not to render compulsory deeds which had been accomplished voluntarily. That decision had been made known to the House at the preceding session and no exception had been found to it. Had we consented to share in the wars of the empire, our political future would have been jeopardized. Practically it would have been handing back to the authorities in Downing street the privileges which half a century of struggles have won for us. The wars which England is constantly waging in her various colonies do not concern us directly. We have nothing to do with the government of these colonies, neither are they governed on our account. Nothing could be more in contradiction with the principles of our government than for us to undertake to meet an expenditure to which we have not been called to give our assent. George III. lost his American colonies for having ignored this principle. An ill-fated day it would be when Great Britain would compel us to share in the expenditure incurred in her wars of expansion. British connection would thus become too burden-