

tions. I am not going to enter into any discussion with regard to the modifications; that we will reach later on.

We come now to the reference in the speech to the Alaskan boundary question. That is certainly a very important subject and one which will demand very earnest consideration on the part of this House and the people of Canada. I feel it my duty to deprecate the heated language used by the Premier of Canada on this subject towards the close of the last session of parliament, and since that time, with regard to the action of the British government in reference to this matter, and his advocacy of a policy that Canada should have the right to negotiate its own treaties with foreign countries independently of the mother country. A little later the right hon. gentleman modified that opinion in some degree by declaring that in his judgment it would be sufficient that the British government should possess a veto over such treaties negotiated by the colonies; but I must say I consider the observations of the Premier and of other gentlemen who have spoken for the government in regard to this subject as being uncalled for and unfair towards the mother country. In fact, I think that the government of Canada have themselves been quite as much to blame for any unfortunate incident in the formation of the Alaskan tribunal as was the government of Great Britain. I recall to mind that in 1898 the Marquis of Lansdowne called the attention of the government of Canada to the demand of the United States for the abrogation of the Clayton-Bulwer treaty. The answer of our government that Canada had no interest in the Clayton-Bulwer treaty was a most extraordinary one, because we seemed to have as much interest in the question as any country outside of the United States itself; and an opportunity was not taken advantage of which might have been used by the government at that time to obtain some reasonable means of settling this Alaskan boundary question in connection with the concession proposed to be given the United States in the abrogation of that treaty. But I hold, and I wish to make my observations as emphatic as I can, that the government of Canada are very much to blame for having agreed to submit the Alaskan boundary

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON.

question to a packed jury, for that is practically what it was. I was in California at the time the Senate of the United States ratified the treaty to refer the Alaskan boundary question to a judicial tribunal, and I read despatches from Washington in the California papers next morning that Senator Turner and Senator Lodge had agreed to allow the arbitration to take place on the understanding with the President that they were to form members of the Tribunal themselves and that they were irrevocably opposed to any concession of the claims of Canada and never would consent to give up what they called one inch of American territory. Notwithstanding the fact that these gentlemen had prejudged our case and were not impartial jurists, the government of Canada very weakly consented to go on with the case with Messrs. Lodge and Turner on the tribunal, men who had been placed there on a distinct understanding with the government of the United States that they were to stand firmly against the claims of Canada no matter what evidence might be submitted. But still more serious is the complaint we have to make against the government on this subject, that they furnished to the government and counsel of the United States the very strongest evidence they urged before the tribunal in London. Hon. gentlemen who will take the trouble to read those papers will find that Mr. Taylor, one of the United States counsel, read to the arbitrators the following extract from a speech made by Sir Wilfrid Laurier in the House of Commons on March 7, 1898, in support of the Teslin Lake Railway proposition which the government were then pressing through the House. On that occasion Sir Wilfrid Laurier said:—

We have either to take the route by the Lynn canal and Dyea, or the route by the Stikine river. The advantages of the one had to be set against the disadvantages of the other, and vice versa. The advantages of the route by the Lynn canal were that it was shorter and more direct than the route by the Stikine river. But if we had adopted the route by the Lynn canal, that is to say, had chosen to build a railway from Dyea by the Chilkat Pass up to the waters of the Yukon, we should have had to place the ocean terminus of the railway upon what is now American territory. I agree with the statement which has been made on the floor of this House on more than one occasion that Dyea, if the treaty is correctly interpreted, is in Canadian territory. It ought to be; but the fact is, as my hon. friends know very well, even those who do not belong to