

THE
ALASKA-CANADA BOUNDARY DISPUTE.

The admission of British Columbia into the Dominion in 1871, made Canada a party to the Alaska boundary dispute; and ever since 1872 urgent and almost yearly requests have been made by the British and Canadian Governments to the Government of the United States for an "expeditious settlement" of the disputed line of demarcation between that Western Province and the Territory of Alaska. The passive resistance of the United States to these requests is inexplicable, unless on the unattractive assumption that the unsanctioned occupation by their Government of disputed British-Canadian territory, and the national insistence in defending that occupation, must ultimately, as in former boundary disputes, assure a diplomatic triumph over Great Britain, and secure to the Republic a further cession of Canadian territory for the enlargement of Alaska. The diplomatic disasters through which Canada has lost some of the best agricultural portions of her original heritage* explain why Canadians now look with intense anxiety for the just settlement of the Alaska boundary controversy; for, as has been said by Sir Charles Dilke in his *Problems of Greater Britain*, "It is a fact that British Diplomacy has cost Canada dear."

Ex-President Cleveland, an authority on the diplomatic policy of the United States, has lately furnished in the *Century Magazine*, what may be prophetic of that policy in the Alaska case:—

One or the other of two national neighbours claims that their boundary line should be defined or rectified. If this is questioned, a season of diplomatic untruthfulness and finesse sometimes intervenes, for the sake of appearances. Developments soon follow, however, that expose a grim determination, behind fine phrases of diplomacy, and in the end the weaker nation frequently awakens to the fact that it must either accede to an ultimatum dictated by its stronger adversary, or look in the face of a despoliation of its territory; and, if such a stage is reached, superior strength and fighting ability, instead of suggesting magnanimity, are graspingly used to enforce extreme demands, if not to consummate extensive spoliation.

* See *British and American Diplomacy Affecting Canada, 1782-1899*. Toronto, 1900.