

MESSAGE

FROM THE

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

TRANSMITTING

*A report of the Secretary of State relative to the frontier line between
Alaska and British Columbia.*

MAY 17, 1886.—Read and ordered to be printed. The accompanying documents referred to the Committee on Printing.

JULY 26, 1886.—*Resolved*, That the documents and maps accompanying the message of the President of the United States on the location of the boundary line between Alaska and British Columbia be printed, and that 100 additional copies be printed for the Department of State.

To the Senate and House of Representatives:

With reference to the paragraph in my annual message to Congress in which I called attention to the uncertainty that exists as to the location of the frontier line between Alaska and British Columbia, as defined by the treaty of cession with Russia of March 30, 1867, I now transmit herewith, for the information and consideration of Congress, a report of the Secretary of State upon the subject, with accompanying papers.

In view of the importance of the subject, I recommend that provision be made by law for a preliminary survey of the boundary line in question by officers of the United States, in order that the information necessary for the basis of a treaty between this country and Great Britain for the establishment of a definite boundary line may be obtained; and I also recommend that the sum of \$100,000, or so much thereof as may be necessary, be appropriated for the expenses of making such survey.

GROVER CLEVELAND..

EXECUTIVE MANSION,
Washington, May 17, 1886.

To the President:

The Secretary of State has the honor to lay before the President, for communication to Congress, the correspondence which has taken place between this Department and Her Britannic Majesty's Government in relation to the survey and location of the boundary line between Alaska and British Columbia. It will be seen that the British Government is prepared to take part in a preliminary investigation of the boundary question, and that nothing now delays action but the want of the ap-

propriation by Congress necessary to enable this Government to take part in the survey.

In view of the fact that important and grave international questions of jurisdiction may at any time arise, owing to the circumstance that great mineral wealth exists in the territory which is traversed by the boundary line, the Secretary of State has the honor to recommend that Congress be requested to enact a law to authorize the survey, and to appropriate the sum of \$100,000, or so much thereof as may be necessary, to defray the expense of a preliminary survey.

Respectfully submitted.

T. F. BAYARD.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
Washington, May 14, 1886.

ACCOMPANYING PAPERS.

- No. 1. Mr. Bayard to Mr. Phelps, No. 144, November 20, 1885.
- No. 2. Mr. Phelps to Mr. Bayard, No. 158, December 8, 1885.
- No. 3. Mr. Phelps to Mr. Bayard, No. 189, January 13, 1886.
- No. 4. Mr. Porter to Mr. Phelps, No. 194, January 20, 1886.
- No. 5. Mr. Phelps to Mr. Bayard, No. 208, February 2, 1886.
- No. 6. Mr. Bayard to Mr. Phelps, No. 215, February 18, 1886.
- No. 7. Mr. Helyar to Mr. Bayard, March 12, 1886.
- No. 8. Mr. Bayard to Mr. Phelps, No. 240, March 16, 1886.
- No. 9. Mr. Bayard to Mr. Helyar, March 16, 1886.
- No. 10. Mr. Bayard to Mr. Phelps, No. 245, March 19, 1886.
- No. 11. Sir Lionel West to Mr. Bayard, April 3, 1886.
- No. 12. Mr. Bayard to Mr. Phelps, No. 270, April 8, 1886.
- No. 13. Mr. Bayard to Sir Lionel West, April 8, 1886.
- No. 14. Mr. Phelps to Mr. Bayard, No. 250, April 17, 1886.
- No. 15. Mr. Bayard to Mr. Phelps, No. 280, April 26, 1886.

No. 1.

Mr. Bayard to Mr. Phelps.

No. 144.]

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
Washington, November 20, 1885.

SIR: Shortly after assuming the duties of this office, my attention was drawn to the circumstance that the existing boundary line between the Territory of Alaska and Her Majesty's possession of British Columbia is not only open to doubt in certain quarters, although not in doubt so far as this Government is concerned, in respect of the water boundary from Prince of Wales Island through the Portland Channel, but that it is, also, with regard to the inland frontier, which is supposed to follow a mountain range, an impracticable one to survey, if not a geographical impossibility.

The Territory of Alaska was acquired by the United States from Russia, subject to the existing demarkation of the eastern frontier line between Russian America and British America under the convention between Great Britain and Russia, of February 28 (16), 1825; and the description of the line contained in Articles III and IV of that convention was incorporated literally as to the English text thereof in the first article of the treaty between the United States and Russia, con-

cluded March 30, 1867. Copies of the latter treaty are hereto annexed for your information.

I am not aware that any question concerning the true location of the line so stipulated ever arose at any time between Great Britain and Russia prior to the cession of Alaska to the United States. If any such question had arisen and was pending at the time of the cession, the United States would naturally have succeeded to the Russian interest therein, just as to any other right of Russia affecting the ceded territory. This Government, however, had no intimation then, and has had none since, from Her Majesty's Government that any such question existed. It is not thought likely, however, that question in this regard could have existed, as the inlet and the country through which the boundary line of 1825 ran were, in 1867, still practically unexplored.

The boundary was then, as it is still, a theoretical one, based, as is fair to be presumed, on the charts which the negotiators had before them in 1825, and which they doubtless assumed to be a substantially correct expression of geographical facts.

It is certain that no question has arisen since 1867 between the Governments of the United States and Great Britain in regard to this boundary.

The ascertainment of the true line of demarkation under the Anglo-Russian treaty would, however, appear to have been the subject of informal consultation soon after Russian Alaska passed to the United States, but no record of any official correspondence between the two Governments is found.

In his annual message to Congress, December 2, 1872, President Grant, after referring to the then recent settlement of the San Juan Island dispute, said :

Experience of the difficulties attending the determination of our admitted line of boundary, after the occupation of the territory and its settlement by those owing allegiance to the respective Governments, points to the importance of establishing, by natural objects or other monuments, the actual line between the territory acquired by purchase from Russia and the adjoining possessions of Her Britannic Majesty. The region is now so sparsely occupied that no conflicting interests of individuals or of jurisdiction are likely to interfere to the delay or embarrassment of the actual location of the line. If deferred until population shall enter and occupy the territory some trivial contest of neighbors may again array the two Governments in antagonism. I therefore recommend the appointment of a commission, to act jointly with one that may be appointed on the part of Great Britain, to determine the line between our territory of Alaska and the coterminous possessions of Great Britain.

An estimate of the probable cost and time of a survey of the Alaskan boundary line on the part of this Government, then made, fixed the cost at about a million and a half of dollars, and the time required as nine years in the field and at least one year more for mapping the results, which illustrates the magnitude of the labor.

The suggestion of President Grant was not then acted upon by the Congress, and does not appear to have been since revived before that body. Since that time the condition of increasing settlement apprehended by President Grant has assumed marked proportions. A territorial government has been organized for Alaska, and enterprise and capital are slowly but steadily making their way toward those distant shores.

In the judgment of the President the time has now come for an understanding between the Government of the United States and that of Her Britannic Majesty, looking to the speedy and certain establishment of the boundary line between Alaska and British Columbia. And this necessity is believed to be the more urgent, inasmuch as the treaty line

is found to be of uncertain if not impossible location for a great part of its length.

In the first place, the water boundary line, from the southernmost point of Prince of Wales Island to the fifty-sixth degree of north latitude, is not found uniformly located on the charts of different modern geographers. On a majority of such charts, as, for example, those of Staff Commander D. Pender's survey for the Admiralty in 1868, and those of the geological survey of Canada recently published, the boundary follows the central line of the main channel known as Portland Inlet, while in other charts prepared by British geographers the line deflects to the northward from the broad waters of Dixon Entrance and passes through a narrow and intricate channel lying northwestward from Portland Inlet, known on the United States Coast Survey chart of 1885 as Pearse Channel, until it suddenly deflects southward again at right angles, to re-enter Portland Inlet, thereby appearing to make British territory of Pearse and Wales Islands and throwing doubt on the nationality of several small islands at the southwestern extremity of Wales Island. This latter construction is at the outset in manifest contradiction with the treaties, which provided "that the island called Prince of Wales Island shall belong wholly to Russia" (now, by cession in 1867, to the United States).

There would seem to be ground in the text of Vancouver, the original explorer and geographer of the region, for supposing that he at one time regarded Pearse Canal of later geographers as the lower part of Portland Canal. But there are very evident reasons for believing that this was not the construction intended by the authors of the Anglo-Russian treaty of 1825, and that their purpose was the location of the natural boundary line in the broader channel called Portland Inlet on the Admiralty and United States Coast Survey charts. For a clear understanding of the subject, chart No. 7 of Vancouver's atlas, the British Admiralty chart No. 2431, corrected to June, 1882, or any later edition, the United States Coast Survey chart No. 700, of 1885, and the charts of the Coast Pilot of Alaska recently issued by the United States Coast Survey should be consulted. Of these, photographic copies of Vancouver's atlas chart No. 7 and copies of the Coast Survey publications are herewith sent you. You can doubtless obtain copies of the British Admiralty chart by application in the proper quarter.

The language of the treaties is:

Commencing from the southernmost point of the island called Prince of Wales Island, which point lies in the parallel of 54 degrees 40 minutes north latitude, and between the one hundred and thirty-first and the one hundred and thirty-third degree of west longitude (meridian of Greenwich), the said line shall ascend to the north along the channel called Portland Channel as far as the point of the continent, where it strikes the fifty-sixth degree of north latitude.

So far the treaties relate to the water boundary, and it is to be remembered, as already remarked, that the line so described was intended to leave Prince of Wales Island Russian territory in 1825, and a possession of the United States in 1867. No record has been found, in print or otherwise, so far as sought, of the circumstances attending the drawing up of the Anglo-Russian convention of 1825, which would throw light on the understanding of the negotiators on this point, but it may be assumed with confidence that the charts employed in the negotiation were those of Vancouver. They were made by a British officer under the direction of the British Government, and would therefore be acceptable as a standard by that party to the convention. They were the most recent charts then extant, and for half a century they

remained the only authentic charts of that region, the Russians having at that time made no original surveys of importance in this district. Moreover, the wording of the convention of 1825 is found to be in complete accord with the features presented by Vancouver's chart, and especially with chart No. 7 in the atlas accompanying the narrative of his voyage. The description in the convention seems to be a faithful reproduction of the picture actually present to the eyes of the negotiators in that chart.

The first discrepancy that meets us is, that neither on Vancouver's nor any other chart known does the water-way of Portland Channel strike "the fifty-sixth degree of north latitude." On Vancouver's chart No. 7 it ends in a *cul-de-sac*, about fifteen miles before the fifty-sixth degree is reached. This, however, is of little importance, for, with the better topographical knowledge we now possess, we know that a conventional line, in continuation of the general trend of the mid-channel line, would strike the fifty-sixth degree of north latitude at a distance of some four or five miles inland.

While Portland Channel, Portland Canal, or Portland Inlet, as it is indifferently styled on the several charts, is and has long been readily identified as the main passage inland from the southernmost point of Prince of Wales Island, the intricate and narrow passage separating Pearce Island from the mainland is practically unsurveyed. It does not appear at all on the Pender Admiralty charts of 1868. In the United States Coast Survey charts it is conjecturally marked by dotted lines.

The facts that the parallel of $54^{\circ} 40'$, by the most recent surveys, enters the mouth of Portland Inlet, that the most navigable channel trends thence directly inland in an almost straight line, that Prince of Wales Island is in terms excluded from British territory, and that the name used in the Anglo-Russian convention of 1825 is found on all existing maps possessing authority applied to Portland Inlet or Channel, and not to Pearce Channel, lend reason and force to the conviction that it was the intention of the negotiators that the boundary line should directly follow the broad and natural channel midway between its shores, and extend, if need were, inland in the same general direction until the range of hills, hereafter to be considered, should be reached (as appears in Vancouver's chart), at or near the fifty-sixth parallel.

It is not, therefore, conceived that this water part of the boundary line can ever be called in question between the two Governments.

There is, however, ample ground for believing that the erroneous premises upon which the negotiators apparently based their fixation of the inland boundary line along the coast, render its true determination and demarkation by monuments, a matter of doubt and difficulty in carrying it into practical effect, and that, in prevision of the embarrassments which may follow delay in the establishment of a positive frontier line, it is the interest and the duty of the two Governments to reach a good understanding, which shall forthwith remove all chance for future disagreement.

The convention of 1825 continues from the point where the quotation above given ceases, as follows:

From this last-mentioned point—

The intersection of the mid-channel line of Portland Channel with the fifty-sixth north parallel—

the line of demarkation shall follow the summit of the mountains situated parallel to the coast as far as the point of intersection of the one hundred and forty-first de-

gree of west longitude (of the same meridian), and finally, from the said point of intersection, the said meridian line of the one hundred and forty-first degree, in its prolongation as far as the Frozen Ocean.

Provided—

As the convention proceeds to stipulate in the second paragraph of the following article, IV

that whenever the summit of the mountains *which extend in a direction parallel to the coast* from the fifty-sixth degree of north latitude to the point of intersection of the one hundred and forty-first degree of west longitude shall prove to be at the distance of more than 10 marine leagues from the ocean, the limit between the British possessions and the line of coast which is to belong to Russia as above mentioned (that is to say, the limit to the possessions ceded by this convention) shall be formed by a line parallel to the winding of the coast, and which shall never exceed the distance of ten marine leagues therefrom.

Here, again, there is conclusive internal evidence that the negotiators accepted as a fact and described in words the picture presented to their eyes by the chart actually spread before them. If we examine Vancouver's charts we find the evident reason for the language employed in the convention. Vancouver, who to his integrity and zeal as a navigator joined an excellent hydrographic faculty, seems to have been but a poor topographer, and represented an impossibly regular land formation such as could not well exist, and has not been discovered to exist anywhere on the world's surface. His charts exhibit, at a moderate distance from the shore, a uniformly serrated and narrow range of mountains, like an enormous caterpillar, extending, with a general parallelism to the shore from one end of the region in question to the other, except at scattered points where valleys intervene, which we now know to be the valleys of the Taku, Stikine, and other rivers. The line projected from the mid-channel line of Portland Channel intersects, at about the fifty-sixth degree of north latitude, the backbone range in question, and were the features of Vancouver's chart a correct representation of the topography, no more excellent and convenient boundary could be imagined than that following the depicted serrated ridge. It is not singular that, assuming the chart to be correct, both parties should have agreed to accept this remarkably uniform feature as marking the boundary. The better knowledge of that region now possessed shows that Vancouver's topography is not correct. There is no such range of hills as indicated on Vancouver's charts, and as assumed by the negotiators of the convention of 1825. The topography of the region in question has not as yet been accurately charted, but enough is known of its natural features to wholly disprove the conjectural topography of Vancouver.

Prof. William H. Dall, whose researches in Alaska are well known, and whose explorations have so largely contributed to our present knowledge of the geographical and geological character of that country, upon being invited by me to report as to the accuracy of Vancouver's charts, writes as follows:

We have no good topographical maps of this part of Alaska, but having been engaged nearly nine years exploring and surveying the territory, I assert without fear of contradiction that nothing of the sort [depicted by Vancouver] exists. We have instead what has been aptly called a "sea of mountains," composed of short ranges with endless ramifications. their general trend being parallel with the general curve of Northwestern America, but, so far as their local parts are concerned, irregular, broken, and tumultuous to the last degree. In certain places, as from Cape Spencer to Yakutat Bay, we have the nearest approach to such a range, but even here there are broad valleys penetrating an unknown distance, and lateral spurs given off in many directions. These Alps rise conspicuously above their fellows, but to the eastward. Another peculiarity of the topography is that the hills or summits are nearly uniform in height, without dominating crests, and few higher peaks.

The single continuous range being non-existent, if we attempt to decide on the "summit" of the mountains we are at once plunged into a sea of uncertainty. Shall we take the ridge of the hills nearest the beaches? This would give us in many places a mere strip of territory not more than 3 miles wide, meandering in every direction. Shall we take the highest summit of the general mass of the coast ranges? Then we must determine the height of many thousands of scattered peaks, after which the question will arise between every pair of equal height and those nearest to them. Shall we skip this way or that with our zigzag boundary, impossible to survey except at fabulous expense and half a century of labor? These peaks are densely clothed with trees and deep, soft moss and thorny underbrush, as impenetrable and luxuriant as the savannahs of Panama.

In short, the "summit of the mountains" is wholly impracticable. We may then fall back on the line parallel with the windings of the coast. Let any one with a pair of drawing compasses, having one leg a pencil point, draw this line on the United States Coast Survey map of Alaska (No. 960, of 1884). The result is sufficient to condemn it. Such a line could not be surveyed; it crosses itself in many places and indulges in myriads of knots and tangles. The line actually drawn as the boundary on that map omits the intricacies and is intended merely as an approximation. It would be subject to almost insuperable difficulties for the surveyor, simplified as it is, and the survey would cost more than the whole territory cost originally. These are the false geographical assumptions on which the language of the treaty was based, and the difficulties they offer when it is proposed to realize, by survey, the verbal boundary.

The words of Mr. Dall are those of a practical man, conversant with the region, and experienced in the class of difficulties in the way of an actual demarkation of the conventional frontier.

The line traced upon the Coast Survey map of Alaska, No. 960, of which copies are sent to you herewith, is as evidently conjectural and theoretical as was the mountain summit line traced by Vancouver. It disregards the mountain topography of the country, and traces a line, on paper, about 30 miles distant from the general contour of the coast. The line is a winding one, with no salient landmarks or points of latitude and longitude to determine its position at any point. It is, in fact, such a line as is next to impossible to survey, through a mountainous region, and its actual location there by a surveying commission would be nearly as much a matter of conjecture as tracing it on paper with a pair of dividers.

If the coast and interior country from Dixon Entrance to Mount Saint Elias were already accurately surveyed, its topography charted, and the heights of all its "summits" determined, it would even then be impossible, except by conventional compromise, to locate such a line as the treaties prescribe. To illustrate this, a case nearer home may be supposed. Examine, for instance, an Ordnance Survey map of Scotland, and attempt to mark out upon it a line which, starting from the intersection of the mid-channel line of the Firth of Solway and the fifty-fifth parallel shall thence follow the "summit of the mountains" northward as far as the fifty-eighth parallel, and which, where such "summit" shall be more than "ten marine leagues" from the Atlantic coast, shall follow the "winding" thereof. If the tracing of such a line on paper, when every material fact of contour and altitude is precisely known, were found to offer difficulty, the obstacles to the delimitation of an actual frontier, with landmarks and monuments, through a wholly unexplored country much more broken than Scotland is, and with a sea-coast scarcely less intricate, could not fail to be many fold greater.

As a rule, a theoretical frontier based on the assumed contour of mountain chains, is more difficult to determine with accuracy than one following known water-courses or founded by right lines having geodetic termini.

Rude and inaccessible as is the "sea of mountains" of Southeastern Alaska and forbidding as it may appear for ordinary purposes of inland settlement, it should be remembered that it is a mineral-bearing

region, the geological continuation of the gold and silver belt of California and Nevada, and may at any time spring into an importance not now calculable. It is of evident advantage to both countries to agree upon some boundary line capable of survey at a reasonable cost, yet so precisely and practically described, that in case of need any given point thereon may be readily determined in advance of a general survey, and to do this while the whole question of local values is in abeyance.

You will bring the foregoing considerations to the attention of the Marquis of Salisbury and invite an early expression of his views touching the expediency of appointing an international commission at the earliest practicable day to fix upon a conventional boundary line, which, while in substantial accord with the presumed intent of the negotiators of the Anglo-Russian convention of 1825, shall be fixed and readily determinable in whole or in part under the ordinary conditions of astronomical and topographical surveys.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

T. F. BAYARD.

Treaty concerning the cession of the Russian possessions in North America by His Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias to the United States of America.

[Concluded March 30, 1867; ratified by the United States May 28, 1867; exchanged June 20, 1867; proclaimed by the United States June 20, 1867.]

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

A PROCLAMATION.

Whereas a treaty between the United States of America and His Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias was concluded and signed by their respective plenipotentiaries at the city of Washington, on the thirtieth day of March, last, which treaty, being in the English and French languages, is, word for word, as follows:

The United States of America and His Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias, being desirous of strengthening, if possible, the good understanding which exists between them, have, for that purpose, appointed as their Plenipotentiaries: the President of the United States, William H. Seward, Secretary of State; and His Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias, the Privy Counsellor Edward de Stoeckl, his Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the United States.

And the said Plenipotentiaries, having exchanged their full powers, which were found to be in due form, have agreed upon and signed the following articles:

ARTICLE I.

His Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias agrees to cede to the United States, by this convention, immediately upon the exchange of the ratifications thereof, all the territory and dominion now possessed by his said Majesty on the continent of America and in the adjacent islands, the same being contained within the geographical limits herein set forth, to wit: The eastern limit is the line of demarcation between the Russian and the British possessions in North America, as estab-

Sa Majesté l'Empereur de toutes les Russies et les Etats-Unis d'Amérique, désirant raffermir, s'il est possible, la bonne intelligence qui existe entre eux, ont nommé, à cet effet, pour leurs plénipotentiaires, savoir: Sa Majesté l'Empereur de toutes les Russies, le Conseiller Privé Edouard de Stoeckl, son envoyé extraordinaire et ministre plénipotentiaire aux Etats-Unis; et le Président des Etats-Unis, le Sieur William H. Seward, Secrétaire d'Etat, lesquels, après avoir échangé leur pleins-pouvoirs, trouvés en bonne et due forme, ont arrêté et signé les articles suivants:

ARTICLE I.

Sa Majesté l'Empereur de toutes les Russies s'engage, par cette convention, à céder aux Etats-Unis, immédiatement après l'échange des ratifications, tout le Territoire avec droit de souveraineté actuellement possédé par Sa Majesté sur le continent d'Amérique ainsi que les îles contiguës, le dit Territoire étant compris dans les limites géographiques ci-dessous indiquées, savoir: la limite orientale est la ligne de démarcation entre les possessions Russes et Britanniques dans l'Amé-

lished by the convention between Russia and Great Britain of February 28-16, 1825, and described in Articles III and IV of said convention, in the following terms:

"Commencing from the southernmost point of the island called Prince of Wales Island, which point lies in the parallel of 54 degrees 40 minutes north latitude, and between the 131st and the 133d degree of west longitude, (meridian of Greenwich,) the said line shall ascend to the north along the channel called Portland channel, as far as the point of the continent where it strikes the 56th degree of north latitude; from this last-mentioned point, the line of demarcation shall follow the summit of the mountains situated parallel to the coast as far as the point of intersection of the 141st degree of west longitude, (of the same meridian;) and finally, from the said point of intersection, the said meridian line of the 141st degree, in its prolongation as far as the Frozen ocean.

"IV. With reference to the line of demarcation laid down in the preceding article it is understood—

"1st. That the island called Prince of Wales Island shall belong wholly to Russia," (now, by this cession, to the United States.)

"2d. That whenever the summit of the mountains which extend in a direction parallel to the coast from the 56th degree of north latitude to the point of intersection of the 141st degree of west longitude shall prove to be at the distance of more than ten marine leagues from the ocean, the limit between the British possessions and the line of coast which is to belong to Russia as above mentioned (that is to say, the limit to the possessions ceded by this convention) shall be formed by a line parallel to the winding of the coast, and which shall never exceed the distance of ten marine leagues therefrom."

The western limit within which the territories and dominion conveyed, are contained, passes through a point in Behring's straits on the parallel of sixty-five degrees thirty minutes north latitude, at its intersection by the meridian which passes midway between the islands of Krusenstern, or Ignalook, and the island of Ratmanoff, or Noonarbook, and proceeds due north, without limitation, into the same Frozen ocean. The same western limit, beginning at the same initial point, proceeds thence in a course nearly southwest, through Behring's straits and Behring's sea, so as to pass midway between the northwest point of the island of St. Lawrence and the southeast point of Cape Choukotski, to the meridian of one hundred and seventy-two west longitude; thence, from the intersection of that meridian, in a south-westerly direction, so as to pass midway between the island of Attou and the Copper Island of the Kormandorski couplet

rique du Nord, ainsi qu'elle est établie par la convention conclue entre la Russie et la Grande-Bretagne, le 1^{er} février 1825, et définie dans les termes suivants des articles III et IV de la dite convention:

"A partir du point le plus méridional de l'île dite Prince of Wales, lequel point se trouve sous la parallèle du 54^{me} degré 40 minutes de latitude nord, et entre le 131^{me} et le 133^{me} degré de longitude ouest (méridien de Greenwich), la dite ligne remontera, au Nord le long de la passe dite Portland Channel, jusqu'au point de la terre ferme, où elle atteint le 56^{me} degré de latitude nord; de ce dernier point la ligne de démarcation suivra la crête des montagnes situées parallèlement à la côte jusqu'au point d'intersection du 141^{me} degré de longitude ouest (même méridien); et finalement, du dit point d'intersection la même ligne méridienne du 141^{me} degré formera, dans son prolongement jusqu'à la mer Glaciale, la limite entre les possessions Russes et Britanniques sur le continent de l'Amérique nord-ouest.

"IV. Il est entendu, par rapport à la ligne de demarcation déterminée dans l'article précédent:

"1^o. Que l'île dite Prince of Wales, appartiendra toute entière à la Russie;" (mais dès ce jour en vertu de cette cession aux Etats-Unis.)

"2^o. Que partout où la crête des montagnes qui s'étendent dans une direction parallèle à la côte, depuis le 56^{me} degré de latitude nord au point d'intersection du 141^{me} degré de longitude ouest se trouverait à la distance de plus de dix lieues marines de l'Océan, la limite entre les possessions Britanniques et la lisière de côte mentionnée ci-dessus comme devant appartenir à la Russie" (c'est-à-dire la limite des possessions cédées par cette convention): "sera formée par une ligne parallèle aux sinuosités de la côte et qui ne pourra jamais en être éloignée que de dix lieues marines."

La limite occidentale des Territoires cédés passe par un point au détroit de Behring sous la parallèle du soixante-cinquième degré trente minutes de latitude Nord à son intersection par le méridien qui sépare à distance égale les îles Krusenstern ou Ignalook et l'île Ratmanoff ou Noonarbook et remonte en ligne directe, sans limitation, vers le Nord, jusqu'à ce qu'elle se perde dans la mer Glaciale. Commencant au même point de départ, cette limite occidentale suit de là un cours presque Sudouest, à travers le détroit de Behring et la mer de Behring, de manière à passer à distance égale entre le point Nordouest de l'île Saint Laurent et le point Sudest du cap Choukotski jusqu'au méridien cent soixante-douzième de longitude Ouest; de ce point, à partir de l'intersection de ce méridien, cette limite suit une direction Sudouest de manière à passer à distance égale entre l'île d'Attou et l'île Cøpper du groupe d'îlots Kor-

or group in the North Pacific Ocean, to the meridian of one hundred and ninety-three degrees west longitude, so as to include in the territory conveyed the whole of the Aleutian islands east of that meridian.

ARTICLE II.

In the cession of territory and dominion made by the preceding article are included the right of property in all public lots and squares, vacant lands, and all public buildings, fortifications, barracks, and other edifices which are not private individual property. It is, however, understood and agreed, that the churches which have been built in the ceded territory by the Russian Government, shall remain the property of such members of the Greek Oriental Church resident in the territory, as may choose to worship therein. Any government archives, papers, and documents relative to the territory and domain aforesaid, which may be now existing there, will be left in the possession of the agent of the United States; but an authenticated copy of such of them as may be required, will be, at all times, given by the United States to the Russian Government, or to such Russian officers or subjects as they may apply for.

ARTICLE III.

The inhabitants of the ceded territory, according to their choice, reserving their natural allegiance, may return to Russia within three years; but if they should prefer to remain in the ceded territory, they, with the exception of uncivilized native tribes, shall be admitted to the enjoyment of all the rights, advantages and immunities of citizens of the United States, and shall be maintained and protected in the free enjoyment of their liberty, property, and religion. The uncivilized tribes will be subject to such laws and regulations as the United States may, from time to time, adopt in regard to aboriginal tribes of that country.

ARTICLE IV.

His Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias shall appoint, with convenient despatch, an agent or agents for the purpose of formally delivering to a similar agent or agents appointed on behalf of the United States, the territory, dominion, property, dependencies and appurtenances which are ceded as above, and for doing any other act which may be necessary in regard thereto. But the cession, with the right of immediate possession, is nevertheless to be deemed complete and absolute on the exchange of ratifications, without waiting for such formal delivery.

mandorski dans l'océan Pacifique Septentrional jusqu'au méridien de cent quatre-vingt-treize degrés de longitude Ouest de manière à enclaver, dans le Territoire cédé, toutes les îles Aléoutes situées à l'est de ce méridien.

ARTICLE II.

Dans le Territoire cédé, par l'article précédent, à la Souveraineté des Etats-Unis, sont compris le droit de propriété sur tous les terrains et places publics, terres inoccupées, toutes les constructions publiques, fortifications, casernes et autres édifices qui ne sont pas propriété privée individuelle. Il est, toutefois entendu et convenu que les églises, construites par le Gouvernement Russe sur le Territoire cédé, resteront la propriété des membres de l'Eglise Grecque Orientale résidant dans ce Territoire et appartenant à ce culte. Tous les archives, papiers, et documents du Gouvernement, ayant trait au susdit Territoire, et qui y sont maintenant déposés, seront placés entre les mains de l'agent des Etats-Unis; mais les Etats-Unis fourniront, toujours quand il y aura lieu, des copies légalisées de ces documents au Gouvernement Russe, aux officiers ou sujets Russes qui pourront en faire la demande.

ARTICLE III.

Il est réservé aux habitans du Territoire cédé le choix de garder leur nationalité et de rentrer en Russie dans l'espace de trois ans; mais s'ils préfèrent rester dans le Territoire cédé, ils seront admis, à l'exception toutefois des tribus sauvages, à jouir de tous les droits, avantages, et immunités des citoyens des Etats-Unis, et ils seront maintenus et protégés dans le plein exercice de leur liberté, droit de propriété, et religion. Les tribus sauvages seront assujéties aux lois et réglemens que les Etats-Unis pourront adopter, de temps en temps, à l'égard des tribus aborigènes de ce pays.

ARTICLE IV.

Sa Majesté l'Empereur de toutes les Russies nommera, aussitôt que possible, un agent ou des agents chargés de remettre, formellement à l'agent ou aux agents nommés par les Etats-Unis, le Territoire, la souveraineté, les propriétés, dépendances et appartenances ainsi cédés et de dresser tout autre acte qui sera nécessaire à l'accomplissement de cette transaction. Mais la cession, avec le droit de possession immédiate, doit toutefois être considérée complète et absolue à l'échange des ratifications, sans attendre la remise formelle.

ARTICLE V.

Immediately after the exchange of the ratifications of this convention, any fortifications or military posts which may be in the ceded territory shall be delivered to the agent of the United States, and any Russian troops which may be in the territory shall be withdrawn as soon as may be reasonably and conveniently practicable.

ARTICLE VI.

In consideration of the cession aforesaid, the United States agree to pay at the treasury in Washington, within ten months after the exchange of the ratifications of this convention, to the diplomatic representative or other agent of His Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias, duly authorized to receive the same, seven million two hundred thousand dollars in gold. The cession of territory and dominion herein made is hereby declared to be free and unincumbered by any reservations, privileges, franchises, grants, or possessions, by any associated companies, whether corporate or incorporate, Russian or any other, or by any parties, except merely private individual property holders; and the cession hereby made, conveys all the rights, franchises, and privileges now belonging to Russia in the said territory or dominion, and appurtenances thereto.

ARTICLE VII.

When this convention shall have been duly ratified by the President of the United States, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, on the one part, and on the other by His Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias, the ratifications shall be exchanged at Washington within three months from the date hereof, or sooner, if possible.

In faith whereof, the respective plenipotentiaries have signed this convention, and thereto affixed the seals of their arms.

Done at Washington, the thirtieth day of March, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-seven.

[L. s.] WILLIAM H. SEWARD.

[L. s.] EDOUARD DE STOECKL.

ARTICLE V.

Immédiatement après l'échange des ratifications de cette convention, les fortifications et les postes militaires qui se trouveront sur le Territoire cédé seront remis à l'agent des Etats-Unis, et les troupes Russes qui sont stationnées dans le dit Territoire seront retirées dans un terme praticable et qui puisse convenir aux deux parties.

ARTICLE VI.

En considération de la susdite cession les Etats-Unis s'engagent à payer à la Trésorerie à Washington dans le terme de dix mois, après l'échange des ratifications de cette convention, sept millions deux cent mille de dollars en or, au Représentant diplomatique ou tout autre agent de Sa Majesté l'Empereur de toutes les Russies dûment autorisé à recevoir cette somme. La cession du Territoire avec droit de souveraineté faite par cette convention, est déclarée libre et dégagée de toutes réservations, privilèges, franchises, ou possessions par des compagnies Russes ou tout autre, légalement constituées ou autrement, ou par des associations, sauf simplement les propriétaires possédant des biens privés individuels et la cession ainsi faite transfère tous les droits, franchises et privilèges appartenant actuellement à la Russie dans le dit Territoire et ses dépendances.

ARTICLE VII.

Lorsque cette convention aura été dûment ratifiée par Sa Majesté l'Empereur de toutes les Russies d'une part, et par le Président des Etats-Unis avec l'avis et le consentement du Sénat, de l'autre, les ratifications en seront échangées à Washington dans le terme de trois mois, à compter du jour de la signature, ou plus tôt si faire se peut.

En foi de quoi les plenipotentiaries respectifs ont signé cette convention et y ont apposé le sceau de leur armes.

Fait à Washington le 18-30 jour de Mars de l'an de Notre Seigneur mil huit cent soixante sept.

[L. s.] EDOUARD DE STOECKL.

[L. s.] WILLIAM H. SEWARD.

And whereas the said treaty has been duly ratified on both parts, and the respective ratifications of the same were exchanged at Washington on this twentieth day of June, by William H. Seward, Secretary of State of the United States, and the Privy Counsellor Edward de Stoeckl, the Envoy Extraordinary of His Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias, on the part of their respective Governments,

Now, therefore, be it known that I, ANDREW JOHNSON, President of the United States of America, have caused the said Treaty to be made public, to the end that the same and every clause and article thereof may be observed and fulfilled with good faith by the United States and the citizens thereof.

12 FRONTIER LINE BETWEEN ALASKA AND BRITISH COLUMBIA.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand, and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the city of Washington, this twentieth day of June, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-seven, and of the Independence of the United States the ninety-first.

[L. S.]

By the President :

WILLIAM H. SEWARD,
Secretary of State.

ANDREW JOHNSON.

No. 2.

Mr. Phelps to Mr. Bayard.

No. 158.]

LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES,
London, December 8, 1885.

SIR : I have the honor to acknowledge the reception of your dispatch, No. 144, relative to the boundary line between Alaska and the British Possessions. The instructions therein contained shall receive immediate attention.

The uncertainty that prevails in respect to the administration of the British Government, owing to the nearly equal divisions of political parties in the new Parliament, may perhaps make it difficult to obtain early attention to international subjects not of immediate importance, but I shall endeavor to get action in this matter.

I have the honor to be, with great respect, your obedient servant,
E. J. PHELPS.

No. 3.

Mr. Phelps to Mr. Bayard.

No. 189.]

LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES,
London, January 13, 1886.

SIR : I have the honor to inform you that I had on yesterday an interview with Lord Salisbury on the subject of the Alaskan boundary, referred to in your instructions, No. 144, of November 20, 1885.

The matter was fully discussed. The importance, for various reasons of an early adjustment of the questions involved was recognized by his lordship, and the suggestion of a joint commission by the two nations for the determination of the boundary line, or for the ascertainment of such facts as would enable the Governments to establish a boundary, was very favorably received.

Lord Salisbury desires, however, before coming to a conclusion, to communicate by mail with the colonial authorities of Canada. And the question arose how early a decision as to the appointment of such a commission will be necessary in order that an appropriation for its expenses on the part of the United States may be obtained from the Congress now in session. I therefore sent you this morning a telegram, of which the following is a copy :

Boundary commission for Alaska favorably regarded.

Salisbury desires time to communicate by mail with Canada. How late can you get appropriation for expenses inserted ?

Please telegraph answer.

It is my belief that Her Majesty's Government will agree to the joint commission.

I have the honor, &c.,

E. J. PHELPS.

No. 4.

Mr. Porter to Mr. Phelps.

No. 194.]

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
Washington, January 20, 1886.

SIR: In compliance with the suggestion contained in your dispatch, No. 184, of the 6th instant, I have to inform you that I have taken great pleasure in causing copies of the United States charts of Alaska, No. 960, 1884, and chart No. 710, Berilla Gigedo Channel, 1885, for the use of the foreign office.

I am, sir, &c.,

JAS. D. PORTER,
Acting Secretary.

No. 5.

Mr. Phelps to Mr. Bayard.

No. 208.]

LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES,
London, February 2, 1886.

SIR: Referring to instruction, No. 144, of the 20th November last, I have the honor to acquaint you that on the 12th of January last I had an interview with Lord Salisbury on the subject of the Alaska boundaries, and suggested to him the importance of the appointment of a joint commission by the Government of the United States and that of Her Majesty for determining the boundaries in question.

Afterwards, on the 19th of January, I addressed a note to his lordship on this subject, and have received from him a reply dated on the 26th of January.

I inclose herewith copy of this correspondence.

I may add that the suggestions I made were favorably received by Lord Salisbury, but as he has now resigned his office it will be necessary to present the subject again to the consideration of the new secretary of foreign affairs.

I have the honor, &c.,

E. J. PHELPS.

[Inclosure 1 to 208.]

*Mr. Phelps to Lord Salisbury.*LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES,
London, January 19, 1886.

MY LORD: Referring to the conversation held with your lordship on the 12th instant, relative to the boundary between the British possessions in North America and the Territory of Alaska, I have the honor to transmit herewith a copy of the statement of the facts contained in the instructions sent me by my Government, together with copies of the maps therein referred to.

I think your lordship will find in these documents the confirmation of the statements I made in the conversation above mentioned.

In the treaty between the United States and the Emperor of Russia, of March 30, 1867, whereby the Territory of Alaska was ceded to the United States, the eastern boundary of that territory, which divides it from the North American possessions of Her Majesty, is designated by embodying in the treaty, in terms, the language of Articles III and IV of the convention between Great Britain and Russia of February 28, 1825, whereby that boundary is established.

Those articles are as follows:

"III. Commencing from the southernmost point of the island called Prince of Wales Island, which point lies in the parallel of $54^{\circ} 40'$ north latitude, and between the one hundred and thirty-first and the one hundred and thirty-third degree of west longitude (meridian of Greenwich), the said line shall ascend to the north along the channel called Portland Channel, as far as the point of the continent where it strikes the fifty-sixth degree of north latitude; from this last-mentioned point the line of demarkation shall follow the summit of the mountains situated parallel to the coast as far as the point of intersection of the one hundred and forty-first degree of west longitude (of the same meridian), and finally, from the said point of intersection, the said meridian line of the one hundred and forty-first degree, in its prolongation as far as the Frozen Ocean.

"IV. With reference to the line of demarkation laid down in the preceding article, it is understood—

"(1) That the island called Prince of Wales Island shall belong wholly to Russia [now by this cession to the United States].

"(2) That whenever the summit of the mountains which extend in a direction parallel to the coast from the fifty-sixth degree of north latitude to the point of intersection of the one hundred and forty-first degree of west longitude shall prove to be at the distance of more than ten marine leagues from the ocean, the limit between the British possessions and the line of coast which is to belong to Russia, as above mentioned (that is to say, the limit to the possessions ceded by this convention) shall be formed by a line parallel to the winding of the coast, and which shall never exceed the distance of ten marine leagues therefrom."

The boundary thus indicated has no apparent ambiguity. But it was established and described when the region through which it runs was entirely unexplored.

It was doubtless agreed upon in view of the maps known as Vancouver's map, then almost the only one available, which shows a range of mountains apparently continuous and sharply defined, running parallel with the coast about ten marine leagues inland from the fifty-sixth degree of north latitude to their intersection with the one hundred and forty-first degree of west longitude, and forming a natural and plainly obvious permanent boundary. And probably the mountains as seen from the sea present that appearance to the eye.

But recent explorations since the country has begun to be occupied show that no such boundary as that described in these treaties exists within the limits above mentioned, or is capable of being determined, and that the monuments by which it is indicated in the treaties tend only to confusion and uncertainty.

Instead of a continuous range of mountains, along the summit of which a tangible and reasonably direct line can be run, the whole region proves to be broken into a sea of mountains, with spurs running in various directions, covering laterally a very wide surface.

By no criterion, either of height, direction, or continuity, can a line be laid down that could be regarded as "following the summit of the mountains." And any approximation that should be attempted to the line prescribed in the treaties would be no nearer than various other approximations that might be made, and which would be widely different from each other.

The only other indication of this part of the boundary contained in the treaties, the limit of 10 marine leagues from the ocean, equally fails of practicable location. The coast proves, upon survey, to be so extremely irregular and indented, with such and so many projections and inlets, that it is not possible, except at immense expense of time and money, to run a line that shall be parallel with it. And if such a line should be surveyed, it would be so confused, irregular, and inconsistent that it would be impossible of practical recognition, and would differ most materially from the clear and substantially straight line contemplated in the treaties.

The result of the whole matter is that these treaties, which were intended and understood to establish a proper boundary, easy to be observed and maintained, really give no boundary at all, so far as this portion of the territory is concerned.

A further difficulty by the recent surveys in respect to this line: It is found that Portland Channel does not extend so far north as the fifty-sixth degree of north latitude. This, however, can probably be easily rectified, upon proper survey, by extending the general line of Portland Channel some 4 or 5 miles further to the north.

Under these circumstances, I am instructed by my Government to propose, through your lordship, to Her Majesty's Government that a commission be agreed on by the Governments of the United States and of Her Majesty, to be composed of commissioners to be appointed by each, who shall, under such instructions and conditions as may be mutually concurred in, and upon such surveys and examinations as may be found necessary and practicable, either designate and establish the boundary line in question or report to the respective Governments such facts, data, and recommendations as may afford a basis for its establishment by convention between them.

In addition to the statement of facts above mentioned, I have the honor to send herewith copies of the maps therein referred to. The book called "United States Pacific Coast Pilot," I must ask your lordship to have the kindness to return at your convenience, as I have no other copy. But should you desire it, I shall be happy to send to the United States for a copy for the use of Her Majesty's Government. And I shall be much obliged if your lordship will cause copies to be sent me of the British and Canadian official maps mentioned in the statement.

In the conversation with your lordship, before alluded to, reference was made to the time within which my Government must apply to Congress for the appropriation necessary for the expenses of the commission on its part, if sent out this year. I have since informed myself on that point, by telegraphic communication with the Department of State, and learn that if an agreement should be reached between the Governments by the 1st of April the appropriation can probably be obtained.

I venture to suggest, however, in view of the reasons which will readily occur to your lordship for as early an adjustment of this boundary as may be found practicable, that as such an expedition can only make progress in the summer, and as some time must necessarily be occupied in its appointment, outfit, and arrangements, it will doubtless be for the mutual interest of the Governments that a decision in regard to it should be made as soon as may be consistent.

I have the honor, &c.,

E. J. PHELPS.

FOREIGN OFFICE, *January 26, 1886.*

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 19th instant, forwarding a statement of the facts relating to the boundary between the British possessions in North America and the Territory of Alaska, as embodied in a dispatch which you have received from your Government, accompanied by copies of the maps referred to in Mr. Bayard's dispatch.

In reply I have the honor to inform you that the proposal of the United States Government for the appointment of a joint commission for the purpose of arriving at an understanding in regard to the boundary line separating the territories in question will receive the immediate attention of Her Majesty's Government.

I beg leave at the same time to acquaint you that I have instructed Her Majesty's minister at Washington to send home some copies of the work called "United States Pacific Coast Pilot," and I shall not fail on receiving them to return the volume which you have been so good as to forward to this department.

In the meanwhile application will be made to the proper department of Her Majesty's Government for copies of the British and Canadian official maps, referred to in the statement inclosed with your letter of the 19th instant, and I shall have much pleasure in supplying you with copies of the same as soon as I receive them.

I have the honor to be, &c.,

SALISBURY.

No. 6.

Mr. Bayard to Mr. Phelps.

No. 215.]

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
Washington, February 18, 1886.

SIR: Your dispatch No. 208 of the 2d instant, transmitting a copy of the recent correspondence with the British Government on the subject of the boundaries of Alaska has been received.

You will make renewed inquiries of the new administration, as the Department must await the answer of Her Majesty's Government before bringing the subject to the attention of Congress.

I am, sir, &c.,

T. F. BAYARD.

No. 7.

Mr. Helyar to Mr. Bayard.

BRITISH LEGATION,
Washington, March 12, 1886.

SIR: With reference to previous correspondence on the subject of the Alaska boundary question, I have the honor to inform you that I am authorized by his excellency the Marquis of Lansdowne to state that he has communicated to Her Majesty's Government the agreement of the Government of Canada in principle to a preliminary survey of the Alaska boundary by a commission.

I have the honor to be with the highest consideration, sir, your obedient servant,

H. O. HELYAR.

No. 8.

Mr. Bayard to Mr. Phelps.

No. 240.]

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
Washington, March 16, 1886.

SIR: With reference to my instruction No. 144 of the 20th of November last, concerning the proposal for an international commission for fixing a conventional boundary between Alaska and British Columbia preserving the intent of the Anglo-Russian convention of 1825, I now transmit to you herewith a copy of a note to this Department from Mr. Helyar, chargé d'affaires *ad interim* of Great Britain, in which he states that the Canadian Government has agreed to the principle of a preliminary survey of the Alaska boundary by a commission.

In view of this action of the Canadian Government, it is hoped that you may be able to bring the negotiations for a convention in relation to the matter to an early and favorable conclusion.

I am, sir, &c.,

T. F. BAYARD.

No. 9.

Mr. Bayard to Mr. Helyar.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
Washington, March 16, 1886.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your note of the 12th instant, in which you inform me that his excellency the Marquis of Lansdowne has communicated to Her Britannic Majesty's Government the agreement of the Government of Canada in principle to a preliminary survey of the Alaska boundary by a commission.

I have the honor to be with high consideration, sir, your obedient servant,

T. F. BAYARD.

No. 10.

Mr. Bayard to Mr. Phelps.

No. 245.]

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
Washington, March 19, 1886.

SIR: With reference to my instruction No. 144 of the 20th of November last to you touching negotiations for the appointment of an international commission to fix upon a conventional boundary line between Alaska and British Columbia, I have now to inform you that upon further consideration of the subject by the Department it is thought best to modify the above-mentioned instruction so as to limit your negotiations for the present to the formulation of an agreement with Her Britannic Majesty's Government for a preliminary survey of the Alaska boundary with a view to the discovery of such natural outlines and objects as may be made the basis for a future formal convention for the survey of the boundary line.

I am, sir, &c.,

T. F. BAYARD.

No. 11.

*Sir Lionel West to Mr. Bayard.*BRITISH LEGATION,
Washington, April 3, 1886.

SIR: With reference to the memorandum which I had the honor to hand to you on the 19th ultimo, expressing the general agreement of the Dominion Government to a preliminary survey of the Alaska boundary, such as was suggested in the President's message to Congress, I have now the honor to inform you that Her Majesty's Government agree in principle to this preliminary investigation of the boundary, but that such agreement must not be understood necessarily to imply the appointment of a *joint* commission.

I have, &c.,

L. S. SACKVILLE-WEST.

No. 12.

Mr. Bayard to Mr. Phelps.

No. 270.]

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
Washington, April 8, 1886.

SIR: With reference to the Department's instructions to you, numbered 144, of the 20th of November last, and 240 of the 16th ultimo, concerning the Alaska boundary question, I now transmit to you herewith a copy of a note from Her Britannic Majesty's minister at this capital, stating that while Her Majesty's Government agrees in principle to this preliminary investigation of the boundary, it is not desired that such an agreement shall be understood necessarily to imply the appointment of a *joint* commission.

S. Ex. 143—2

We assume that the response of Her Britannic Majesty's Government, that the proposed agreement "must not be understood necessarily to imply the appointment of a *joint* commission," refers only to the preliminary investigation of the boundary suggested in the President's message. This preliminary reconnaissance need not, of course, be the work of a joint commission; indeed, the main utility of the suggestion lies in the opportunity it affords for a comparison of the practical views of independent parties acting toward the same end. Such a comparison will doubtless afford the means of agreeing upon the demarkation by means of a conventional boundary, any part of which can be readily determined without need of surveying the whole. But until terms of conventional agreement are intelligently proposed and adopted, it might be premature to speak of the organization of a joint commission.

You will ascertain if these assumptions correctly represent the views of Her Britannic Majesty's Government. We do not understand that a final boundary line recognized by both can be practically laid down without some form of *joint* determination.

Hoping that the negotiations may be brought to an early conclusion,
I am, sir, your obedient servant,

T. F. BAYARD.

No. 13.

Mr. Bayard to Sir Lionel West.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
Washington, April 8, 1886.

SIR: With reference to previous correspondence concerning the Alaska boundary question, I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your note on the 3d instant, in which you state that the proposed agreement must not be understood necessarily to imply the appointment of a *joint* commission.

I have the honor to be, with highest consideration, sir, your obedient servant,

T. F. BAYARD.

No. 14.

Mr. Phelps to Mr. Bayard.

No. 250.]

LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES,
London, April 17, 1886.

SIR: I have the honor to inclose a translation of a telegram sent you in cipher to-day, on the subject of the Alaska boundary, and also a copy of a note received from Lord Rosebery on the same subject, dated April 15, 1886.

I have had repeated interviews with his lordship in reference to this matter, and I understand the British Government to assent to the proposal I was instructed by you to make, that a joint commission be constituted for a survey of the boundary in question, such as may enable the two Governments to agree upon an adjustment of the boundary. The modification of the original proposal which I was instructed to

make, which modification is contained in your instruction No. 245 of March 19, 1886, had already been proposed by me as an alternative to Lord Rosebery, as I regarded it as within the limits of my previous instructions.

I had proposed that the commission should be empowered either to establish the boundary or to report such survey and facts as might enable the Governments to establish it, according as the Governments might agree.

In conversation with Lord Rosebery, I had expressed my own judgment as favoring the latter alternative, subject, of course, to such instructions as I might receive from you.

Subsequently I received your instruction No. 245, above referred to; and the note from Lord Rosebery, of which I inclose a copy, shows that he has reached the same conclusion as is expressed by you in that instruction.

Awaiting your further instructions as to the commissioners to be named, and as to the details of the powers to be conferred upon them, I have the honor to be, sir, your obedient servant,

E. F. PHELPS.

FOREIGN OFFICE, *April 15, 1886.*

DEAR MR. PHELPS: With reference to our conversation of the 12th instant, about the Alaska boundary, I find that the views of the Canadian Government on the proposal contained in your letter of the 19th of January, which inclosed the purport of a dispatch from Mr. Bayard, were communicated to the foreign office on the 31st ultimo.

Sir L. West has, in consequence, been instructed to inform the Government of the United States that Her Majesty's Government are prepared to take part in a *preliminary* investigation of the boundary question. This would not commit the two Governments to a joint commission such as that suggested in your note of the 19th of January.

Meanwhile, we do not propose to move further in the matter until we know what action is taken by the United States Government in regard to applying to Congress for an appropriation.

Believe me, sincerely,

ROSEBERY.

No. 15.

Mr. Bayard to Mr. Phelps.

No. 280.]

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
Washington, April 26, 1886.

SIR: With reference to previous correspondence on the subject of the Alaska boundary question, I transmit to you herewith, for the files of your legation, a copy of a memorandum in reference to the matter which was left at this Department on the 19th ultimo by Sir Lionel West.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

T. F. BAYARD.

Alaska boundary.

Mr. Phelps's proposal was for the appointment of a joint commission. The Dominion Government, however, while expressing its general agreement to a preliminary survey, has not expressed its assent to such a commission. They con-

sider that a preliminary survey, such as was suggested in the President's message to Congress, is preferable to a formally-constituted joint commission, which would involve a large expenditure of public money and lead perhaps to interminable discussions.

We are of opinion that the survey which they are prepared to agree to would enable the two Governments to establish a satisfactory basis for the delimitation of the frontier and demonstrate whether the conditions of the convention of 1825 are applicable to the now more or less known features of the country.