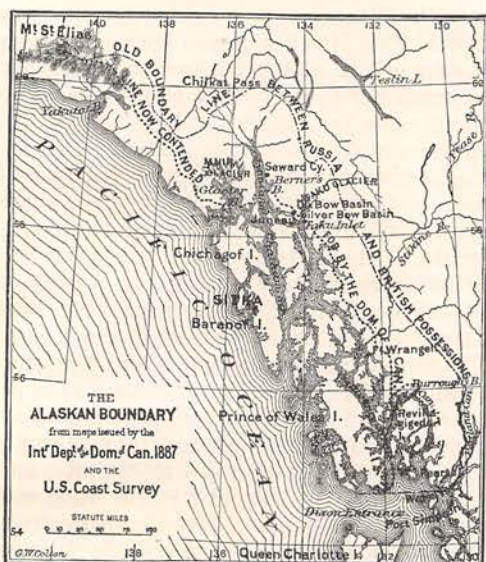


## THE ALASKA BOUNDARY QUESTION.



IN THE CENTURY for July, 1891, attention was called by the present writer to the necessity for establishing definitely the boundary line between Alaska and British Columbia. The accompanying map, there printed, shows the regular boundary line recognized by Russia, Great Britain, and the United States since 1824, and also the new or Cameron Line contended for by the Dominion of Canada since 1887. By convention of July, 1892, commissioners were appointed on the part of the United States and Canada to conduct surveys in the region in question, to ascertain « facts and data necessary to the permanent delimitation of the said boundary line.» The work was to be completed by December 31, 1894, but the difficult field-work in so great an extent of territory required an extension of time to December 31, 1895; and now, by a last convention, December 31, 1896, is the time set for all data relative to the boundary region to be laid before those who will be charged with negotiating the final treaty.

In the treaties between Russia and Great Britain, and Russia and the United States, in 1824 and 1825, and again in the treaty between Russia and the United States in 1867, it is provided that, from the well-known boundary line of  $54^{\circ} 40'$ ,

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.

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 northern part of this boundary, being an astronomical one, was easily determined by careful observations made at United States Coast Survey stations on the Yukon and Porcupine rivers in 1889-91. Meridian stones were erected on the banks of those rivers, and the difference in position between them and the positions marked by Canadian surveyors is but trifling. An appropriation of \$75,000 has been granted by Congress to defray the share of the United States in the expense of the joint commission to determine and mark the line of the 141st meridian in the Yukon region this season.

Circle City, just below the arctic circle, on the upper Yukon, and the mining camps on Forty Mile Creek and other tributaries, are now permanent settlements, with regular communication each summer with Seattle and San Francisco, by way of St. Michael's in Bering Sea, and receive an influx of miners each spring, by way of Juneau and Chilkat. Over two thousand miners are said to have been at work along the creeks and gulches of Yukon Alaska last season, and more than four hundred men started in January and February of this year to drag their supplies on hand sleds across the 750 miles of British territory lying between the boundary at the summit of Chilkoot Pass and the boundary at the crossing of the 141st meridian on the Yukon.

The United States does not recognize, protect, or control these mining communities in

any way. No geological explorations or surveys have been undertaken, and there are no official reports upon the location, formation, development, or yield of this rich placer region. There are no military posts and not a territorial or Federal officer in Yukon Alaska save one customs inspector and postmaster. There is no law, save as the miners maintain their own unwritten code. Church missionary societies have provided for the few peaceable Indian tribes, but even spiritual comfort is withheld from the miners. «Heaven is high, and the Czar is far off,» despairing Russian colonists used to say long ago. Since the military occupation of Alaska ceased in 1877, frequent appeals have been made for the establishment of a garrison at Chilkat, and the construction of a military road over the pass traversed by Yukon miners for the last sixteen years. General Miles once considered the matter to the extent of detailing an officer to make a reconnaissance. Mr. E. J. Glave explored the Chilkat country in 1891, and proved the feasibility of taking packhorses over the divide and grazing them in the rich bush country around the Yukon's head waters, so that the slow and expensive packing by Indian carriers or hand-sleds might easily be abandoned.<sup>1</sup>

The governor of Alaska has vainly recommended that government engineers should survey and build a wagon road to the boundary line by Mr. Glave's Chilkat route; and he urges, in his last annual report (1895), the establishment of a one-company military post in the Yukon valley, and a regular mail service between Circle City and Chilkat.

The Dominion of Canada maintains a force of mounted police at Fort Cudahy, near the boundary line on the Yukon; its gold commissioner visits the few British camps to issue miners' licenses and to gather taxes and statistics; its customs officers levy duties on the supplies United States miners drag or raft through British territory from southeastern Alaska; and some months ago the Dominion's efforts to provide a regular mail service between Fort Cudahy and Chilkat aroused the most absurd and unfounded excitement in the Jingo prints in the United States.

The demarcation of the line southward from Mount St. Elias to Portland Channel presents remarkable physical difficulties, and there all the differences of opinion between Canadian and United States authorities arise. The treaties provided that the line should there follow the summits of the mountains running

parallel with the coast, save when that summit line proves to be more than ten marine leagues, or thirty miles, from the coast, when the line shall be drawn «parallel to the winding of the coast, and which shall never exceed the distance of ten marine leagues therefrom.» This bit of mainland has always been known as the «Thirty Mile Strip,» and its conventional boundary line was drawn alike on all maps and charts until the official Canadian map of 1884 placed the line nearer the sea-coast, and, ignoring the treaty references to Portland Channel, brought it to the line of 56° on the Unuk River, and thence by Behm Canal and Clarence Strait to 54° 40'. In 1887, the official Canadian map presented the Cameron Line, which, advancing still nearer to the coast, narrowed the Thirty Mile Strip to a five-mile strip where it existed at all, and broke up the continuous «line of coast which is to belong to Russia» (and by cession to the United States) into alternating tongues and patches of United States and British soil. Yet this Thirty Mile Strip was rented by the Hudson Bay Company from Russia for twenty-eight years, Sir George Simpson, governor of that company, saying that all the British possessions in the interior adjacent to it were worthless without this coast strip.

In an informal discussion of this international boundary line held at Washington during the Fisheries Conference, 1887-1888, Mr. William H. Dall of the Smithsonian Institution, and Dr. G. M. Dawson of the Dominion Geological Survey, represented their respective governments. The map was presented on which General Cameron had drawn his surprising line, and the argument advanced that the words «Portland channel» in the treaties could not mean Portland Channel, because that tidal inlet does not extend to the line of 56°—not by all of five or six minutes of latitude, it seems. British surveyors charted that supposed boundary inlet immediately after the transfer of Russian America to the United States; and on the «fly» to the British Admiralty chart No 2431, published in 1869, they appropriately named the heights on the east, or British side, for their own contemporary statesmen, and honored the heights on the west, or Alaskan, shore with the names of Lincoln, Seward, Rousseau, Halleck, Adams, Peabody, and Reverdy Johnson. The Canadian conferee suggested to Mr. Dall that the United States yield some portions of the Thirty Mile Strip giving access to the interior in exchange for a great block of territory south and west from the upper Yukon and between the latter

<sup>1</sup> See CENTURY MAGAZINE, September and October, 1892: «Pioneer Packhorses in Alaska.»

and the present boundary of Alaska. Then Mr. Dall inquired if Canada would take all Arctic-fronting Alaska north of the Yukon River, and give the United States the Queen Charlotte Islands in exchange. Later, Sir John Robson, premier of British Columbia, quite unofficially voiced the suggestion that the United States relinquish its few patches of coast line between  $56^{\circ}$  and Mount St. Elias in exchange for certain concessions in sealing. The American sense of humor is evidently not restricted to the lower half of the continent, and the game of « bluff » is a recreation and accomplishment alike in the Dominion and the States.

For three seasons the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey and the Dominion Survey have maintained camps on the different inlets and rivers of the Thirty Mile Strip of Alaska between Mount St. Elias and Portland Channel. For two seasons a Canadian surveyor accompanied each party of United States surveyors, and a Coast Survey officer was included in each Canadian camp; but the practice was discontinued. The reports of these Coast Survey parties are confidential to the Department of State, and not published; but the general features of the surveyors' work are known. In 1893 elevations were taken, and astronomical, topographical, and triangulation work was done, along the Unuk, Stikine, and Taku rivers, the points of triangulation being marked by monuments, cairns, or beacons. In 1894 more work was done on the Unuk and in Lynn Canal, and observations at Yakutat, added to the astronomical work of 1892, definitely fixed the height of the summit of Mount St. Elias at 18,024 feet above the level of the sea, and its position in latitude  $60^{\circ} 17' 35''$  N. and longitude  $140^{\circ} 55' 47''$  W. This puts the actual summit within British lines, the meridian line and the thirty-mile line touching on its lower slope. The great white peak remains a sufficient corner-stone for the domain, but it is overtopped to eastward by the neighboring British peak of Mount Logan (19,539 feet), which is now the highest mountain on the North American continent. In 1895 a traverse was run from the line of  $56^{\circ}$  N., on Bear River at the head of Portland Channel, and triangulation carried to Fort Simpson, and along the north shore of Dixon Entrance which forms a natural water boundary along the line  $54^{\circ} 40'$ . In the mean time the regular work of the United States Coast Survey steamer *Patterson* in Alaska has not been interrupted, and the careful charting of the routes of commerce through the Sitkan archipelago has been continued.

The change of boundary indicated by the Cameron Line would not only take from Alaska several rich mineral sections, but our most unique scenic possessions. Portland Channel itself is a fiord of surpassing beauty; Behm Canal is justly extolled as the finest landscape reach on the coast; Revillagigedo is the scenic island; and John Muir is author of the saying that the Stikine River is « a Yosemite one hundred miles long. » The Cameron Line would annex all these to Canada, crossing the Stikine at its muddy mouth, and taking away over sixty miles of that navigable Yosemite, on whose banks four places have been accepted as the temporary boundary in the past. Three times the Hudson Bay Company post and the British custom-house were removed and rebuilt, until at last, during the Cassiar mining boom, the British custom-house was allowed to remain on acknowledged Alaskan soil, at the foot of the Great Glacier, for the temporary convenience of the British authorities and the United States military officers at Fort Wrangell, near the mouth of the Stikine River. Later a town site was surveyed around this very custom-house, and entered at Victoria, B. C.

The most beautiful tide-water glacier on the coast would be lost to us by General Cameron's penciled annexation of Taku Inlet. The boundary line, which had always been drawn at the crest of the mountain range at the head of Lynn Canal, was moved down to tide-water on the Canadian map of 1884; and in 1887 General Cameron moved the line sixty miles farther south, to the very entrance of that magnificent fiord, gathering in all the Berner's Bay mines, the canneries at the head of Lynn Canal, the great Davidson Glacier, and the scores of lesser ice-streams that constitute the glory of that greater Lyngenfiord of the New World. Least pleasant to contemplate in this proposed partition or gerrymandering of scenic Alaska is the taking away of Glacier Bay, which, discovered by John Muir<sup>1</sup> in 1879, visited and named by Admiral Beardslee in 1880, has been the goal of regular excursion steamers for thirteen seasons past. Alaska tourists learn with dismay that the Cameron line, cutting across Glacier Bay at its very entrance, would transfer the great glaciers to the British flag, and prevent United States steamers from landing passengers at Muir Glacier, just as the Canadian excursion steamer has been debarred from landing visitors in Muir Inlet for want of a United States custom-house.

<sup>1</sup> See CENTURY MAGAZINE, June, 1895: « The Discovery of Glacier Bay. »

So far the so-called Canadian «aggressions» are all on paper. The Cameron Line has been drawn, but has only imaginary existence. For a quarter of a century there has been complete indifference to the unsettled Alaska boundary line on the part of the United States, followed recently by excited and intemperate utterances in the newspapers, based on half information, miners' yarns, and imagination, as deplorable in effect

as the former indifference. Public opinion is being misled and prejudiced to a degree that renders peaceable consideration of the question difficult. Wild editorials have given such hints, points, and suggestions for Canadian «aggressions,» were such intended, that one might believe the Jingo journalists hypnotized from across the border, so much better do they serve the Dominion's ends than those of our «neglected estate» of Alaska.

*Eliza Ruhamah Scidmore.*

## ARE NERVOUS DISEASES INCREASING?



IT is the generally accepted belief that the present age is characterized, especially in America, by a great increase in the amount of so-called «nervousness,» and of actual disease of the nervous system. Few have been bold enough to question this belief,<sup>1</sup> which statistics apparently confirm.

It would be tedious to cite the statistics which seem to prove such an increase. One or two examples may suffice. In Massachusetts, from 1860 to 1890, according to the Registration Reports, the deaths from diseases of the brain (paralysis, apoplexy, convulsions, etc.) increased from 12.06 to 19.61 for each ten thousand inhabitants; from 1855 to 1885, according to the State census, the insane increased from 1 in every 590 inhabitants to 1 in every 369 inhabitants. Each new edition of the treatises on diseases of the nervous system, moreover, is bulkier than its predecessor, and contains descriptions of new affections which even ten years ago were unrecognized or unknown. One of the latest elementary text-books (Dana's) describes 176 different nervous affections. The increase in this country has been especially noted: books have been written upon American nervousness, nervous prostration has been called the «American disease,» and I have heard a college president, who ought to have known better, even though it was after dinner, speak of «Americanitis,» which really means the inflammation of the American, but by which he meant this same nervous excitability.

The causes of this alleged increase have been so often rehearsed that it is needless to do more than mention a very few of them here.

Nordau, in his much-discussed «Degeneration,» has given them in considerable detail, with an appalling array of figures. They are also enumerated quite fully in Beard's «American Nervousness.» The chief cause is thought to be the much greater demand which the conditions of modern life make upon the human brain. In almost every department of human industry brute force has been replaced by skill, and thus the brain has been compelled to preside more directly over muscular movements, and to make the muscles contract with greater rapidity and precision, although with less strength. The workman finds less satisfaction in his work; he is only a peg in a great machine, and takes little pleasure in the endless polishing of pin-heads. Modern methods of doing business are such that fortunes may be won or lost in a moment, and combinations are daily made involving millions. Everything is done in a hurry. We telegraph to London or Berlin, talk through the telephone with customers in Chicago or Philadelphia, and think little of a trip to Omaha for an hour's interview.

With the advent of democracy the whole social condition has been filled with unrest. We are no longer content in the state unto which it has pleased God to call us, but we long for something better, to get into a higher stratum of society. We are daily incited by the story of the humble origin of many of the world's leaders, and we see no reason why we cannot become leaders ourselves. Few of us, however, have the ability so to do; and therefore to the striving and unrest is added the dependency of unfulfilled desire. In our religious life, too, we have been wandering, without map or guide, in the wilderness of doubt.

With all this has come an enormous increase in the complexity of our mental life. Not only do we take our pleasures sadly, but

<sup>1</sup> The belief, however, has recently been attacked by Dr. Clifford Allbutt of London, in the «Contemporary Review» for February, 1895, and by Professor Freund of Strasburg («Wie steht es um die Nervosität unseres Zeitalters?») Leipsic, 1894.