

# ALASKAN BOUNDARY CASE AS IT IS PRESENTED TO THE COMMISSION NOW IN SESSION

The dispute between this country and Great Britain regarding the Alaskan boundary would have been settled long ago had not an unfortunate streak of economy permeated the State Department. Nearly 30 years ago the British government offered to join the United States in surveying to the coast of the north-hand of Alaska exactly where the map people of that time had laid out the boundary line, and according to the construction of the treaty adopted by the United States it was to be the line which would be upwards of \$2,000,000 to fix the boundary at specified points. The State Department and Congress were unwilling to spend this money. Had they done so there would have been no dispute about the boundary treaty just ratified, the United States would have retained all the territory it bought from Russia, and Great Britain would have had the coast of the north-hand for securing possession of a port which would give her access to the Klondike.

There is no dispute as to the boundary line of the main part of Alaska, embracing the coast from the northern corner of the continent of America. The difference concerns only the question of how wide the strip of coast is to be from Mount St. Elias to British Columbia. The United States asserts that the strip is, with one or two unimportant exceptions, 30 miles wide, and it has always occupied that territory within the limits of the strip at large. The United States claims that this strip is to be measured inwardly from the tidewater in all cases.

**The British Contention.**  
The British contention is that the boundary should leave to the United States only a narrow strip, frequently less than five miles in width, and that the line should cross all the bays and inlets, thus giving the British merchants the undisputed right to enter the waters of the straits and inlets, and to use them as a customs house of the United States. The British contention now does not entirely deprive the United States of all the territory which it bought from Russia, but it does deprive the American territory under the British theory is so narrow and is so cut up by the numerous bays and inlets, that practically all the coast is for commercial purposes, the only real access to that coast being by means of the inlets themselves, which are generally so wide and so deep at the present day that the British line crosses as a permanent anchorage and preclude the idea of a successful landing.

It is indispensable to an understanding of the Alaskan boundary question that the maps. It is one of the points urged by the Americans that all existing maps show the boundary of the panhandle of Alaska to be a line running parallel with the mountain range, 30 miles distant from salt water. There are no published maps of the British contention. An official map of the panhandle of Alaska published by the United States in 1887, and another map which shows the established boundary line, is reproduced above, and the boundary claimed by the British, as well as the *modus vivendi* line, is shown thereon.

**Caused by Thirst for Gold.**  
Before going into the details of the boundary question, it should be explained that there never was any dispute between the two countries and no one had ever heard officially of the boundary until August, 1887. A high joint commission had been appointed to settle various matters in dispute between the United States and Canada. The commission was not one of them, and it was not until the commissioners met in Quebec, in the summer of 1887, that anyone heard of the new and surprising boundary. The British, who had been told that the boundary was the 141st meridian, were apparently first thought of after the high joint commission had been agreed upon and before its first meeting. The British, and not the Americans, were the ones who discovered the boundary, the situation at once grew serious. The high joint commission entirely failed to agree on the boundary, and the Americans would not arbitrate for American territory provided the umpire was a European, and the Canadians, although nominal Americans, were afraid to arbitrate with a European. The United States commissioners finally proposed that each side should appoint three commissioners, and that they should endeavor to agree on a boundary line. This plan was rejected by the British. This is the same as that now adopted. Three men from the United States and three from the British were to agree upon the proper interpretation of the old treaties. If they fail, the dispute will be different from what it is now, in that the United States and the British commissioner that his own country is in the wrong.

There has been no danger of a clash between the United States and the British authorities at any point along the entire stretch of coast from British Columbia to Mount St. Elias, with the single exception of the trails leading from the coast to the Klondike. There are places where there only, have hostile bayonets glanced, and the opposing custom houses have been side by side. If the subsidence of the Klondike had occurred, it is probable the Canadians would never have raised the boundary question.

**The Modus Vivendi.**  
The miners going to and fro, excepting those who chose the long route by the Yukon, invariably went up the Lynn Canal, crossed the narrow strait of Chilkoot Pass, and then floated down the network of Canadian waterways to the placer diggings of the Klondike. Among the trails running from the Lynn Canal, if anywhere a dangerous or difficult authority and bloodshed might occur. Therefore, Secretary Hay and Lord Pauncefote, then British Ambassador, agreed upon a *modus vivendi*, or temporary boundary line, which now governs all intercourse along the usual Klondike trails. This imaginary line is just a short distance north of the Klondike, and by means of the Chilkoot River gives the British water access to the Klondike. It is, therefore, a distinct surrender of American territory, but it was, of course, stipulated in the *modus vivendi* that it should not prejudice the rights of either party, so that if the commission agreed on anything at London the temporary boundary line should be transferred into consideration. This *modus vivendi* also runs, as indicated on the map, across the summit of the mountains, just beyond Dyea and Skagway, and it is known as the White and Chilkoot Passes. This is inside of the usual boundary line, but it is generally admitted by the United States authorities that there is a distinct mountain range there contemplated by the original treaty, and hence, although the line is still only about 15 miles from tidewater, this country has practically admitted that it is in the wrong.

**How We Acquired Alaska.**  
No clear understanding of the points involved in the Alaskan boundary dispute can be arrived at without a survey of the history of the Alaskan territory. Governments trace their rights to real estate estates as individuals do, except that treaties between nations take the place of deeds between individuals. It becomes necessary, therefore, to run back of the history of Alaska a little for the purpose of finding just where and how the boundary was originally fixed by agreement among the nations.

It is curious to discover, in going into the history of Alaska, that the boundary line was first accurately laid out not by cause of a dispute as to the boundary itself, but merely as an incident to a question as to the jurisdiction of the high seas. In 1821 three great nations were interested. The boundary question not only had nothing to do with the original dispute, but it was judged in by the ears of the world, and the nations were given a chance to withdraw gracefully from a preposterous claim of sovereignty over the ocean.

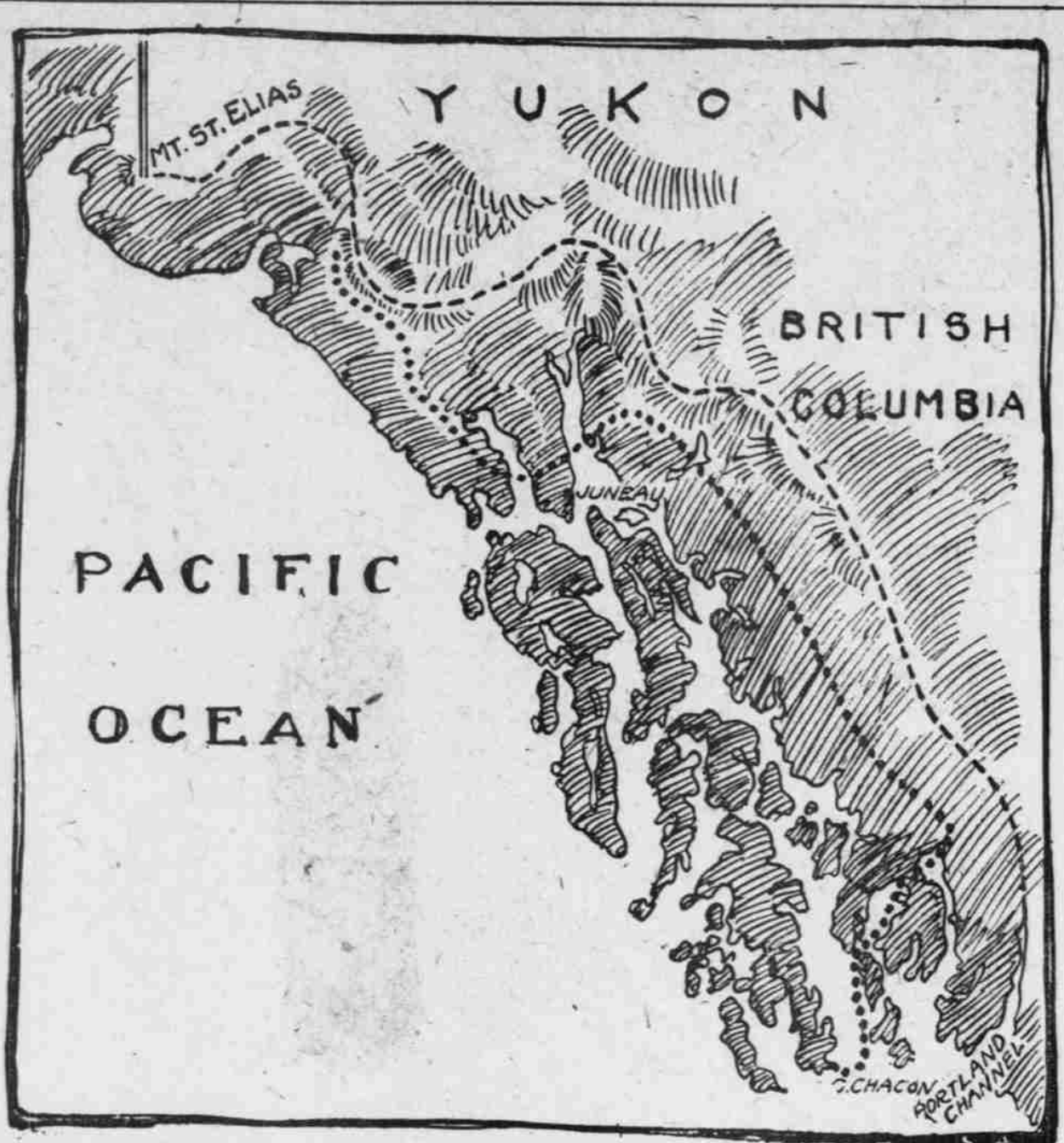
In 1821 the Empire of Russia made an extraordinary declaration, or ukase, in which it asserted a claim to the exclusive jurisdiction of a tract of ocean 100 miles from the mainland of Northeastern Asia, from the extreme from the north coast of North America, which had long been occupied by the Russian fur-traders. In addition to that Russia asserted that the British colonies had no right to a post handle of Alaska, run down among the fringe of islands to the parallel of 51 degrees north latitude. This would have separated the entire coast of British Columbia from the ocean. There was then a boundary dispute between Great Britain and the United States, and this country claimed that what was then known as the Oregon Territory, which extended nearly 10 degrees of north latitude, Russia was, therefore, claiming a narrow strip of coast which for 250 miles was also claimed by Great Britain and the British North-American colonies. The British government, both the United States and Great Britain made immediate and vigorous protests. Russia, however, did not care but little about them. It was entirely willing at once to withdraw its demand for the exclusive sovereignty of the Pacific Ocean, but it insisted on its claim to the line of coast south of the 51st parallel of latitude. As a result of this action the United States without hesitation withdrew its claim to the Oregon Territory, which involved merely a declaration that this country had general rights in the Northern Pacific ocean.

**Russia's Treaty With England.**  
However, in order that Russia might be permitted to back down gracefully from its original position, the British government of the day conceived the idea of negotiating a treaty which would mark the boundary between the Russian possessions in Alaska and the British North-American colonies. The negotiations were continued with various breaks between the years 1821 and 1825. In the latter year the treaty between Russia and Great Britain was formally ratified, which has become known as the "Treaty of 1825." The United States claimed the strip of coast running from Mount St. Elias down to the Portland Channel, approximately at the 51st degree of north latitude. The British, however, claimed a narrow strip of coast more than three-quarters of a century ago.

In 1857 the United States bought the territory of Alaska from the Empire of Russia. The United States claimed the strip of coast running from Mount St. Elias down to the Portland Channel, approximately at the 51st degree of north latitude. The British, however, claimed a narrow strip of coast more than three-quarters of a century ago. In 1857 the United States bought the territory of Alaska from the Empire of Russia. The United States claimed the strip of coast running from Mount St. Elias down to the Portland Channel, approximately at the 51st degree of north latitude. The British, however, claimed a narrow strip of coast more than three-quarters of a century ago.

**Mistake by the Topographers.**  
The framers of the treaty, however, knew that they were in ignorance of the actual topography of the country they were attempting to bound, and therefore they provided an alternative line which could be run whenever it was found that there were no mountains to serve as a natural boundary. The treaty, as the translation shows, provided that the boundary line should be run along the "crest" of the mountains in each case, except where the mountains were more than ten leagues, or 30 geographical miles, back from the coast. To the ordinary observer this provision meets all the necessities of the case, and it would seem to be as easy to run it along a range of mountains. So it seemed, too, to the geographers of the world and to the statesmen of all nations. They assumed that the mountains were everywhere, and that no one ever thought there were. The Canadian surveyors, however, discovered that there were no mountains anywhere near the outside fringes of islands, and that no one ever thought there were. The Canadian surveyors, however, discovered that there were no mountains anywhere near the outside fringes of islands, and that no one ever thought there were.

**Text of the Treaty.**  
The original British translation shows sections 2 and 4 of the original treaty as translated in the British Foreign Office when the facts were all fresh to be as follows:  
"The line of demarcation between the possessions of the high contracting parties is not to be drawn in any other manner than that in which the islands of America to the northwest shall be drawn in the manner following:  
"Commencing with 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 121st and 133rd degree of west longitude (meridian of Greenwich), the line shall extend 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 shall extend to the north along 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 the 56th degree of north latitude, from the said point of intersection the said meridian line of the 141st degree, in its prolongation as far as the Frozen Ocean, shall form the limit between the Russian and British possessions in the continent of America to the northwest."  
"4. With reference to the line of demarcation laid down in the preceding article it is understood:  
"First—That the island called Prince of Wales Island shall belong wholly to Russia.  
"Second—That wherever the summits 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 the outside line of the string of coast which is to belong to Russia, as above mentioned, shall be formed by a line parallel to the windings of the coast, and which shall never exceed the distance of ten marine leagues therefrom."  
If the people had known as much about the extreme northwest coast of this continent as they do today the treaty would have been differently worded.



or at any events would not have been misconstrued, because the preliminary negotiations were conducted in such a clear way it was intended to run the boundary line. The whole difficulty arises from the fact that when Vancouver discovered the section of country which generally bears his name from the coast, a short distance along the coast. When he started out it seemed as though the coast was bordered everywhere by a range of mountains, apparently about 25 or 30 miles away from the coast. This is the range of mountains which the treaty attempted to fix as the boundary between Great Britain and Russia. Unfortunately, Vancouver guessed wrong as to the position of the coast, but in no case is there a well defined watershed, except just on the trail which leads from the Lynn Canal to the Klondike, and it was just at this point, of course, that the interests of Great Britain and the United States clashed five years ago when the 30 miles from the coast, and the headwaters of the Yukon.

**Canadian Make New Claims.**  
If this preposterous interpretation of the treaty had been adopted, Dyea and Skagway, but Juneau, the principal town of Alaska, with Wrangell and other ancient settlements, would have become British territory. The United States would have retained Sitka, which is on Baranoff Island, but it would have had no mainland at all from British Columbia up to Cape Spencer, of the entire coast of Alaska from the south would absolutely have disappeared. This claim was advanced by Canadians exclusively. It was so absurd it was laughed out of court, and it has never been seriously advanced since. The United States declined to discuss a claim which would deprive it of all hold on the mainland, and the firmness displayed at the time led to another examination of the treaty by the Canadian government, the result that an entirely new interpretation was evolved, and it is this latter theory of a treaty which has now become a serious subject of dispute between the two countries.

**Rival Claims to Gold Fields.**  
There were two ways of reaching the Klondike, one by the Yukon River, which was open only during a short time during the summer, and the other by the Lynn Canal and a long portage across the mountains, descending then by various lakes and rivers to the Klondike region. The Yukon route was entirely within American territory until the edge of the continent was reached, and the region was to the eastward of the 141st meridian, and therefore belonged to Great Britain. There were two ways of reaching the Klondike, one by the Yukon River, which was open only during a short time during the summer, and the other by the Lynn Canal and a long portage across the mountains, descending then by various lakes and rivers to the Klondike region. The Yukon route was entirely within American territory until the edge of the continent was reached, and the region was to the eastward of the 141st meridian, and therefore belonged to Great Britain.

also claim that the boundary fixed by the treaty as being upon the crest of the mountains shall jump from peak to peak long British Columbia, and it is frequently across these great inland bays. By a combination of these two theories the British-claimants, who have about as much right to the strip of coast as the Australian butcher had to the Tichborne estates, have succeeded in running a line, as shown upon the map, which is extremely near the real coast, and which practically cuts the United States off from the mainland entirely. This line gives the British access to all of the great bays and inlets and would give to this country so small a strip of coast as practically to be worthless. No one can understand the Alaskan boundary question without a map. With a map it becomes quite clear.

**Question of Intent.**  
Every court takes into consideration the intent of the man who transfers property by will or deed. A man cannot even commit murder without intending to do it. For this reason the negotiations which preceded the signing of the original treaty between Great Britain and Russia has vast significance, and when the matter is submitted to the joint commission this summer these old negotiations will be found to play an important part. In the first place it must be remembered that the treaty was originally intended for the purpose of permitting Russia to give up its claim of the exclusive control of the North Pacific Ocean. Neither side was attempting to grant any land. Russia had no intention of giving up any territory, and had a string of trading posts running all the way down the coast nearly to the boundary line between the United States and British Columbia, and it is clearly shown in the original negotiations, Russia was seeking to protect its line of fur traders along the mainland in what is known as the panhandle of Alaska. The Hudson Bay Company had some establishments scattered hundred miles in the interior. The Russians did not care to go far inland, but they did insist on absolute control of the coast and have clearly indicated this in the instructions to their diplomatic agents. They were also willing, it must always be remembered, to fix the boundary of the main part of Alaska at the 141st meridian of longitude, 300 geographical miles to the eastward of where it now runs. Had that proposition, which was made once, been adopted, the Klondike would now be in the possession of the United States and the panhandle boundary line would never have been disputed.

**Strength of American Case.**  
When one takes into consideration the fact that the territory has been in the undisputed possession first of Russia and then of the United States for nearly three generations, that the existing maps have been accepted by all the world, and that Great Britain, if it had any rights to the strip of coast, has slept upon its privileges so long that it is almost dead now, it seems as if no one could doubt the result of a fair arbitration of the dispute. Former Secretary of State John C. Fremont, who was one of the high joint commission which wrestled with the subject three years ago, formulated the American position into 25 separate points, which indicate our arguments more clearly than any other arguments, and which, accordingly, are in full as the brief on the part of the United States of America.

**Miled as to Mountains.**  
The intent of the treaty is still further shown by the fact that, although the British had freely offered to place the boundary line upon the crest of the mountain range offered beyond that point, the Russians were not concerned about the distance, because they knew that the general course of the coast was a great mountain range between them and the Hudson Bay territory, and no fur traders could successfully maintain themselves on the seaward side of that range provided they were shut off from access to salt water by a definite strip of Russian territory. Relieving first that the

mountains were there, and not desiring a wide strip of coast, the Russians were all gathered on salt water, the coast live in the interior, where the mountains were bare and barren, the Russians readily agreed to a paragraph fixing the boundary line upon the crest of the mountains, expressly providing that this line should be "parallel to the windings of the coast."

In following out these original negotiations it is shown that the British-claimants claimed and the British freely conceded absolute sovereignty over a strip of coast running from the lower end of the coast of Alaska to the head of the Lynn Canal, and that the British-claimants were wide enough to keep the coast open to the traders forever away from the ocean. The text of the sections quoted and the use of the plural word "mountains" on their face shows that the British-claimants were to run the boundary line along a range of mountains supposed to be parallel to the coast. The Russian boundary line was set fixed at an leagues from the coast, but the distance was only fixed when the mountains did not manifest themselves. The wording is not such as to indicate that a line could be drawn from isolated peaks near the coast, but that it was expected to run the boundary along the watershed parallel to the coast, wherever that was not more than 30 miles away from the coast. The British-claimants, however, have succeeded in running a line, as shown upon the map, which is extremely near the real coast, and which practically cuts the United States off from the mainland entirely. This line gives the British access to all of the great bays and inlets and would give to this country so small a strip of coast as practically to be worthless. No one can understand the Alaskan boundary question without a map. With a map it becomes quite clear.

**Points of Dispute.**  
Practically all of the present dispute, therefore, turns upon the interpretation of the original treaty so far as it relates to the windings of the coast and to the mountain range, which was supposed to exist at a short distance inland. There was some dispute as regards the starting point of the boundary line. The Russians originally claimed that the point of departure should be the summit of the mountain range, but they abandoned the contention for a coast south of the 56th degree, because the United States and Great Britain were disputing the joint ownership of that very section. It may be out of place to say that Great Britain got it. The treaty, therefore, in order to secure a point of departure, included Prince of Wales Island, which is a narrow strip of land then ran the line up the Portland Channel to the 56th degree of latitude. There was a dispute between the United States and Great Britain as to the position of the Portland Channel, growing out of a discrepancy between Vancouver's map and his description. There were several channels called Portland, but the lines of the Portland Channel, as shown upon the map, are now nearly the same, although there is a divergence of opinion as to just where they strike the 51st degree. This does not affect the access to the Klondike, however.

**Points of Arbitration.**  
In the treaty just ratified by the Senate the exact points bearing upon the interpretation of the treaty between Great Britain and Russia are carefully specified, and the commissioners, who are to meet at London this spring, are directed to formulate their decision on seven points, which are as follows:  
1. What is intended as the point of commencement of the line?  
2. What channel is the Portland channel?  
3. What course should the line take from the point of commencement to the entrance to Portland channel?  
4. To what point on the 56th parallel is the line to be drawn, and what course should it follow between these points?  
5. In extending the line of demarcation to the north along the crest of the mountains, following the crest of the mountains situated parallel to the coast until its intersection with the 56th degree of longitude, what is the width separating the British possessions from the bays, ports, inlets, havens and water of the ocean, and extending from the said point on the coast to the point of intersection of the 56th degree of longitude with the 141st degree of longitude west of the meridian of Greenwich?

The foregoing questions should be answered in the affirmative. In the event of the summit of such mountains proving to be in places more than ten marine leagues from the coast, should the line be drawn in the possession of Russia to be measured (1) from the mainland coast of the ocean, strictly so called, along a line perpendicular thereon, or (2) from the point of intersection of the said convention of 1825 that the mainland coast is intended by these inlets, forming part of the territorial waters of Russia, the width of the liaise to be measured to the main chain of the coast, or (3) from the line separating the waters of the ocean from the territorial waters of Russia, and (c) from the head of the aforesaid inlet.

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**Trouble Fared at Fishing Banks.**  
NEW YORK, Sept. 4.—Affairs are serious here among the American fishing schooners among the Dutch from Burgo, Newfoundland. The last time the certainty that the trip will be almost a dead loss has made many of the foreign fishermen quarrelsome. The squid, the usual bait for the banks, has been scarce, and the fish are small, and in recent days the royal birds were beaten. Four or five years ago, however, they won first prize from the banks, and in recent days a low estimate of the total number of racing pigeons in Great Britain is 500,000. A dozen years ago the number was only a tenth of this vast total.

**Premier Halfway to Discovery.**  
(Which might apply as well elsewhere.)  
I've made "inquiry" up and down and find in every quarter that there is a stronger far than water. I find that when in Autumn next I have to fight pro-boats, I must have firm on my side my trustworthy pro-boats. So now I've proved that it is clear beyond all controversy that the British are the victors. That on one point in politics I've got a fixed conviction.

five Indians inhabiting the strip, and exercised a jurisdiction over the coast. Immediately after the cession in 1867 the Department of State of the United States likewise caused a map to be published, setting forth the bounds of Alaska in accordance with the treaty of 1825, and the same claim as to the strip was thereon made as by Russia in its map of 1827.

7. Upon the transfer of Alaska a portion of the United States army was dispatched to occupy the territory and a detachment was stationed for some time on this strip of the mainland.  
8. Since the cession postoffices and post routes have been established and maintained at various points on the strip.  
9. Custom-houses have likewise been established and duties collected thereon.  
10. Government and mission schools have been maintained, and notably so, for nearly 20 years, at the head of the Lynn Canal.  
11. The revenue vessels of the United States have continuously since the date of the cession patrolled the interior waters surrounded by the strip to enforce the revenue and other laws of the United States.

12. The naval and revenue vessels of the United States have for the same period exercised acts of sovereignty over the Indians inhabiting the strip, and especially about the head of Lynn Canal, and the latter have yielded unquestioned allegiance to the United States.  
13. In the census of 1880 and 1890 all the Indian tribes inhabiting the strip were included in the population of the United States and so published in the official reports.  
14. The territorial government of Alaska has exercised various and repeated acts of sovereignty over the strip and Interior waters inclosed by it, and the writs of the United States courts have run through its whole extent.  
15. Under the territorial claim of the United States and the protection of the Government citizens of the United States have entered upon the strip, built cities and towns, and established industrial enterprises thereon.

## HALF-MILLION RACERS.

### Enormous Popularity of Homing Pigeons in England.

London Daily Mail.  
The game of pigeon-racing is a branch of the sporting life that has had an amazing growth within the last decade. Forty years ago the greatest English establishment had the remotest idea what a homing pigeon was, and yet the bird played an important part in history as far back as the days of the Greeks. To England, however, must go the credit of perfecting the present-day racing pigeon. The thousands of this species that provide a fascinating pastime for so many Englishmen today are the result of a system supported from Antwerp, Brussels or the Province of Liege. The average member of society looks rather askance at pigeon-flying, but the sportsmen who are breaking up Sunday for the purpose of "tossing" pigeons. He sees a man wearing a "kerchief" at the neck and carrying a pigeon in a paper bag or out-of-sight basket, and he knows that he is in the presence of a member of the "club." This is as far removed from real pigeon-racing as the North is from the South Pole. The first-named class of bird can be bought for sixpence, and the most abundant, but the genuine aerial racer costs anything from 1 to 20 pounds sterling.

The *modus operandi* of the fancier after joining a homing pigeon club, and there are at least 100 such clubs in England, is to find the secret race marks, and then telegraph the marks to the club officials. The time of handing in the telegram is fixed, and the time of the most arrival home. Thus the number of birds flown and the number of minutes are easily ascertained. The winner of the race is the pigeon that has flown at the highest average rate of speed, this velocity, or average rate of speed, is calculated by dividing the total yards flown by the total number of minutes taken to accomplish the journey. The secret race marks referred to are placed upon the pigeon's wing by the club committee the night before the race, and the owner does not touch his pigeon again until it has returned from the contest. This system is an admirable check against fraud.

The young homing pigeon, when eight days old, is banded on the leg by a metal ring which it has to carry always, as it will cut off or the leg broken the ring cannot be removed. Four hundred thousand of these rings are annually sold by clubs to pigeon fanciers at an average charge of one penny a ring.  
The National Homing Pigeon Union serves a similar purpose to that of the governing bodies of other sports and pastimes. The union has a list of all the members, who number 13,000, and who purchased last year from the union 200,000 similar rings to those described above. The union also has a list of all the birds marked N. U., and serve as an excellent means of identifying pigeons carrying such rings, whenever they are lost and reported found.

Each of the 80 clubs gives prize money, ranging from £10 to £200. The popular race starts are Crewe, Stafford, Worcester, Swindon, Bath, Bournemouth and the Channel Islands. More than 40,000 racing pigeons were released within two hours of Worcester on the morning of Saturday, May 23. The great majority homed to Lanchester, which is the hotbed of the sport. The vast army of birds required no fewer than 32 railway vans to transport them to Worcester. As many as four special trains carrying nothing but pigeons have left Lanchester and Yorkshire on one night.

The sports appeal to all classes. It is now generally known that H. M. the King and H. R. H. the Prince of Wales have both been members of the clubs, and in recent days the royal Derby from the Shetland Isles the royal birds were beaten. Four or five years ago, however, they won first prize from the banks, and in recent days a low estimate of the total number of racing pigeons in Great Britain is 500,000. A dozen years ago the number was only a tenth of this vast total.

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