safety. The power of Mother Nature must be taken seriously. Consider the flooding in California or the devastating tornadoes that hit Louisiana, Georgia, and Florida early this year. In 2016, Hurricane Matthew took 46 lives in the United States alone. In addition to requiring backup capability for the hurricane hunters, the broader bill we will pass tonight, the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act, will improve NOAA s ability to understand, predict, and—most importantly—to warn people about all kinds of weather events that dramatically affect the economy and people's daily lives. It also includes a reauthorization of the Tsunami Warning, Education, and Research Act. These provisions will give NOAA the tools to protect life and property and to support continued economic growth. It is my hope that the House follows suit.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Thune substitute amendment at the desk be considered; the Cantwell amendment at the desk be considered and agreed to; the Thune substitute amendment, as amended, be agreed to; the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed; and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment (No. 204) in the nature of a substitute was considered.

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under ''Text of Amendments.'')

The amendment (No. 205) was agreed to.

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under ''Text of Amendments.'')

The amendment (No. 204), as amended, was agreed to.

The amendment was ordered to be engrossed and the bill to be read a third time.

The bill was read the third time.

The bill (H.R. 353), as amended, was passed.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, MARCH 30, 2017

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m., Thursday, March 30; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; further, that following leader remarks, the Senate resume consideration of H.J. Res. 67, with all debate time being expired; finally, that the joint resolution be read a third time, and the Senate vote on passage of the joint resolution with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of Senator MURKOWSKI.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Alaska.

ALASKA'S SESQUICENTENNIAL

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I have come to the floor this evening in celebration of an important milestone, but speaking about it actually presents a little bit of a challenge. In our current environment, how do you give a statement about a Secretary of State, a Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, a Russian Ambassador, and an exchange of millions of dollars without making sensational headlines? Well, my answer to that is you tell the story of Alaska and the Treaty of Cession that brought Alaska into our Nation on March 30, 1867, exactly 150 years ago tomorrow.

If we are going to be fair, this story actually begins years before 1867. The United States and Russia had been in discussions over Russia's territorial claims since 1856, but the domestic turmoil and the Civil War in the United States stymied progress. So it wasn't until March 11, 1867, when Edouard de Stoeckl, Russia's Foreign Minister to the United States, met with then-Secretary of State William Seward that discussions really began in earnest.

From that time on, things really picked up speed. Just a few weeks later, on March 29, 1867—150 years ago today—Stoeckl received a cable from Czar Alexander II, approving a deal—a deal that would transfer Russia's interests in North America to the United States. In my office, I actually have a copy, a replica of the deal that was written, along with the note for $7.2 million. That was the deal, but closing it in time was far from certain.

With work in this Congress rapidly wrapping up ahead of its April adjournment—can you imagine that, actually having an adjournment around this body in April? But that was the way it was 150 years ago. There was little time to complete an agreement and see it ratified, but Secretary Seward was determined, and despite some rather lackluster interest from President Andrew Johnson, he pressed forward with this.

When Ambassador Stoeckl received the cable, he went to Seward's house on Lafayette Square to deliver the news to him. According to the National Archives, Mr. Stoeckl said: ''Tomorrow, if you like, I will come to the department, and we can enter upon the treaty.'' To which Seward replied: ''Why wait until tomorrow, Mr. Stoeckl? Let us make the treaty tonight.''

Secretary Seward was not merely a determined man; he was really a very canny man—canny because before he met Ambassador Stoeckl, he consulted with the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, who at the time was Charles Sumner of Massachusetts. He did this to ensure smooth action by the U.S. Senate in approving a treaty. In other words—and this is a lesson that all good members of the executive branch should perhaps take to heart—the Secretary consulted with the Congress before taking action.

Conveniently, Senator Sumner and Secretary Seward lived on opposite sides of Lafayette Square from each other, and, according to the National Archives, they were able to meet at Secretary Seward's home. While Senator Sumner made no commitments about the passage of the treaty, he did send a note to Secretary Seward later that evening saying that following its adjournment at noon on Saturday, March 30, ''the Senate would be glad to proceed at once with Executive business'' and consider the treaty. With that, Ambassador Stoeckl and Secretary Seward went to work, crafting the treaty that night and long into the morning, finally putting their signatures to it at 4 a.m. on Saturday, March 30, 1867.

By 10 a.m. that same day, Secretary Seward had met with the Cabinet and with President Johnson to execute a proclamation calling the Senate into special session on Monday, April 1.

It was in Senator Sumner's famous speech to the Senate that day that the word ''Alaska'' was first officially used to describe the new territory. The word ''Alaska'' is Aleut in origin. Traditionally translated as ''mainland,'' it literally means, ''the object toward which the action of the sea is directed.''

It is important that I pause in reciting how Alaska came into the United States, first as a territory and later as a full member of our Union, by recognizing that while Western nations made deals about who ''owned'' the lands and the waters of Alaska, a diverse and vibrant Native people had already lived there for at least 14,000 years. While explorers, scientists, trappers, and settlers had come to Alaska from all over the world, the vast majority of our population were Alaska Natives.

Thankfully, after years of wrongful and misguided policies of assimilation, we in Congress now appreciate the incredible history and cultures of Alaska's indigenous peoples and have worked diligently to fulfill our trust responsibilities to them. Today, major landmarks like Denali, which is the highest mountain in North America, are again known by their rightful Native names. Today, Tribes are empowered to provide healthcare and other services to their people, and Federal agencies are required to consult with Alaskan Native Tribes on issues that impact their daily lives.

While we can all wrestle with the inherent challenge created for many by words like ''purchase'' and recognize

historical injustice, we must also look at the moment through the eyes of those who played a part—to see the opportunity as they did—so that we may capture it to better inform our future.

Senator Sumner's words remind us that what he, Secretary Seward, and others saw then was a foundation for opportunity, which continues in Alaska to this day. For example, in his remarks, Senator Sumner referenced a communication from the legislature of the Washington Territory to President Andrew Johnson in 1866. He said:

> Your memorialists, the Legislative Assembly of Washington Territory, beg leave to show that abundance of codfish, halibut, and salmon of excellent quality have been found along the shores of the Russian possessions. Your memorialists respectfully request your Excellency to obtain such rights and privileges of the Government of Russia as will enable our fishing vessels to visit the ports and harbors of its possessions to the end that fuel, water, and provisions may be easily obtained, that our sick and disabled fishermen may obtain sanitary assistance, together with the privilege of curing fish and repairing vessels in need of repair.

Long before my advocacy for Alaska's fisheries here in the United States Senate, long before my warnings about the dangers of genetically modified seafood, Washington and Alaska had a strong connection that was built on the bounty of our oceans. The economic importance of Alaska's fisheries was a prime consideration in America's acquisition of Alaska even then. It was a critical part of our effort to attain Statehood some 50-plus years ago. And today, it has grown into a fundamental element of the Pacific Northwest's economy.

Alaska's seafood industry now creates an estimated 118,000 jobs, $5.8 billion in annual income, and $14.6 billion in economic output nationally. We feed America, and we feed the world, with everything from our cod and our crab to our halibut and our salmon. Alaska's seafood exports alone would rank sixth compared to all other seafood-producing nations—not States, but nations.

Yet fisheries were but a small part of the justification Senator Sumner offered his colleagues at the time. The prime consideration is one that today remains unappreciated by most Americans. Senator Sumner stated the following:

> The projection of maps is not always calculated to present an accurate idea of distances. From measurement on a globe it appears that a voyage from San Francisco to Hong Kong by the common way of the Sandwich islands, is 7,140 miles, but by way of the Aleutian islands it is only 6,060 miles, being a saving of more than one thousand miles, with the enormous additional advantage of being obliged to carry much less coal. Of course a voyage from Sitka, or from Puget sound, the terminus of the North Pacific railroad, would be shorter still. . . . To unite the east of Asia with the west of America is the aspiration of commerce now as when the English navigator recorded his voyage.

Thus said Senator Sumner. The cession of Alaska secured the Pacific trade route with Asia for America. And today, that great circle route represents the path that thousands of vessels annually take from ports along the west coast of the United States to Asia and back again. Chances are that the products created through the hard work of Americans in the middle of our country transit through Alaskan waters on their way to Asia.

Beyond the economic linkages, Alaska's geography has long been an asset recognized not just by our domestic strategic institutions but also by our enemies. While the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor is a day that will live in infamy, the Japanese campaign in the Aleutians has been called the Forgotten Battle. Six months after Pearl Harbor, the Japanese bombed Dutch Harbor and occupied Attu and Kiska in the Aleutian Islands. Alaska Natives were captured and sent to Japan. On May 11, 1943, the United States moved to retake Attu, landing 11,000 troops on the island. Some 1,000 Americans and more than 2,000 Japanese lost their lives in the fighting—the only land battle on American soil during World War II.

The Japanese attacked the Aleutians for the same reason that Senator Sumner supported the purchase of Alaska—for control of the Pacific transportation routes.

Many historians believe Japanese Admiral Yamamoto launched the attack to protect his nation's northern flank. The United States fought to regain those islands for the very same reason.

Brigadier General William ''Billy'' Mitchell—often called the ''father of the Air Force''—told Congress back in 1935:

> I believe that in the future, whoever holds Alaska will hold the world. I think it is the most important strategic place in the world.

Most of us in Alaska think that Billy Mitchell was correct.

Just as Alaska straddles the great circle route across the Pacific, it sits at the center of the air crossroads of the world. Ted Stevens International Airport in Anchorage sits halfway between Tokyo and New York City and less than 9½ hours by air from 90 percent of the industrialized world.

Think about that. Oftentimes we think about Alaska as so remote and so far away, but when you look at that globe and you look at Alaska's geographic position, we are in the center.

The airport is No. 2 in the United States for landed cargo weight and No. 6 in the world for cargo throughput. In 2012, 71 percent of all Asia-bound air cargo from the United States and 82 percent of all U.S.-bound air cargo from Asia transited through it.

It is no exaggeration to say that the significance of Alaska to the airborne and maritime trade of the United States likely exceeds even the treaty's biggest boosters' dreams back in 1867.

Alaska's strategic significance is now more important than ever. Our natural resources have provided energy and minerals for our Nation for decades—from the oil on our North Slope to our gold, silver, copper, and other metals. We are a storehouse of just about everything that you can think of and everything that you need in modern society.

We are blessed with an abundance of natural resources. We have committed to harnessing them responsibly. As long as there is an understanding of that here in Washington, DC, we will continue to produce every type of energy and many types of minerals for the good of our Nation.

Alaska also remains key to our Nation's defense. North Korea's consistent disregard for international norms and their aggressive attempts to acquire ballistic nuclear capabilities threaten our national security. The investments that we must continue to make in Alaska's missile defense infrastructure are fundamental to our national security interests.

Thanks to my colleagues here in the Senate and the Pentagon's continued recognition of Alaska's strategic importance, we continue to leverage our strategic location for America's national security. The installation of the long-range discrimination radar at Clear, the stationing of F–35s at Eielson, and the continued support for the 425th at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson—or JBER, as we call it—are just some of the critical investments we are making and must continue to make in Alaska.

Understanding the opportunity of Alaska also means understanding the geography and the environment of our State. In preparing for this speech, I was struck by a latter part of the communication from the Washington Territorial Legislature to President Andrew Johnson in 1866. It stated:

> Your memorialists finally pray your Excellency to supply such ships as may be spared from the Pacific Naval Fleet in exploring and surveying the fishing banks known to navigators to exist along the Pacific Coast from the Cortes Banks to the Bering Straits, and as in duty bound, your memorialists will ever pray.

I would be remiss if I didn't note that—historical language aside—this request reads as if it could have been submitted to the Budget Committee by the current delegations from Alaska and Washington.

As we prepare to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Treaty of Cession tomorrow, our sesquicentennial, it is important to remind ourselves just how little has changed in our understanding of Alaska—understanding where it is, how far we have come, and how far we have yet to go when it comes to mapping and to charting.

In 2015, a couple of years ago, I had the honor of attending a celebration back home. It was an event where we celebrated a landmark event—that 57 percent of our land in the State had finally been mapped. That is how young a State Alaska really is. Recognizing that we just do not have accurate mapping in the State, it kind of struck me. For what else do we celebrate 50 percent of completion of anything, except

for us? We were making some progress, and it was worthy of celebration.

As bad as our basic mapping is, the situation is worse offshore in our waters, in the same places where the Washington Territorial Legislature asked for assistance back in 1866.

So 150 years ago, we were asking for assistance with the charting, but after 150 years, just 2.5 percent of the U.S. Arctic has been surveyed to modern standards. Just 2.5 percent of the U.S. Arctic has been surveyed to modern standards. Some 91 percent of the U.S. Arctic has either not been surveyed at all or relies on lead line readings, many of which were taken prior to the Treaty of Cession in 1867.

We talked to the Coast Guard and continue to hear stories about Captain Cook's voyage up to the north. It was actually a voyage on which a relative of mine, John Gore, was with Captain Cook, and they literally would put lead lines over the side of the ship, drop them down, and then recorded the readings.

Again, 91 percent of the U.S. Arctic has either not been surveyed or was surveyed with lead lines, and we are still relying on this data.

The U.S. has been chairing the Arctic Council now for 2 years. As we wrap up our term at the Arctic Council, I fear that we have accomplished much less than I, and many Alaskans, had hoped. It is Alaska that makes the United States an Arctic nation, a fact that was appreciated even at the time this body considered the appropriations for the treaty.

In a letter to the chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee in 1868, Joseph Wilson, who was the Commissioner of the General Land Office at the Department of the Interior, relayed the importance of the treaty to the committee, including this:

> It gives her [the United States] also a hold upon the coast of the great circumpolar ocean, the importance of which, as yet imperfectly appreciated in the country, is awakening very great interest in Europe. England, Denmark, Sweden, France, and Germany are contemplating and organizing movements looking to the exploration and occupancy of the unappropriated northern regions of this continent—movements which it becomes us to watch with jealousy, and promptly circumvent.

Think about that statement 150 years ago.

Well, today, Russia, China, India, and a great number of other nations are looking to the Arctic as an emerging region of international significance, and they are seizing the opportunities that we continue to defer there.

I greatly appreciate my colleagues' attention to these issues, particularly the work of my colleague from Maine and the members of the Arctic Caucus, as we work to raise awareness and press administrations to put the same sort of energy and effort into the region that other nations are. They, too, see the importance of the Arctic to our national interest, as Commissioner Wilson did back in 1898.

After noting the importance of the Arctic attributes of Alaska, Commissioner Wilson went on to say:

> Judged from this standpoint alone, and supposing the entire country of Alaska to be a mere polar desert and utterly uninhabitable, the developments of a very few years will show that the acquisition of this territory at the stipulated price is one of the most advantageous arrangements that our diplomacy ever secured.

Think about those words: $7.2 million and the United States has Alaska.

So when Commissioner Wilson said that in a few years it would ''show that the acquisition of this territory at the stipulated price is one of the most advantageous arrangements that our diplomacy ever secured,'' I would suggest, President Trump, this was a deal. We got a great deal with Alaska.

Popular history may refer to ''Seward's folly'' or you hear that when you are reading it in history books, or it is also referred to as America's acquisition of ''Walrussia'' when describing the Treaty of Cession, but that ignores the broad support that the treaty actually had at the time. For example, the editors of the Charleston Daily News Miner recognized this on April 12, 1867:

> As that territory is said to contain the highest mountain in the world, he [Secretary Seward] has provided a fit pinnacle from which the American Eagle can, when the days of good feeling come back, spread itself over the immense country that will then lie peacefully beneath the shadow of its wings.

Indeed, there was opposition to the Treaty of Cession. Two Members of this body even voted against ratifying the treaty, but 37 did vote to ratify. And while the appropriations actually took another year, as appropriations often do, the treaty was largely viewed as a success.

From Alaska's fisheries to its minerals, from its oil and gas resources to its diverse and vibrant cultures, and from its position on important trade routes to its significance to our national security, Alaska's contribution to America has been and continues to be as big as our geography.

We are still a young State. I was actually born in the Territory of Alaska. I am just the sixth Senator to have the honor of serving my State in this body. But while we might be young and small in population, we are very, very rich in spirit.

In his speech on this floor, Senator Sumner said: ''Small beginnings, therefore, are no discouragement to me, and I turn with confidence to the future.''

So I stand before the Senate today grateful for the future that Senator Sumner and Secretary Seward saw for Russian America. They were men of vision who brought a diverse, challenging, rich territory under the wing of the United States. Alaska, I believe, is better for it and so is America.

I appreciate the Senate's indulgence to tell a bit of the story of this day in our national experience and would like to close my remarks as Senator Sumner did on this floor nearly 150 years ago today by quoting him.

> As these extensive possessions, constituting a corner of the continent, pass from the Imperial Government of Russia, they will naturally receive a new name. They will be no longer Russian America. How shall they be called? Clearly, . . . Alaska.

Clearly, Alaska.

Mr. President, as we celebrate the sesquicentennial of Alaska's purchase from Russia, I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PERDUE). The Senate stands adjourned until 9:30 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 7:10 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, March 30, 2017, at 9:30 a.m.