

appointment of a Commission. The full terms of reference have not yet been decided upon, and this point will receive consideration.

*Mr. E. Robertson.*—Can the right honourable gentleman inform the House who the other members of the Commission are to be besides the Member for West Birmingham?

*Sir J. Fergusson.*—Her Majesty's Minister at Washington will be one, and the third will be a Canadian, but that is not settled.

No. 127.

*Colonial Office to Foreign Office.—(Received September 6.)*

(Confidential.)

Sir,

*Downing Street, September 6, 1887.*

I AM directed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 29th ultimo, transmitting a copy of the despatch in which the Marquis of Salisbury informed Sir L. West that the United States' Government had agreed to the appointment of a Mixed Commission to consider the North American Fisheries question.

Sir H. Holland communicated this information to the Governor-General of Canada, and expressed the hope of Her Majesty's Government that Sir John A. Macdonald, the Premier of the Dominion, may be able to represent Canada on the Commission; and I am to inclose a copy of a telegram which has been received from Lord Lansdowne in reply, and also a copy of a telegram from the Acting Governor of Newfoundland. In both of these telegrams questions are raised which Sir H. Holland desires to bring, without delay, under Lord Salisbury's consideration.

The Dominion Government asks what is to be the scope of the proposed inquiry.

The Mixed Commission is the result of the correspondence between Mr. Bayard and Sir Charles Tupper, transmitted in the despatch from Lord Lansdowne which was inclosed in the letter of the 1st July from this Department; and after carefully perusing that correspondence, and consulting Sir Charles Tupper, Sir H. Holland is satisfied that it is the desire of both parties to deal not only with those questions of fishery limits on the Atlantic coast which had been specified in Mr. Bayard's proposals transmitted by Mr. Phelps in his note of the 3rd December, 1886, but, as far as may be practicable, with "the entire commercial relations of the two countries," in order that "not only a *modus vivendi* to meet present emergencies, but also a permanent plan to avoid future disputes," may be devised.

It appears desirable, therefore, that there should be no narrow definition of the subjects to be taken into consideration by the Mixed Commission, but that in the communication to be made to the United States' Government the language used by Mr. Bayard in his letter to Sir C. Tupper of the 31st May with regard to the scope of the inquiry should be closely adhered to, in order that the Commission may have full latitude to examine not merely the fishery questions connected with the Atlantic coasts, but also those relating to the seal fisheries in Behring's Sea, as well as all points connected with the commercial intercourse between Canada and the United States.

It remains to decide what answer should be given to the inquiry of the Government of Newfoundland, whether the Fishery question as between that Colony and the United States will be discussed by the Mixed Commission, and whether Newfoundland will be represented on that Commission.

Lord Salisbury will remember that the Governments of the United States and of Newfoundland have recently been disposed to desire that there should be an independent agreement between them; but that the Canadian Government has represented that such separate negotiations might seriously compromise the position of Canada; and as matters now stand, Sir H. Holland is inclined to think that it may be best, as on previous occasions, not to place a special Representative of Newfoundland on the Commission, but in the event of the proposals of the Commission not appearing to meet in all respects the requirements of Newfoundland to provide subsequently for a separate arrangement in regard to that Colony, the Government of Newfoundland should, however, have their Agent at Washington during the sittings of the Commission ready to confer with the British Commissioners when any point arises of special interest to Newfoundland.