

American government and the American people? What will you say when I bring you messages of presidents of the United States and reports from the American Senate? In the month of August, 1888, President Cleveland sent the following message to Congress:

The value to the Dominion of Canada of the privilege of transit for their exports and imports across our territory, and to and from our ports, though great in every aspect, will be better appreciated when it is remembered that, for a considerable portion of each year, the St. Lawrence river, which constitutes the direct avenue of foreign commerce leading to Canada, is closed by ice.

During the last six years the imports and exports of British Canadian provinces carried across our territory under the privileges granted by our laws, amounted in value to about two hundred and seventy millions of dollars, nearly all of which were goods dutiable under our tariff laws, by far the larger part of this traffic consisting of exchanges of goods between Great Britain and her American provinces brought to and carried from our ports in their own vessels.

The treaty stipulation entered into by our government was in harmony with laws which were then on our statute-book, and are still in force.

I recommend immediate legislative action conferring upon the executive the power to suspend by proclamation the operation of all laws and regulations permitting the transit of goods, wares and merchandise in bond across or over the railways of the United States to or from Canada.

This was the language, the peremptory language of the president of the United States. Now, it is, perhaps, not out of place, nay, it is extremely important, to make clear what was the cause which brought President Cleveland to hold such a threat over our heads? The cause was the fact that we would not agree—the Canadian government, the Canadian people, would not agree—to the abrogation of the Fisheries Convention of 1818. Under the convention of 1818, American fishermen are granted certain privileges in Canadian waters. They are allowed to make use of the shore of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick for certain purposes—for wood, water, repairs and shelter. They are not allowed to make use of that coast to buy bait or to land their fish. The Americans have applied to us again and again for these two privileges, the privileges of buying bait in Canadian territory and the privilege of landing their cargoes of fish. We have refused, unless we were given some compensation. We have always been ready to negotiate with them. We have told the American fishermen again and again: We will share with you our advantages, if you will share with us your advantages. On the coast of Nova Scotia, we have a basis for the operations of fishermen, and Canadian fishermen have the advantage that they can use the coast to supply themselves with bait and to land their cargoes of fish. The American fishermen have the advantage

of having a market in their own territory. We have told them again and again: Yes, we are ready to agree with you; give us the opportunity of sharing with you your market, and we will give you the privilege of sharing with us the advantages of our base of operations. That was a fair proposal. But it never was acceded to, it never was accepted. But, because we would not agree to give away our birthright, we were threatened by President Cleveland with the withdrawal of the bonding privilege. Nor is that all. A few years afterwards, in the session of Congress of 1892, a report was brought down to the Senate from the Committee on Interstate Commerce again dealing with the bonding privilege. This time, the reason why this threat was held over our heads was, not on account of the fishery question, but on account of the railway question. The American railways wanted to have certain privileges upon our territory that we were not prepared to give them; and, because we would not give them these advantages, because we were not ready to make the soil of Canada, for railway purposes, part of the territory of the United States, again we were threatened with the removal of the bonding privilege. This was the conclusion of the report I have referred to:

The committee therefore recommend that either such a license system shall be established as will be applicable to the Canadian railroads doing business in the United States, or that some other plan, not injurious to the general trade and commerce of the country, be adopted which will secure to American railroads an equal chance in competition with Canadian railroads. Such action, in the judgment of the committee, is in the interest not only of American railroads, and especially American trans-continental lines, but in the interest of American commerce and of the general prosperity of the American people.

Even that was not all. In the following year, President Harrison again approached the subject, and again approached it in the same hostile spirit, and approached it, as the committee of the Senate had done, from the point of view of American railways. He made the following recommendation to Congress in a message dated November, 1893:

The statutes relating to the transportation of merchandise between the United States and the British possessions should be the subject of revision. The treasury regulations have given to these laws a construction and a scope that I do not think was contemplated by Congress. A policy adapted to the new conditions growing in part out of the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railroad, should be declared, and the business placed upon a basis more just to our people and to our transportation companies. If we continue the policy of supervising rates and requiring that they shall be equal and reasonable upon the railroads of the United States we cannot in fairness at the same time give these unusual facilities for competition to Canadian roads that are free to pursue the practices as to cut rates and favoured rates that we con-