

that he ever acknowledged the receipt of the dispatch in any way. In the month of January, 1884, he was—I was going to say, admonished—but certainly he had his memory jogged by Lord Derby upon this great question, and finally, in December, 1884, he was pressed by the English Government hard upon the point, who told him that the time had come when these fishery articles were about to expire, and he must make up his mind to some action, conciliatory or otherwise, with regard to the fisheries of this great Dominion. But, Sir, the hon. gentleman did nothing, and the then Opposition came forward with a resolution to this House, and laid down what they considered to be the true policy. In a resolution which I had the honor to move in March, 1884, the Liberal party of this Dominion propounded a policy which they thought should be adopted; and I have no hesitation in saying, from knowledge which I have since acquired, that if the right hon. gentleman at the head of the Government had accepted the offer made by the Liberal party, and had sent a man to Washington to negotiate a treaty, I have the very best means of knowing that if he had sent the right man, a man in earnest, he could have succeeded in negotiating a proper treaty. The public mind of the United States at that time had not been irritated and annoyed; the politicians were not in the state of mind that they were in 1887, when they passed the Non-Intercourse Bill; the leading men of the United States were more than anxious that the fishery trouble should be settled upon an amicable, a peaceful, and a friendly basis. Sir, I charge upon the hon. gentleman to-night that by his supineness, by his procrastination, by his want of statesmanship upon these occasions, he let the golden moment go by, and he is chargeable before this country with all the evils which flowed from it, and with the vast loss, financial, pecuniary and otherwise, which accrued to it from the condition in which the country found itself in 1885-86-87. Well, Sir, what was his reply on that occasion? It was almost in the stereotyped form in which he gave it to the leader of the Opposition a day or two ago: "We are not going down upon our knees to the Yankees. It is not consistent with the dignity of this great country to go down upon our knees to the United States." Sir, who asked him to go down upon his knees to the United States? I suppose there is such a thing, as was stated by the hon. member for Northumberland (Mr. Mitchell), as friendly negotiation upon an even footing. I suppose that it would be no humiliation to Canada to send a duly accredited agent to Washington, sanctioned by the Imperial Government, with power to negotiate a friendly treaty, and to settle the fishery disputes. Where would be the humiliation? Is it a humiliation for 5,000,000 of people to treat with 60,000,000, their great neighbors to the south? The thing is ridiculous and childish. The hon. gentleman answered us then that he would not do it. But what did he do? He put off the evil day till the last moment, and when the last moment came and he could not put it off an hour longer, he voluntarily offered to surrender the whole of the territorial and fishing rights of this Dominion, during 1885, for nothing. He found himself in a corner, put there by his own want of statesmanship, his own want of judgment, and he offered to give them free fishing if they would give us free fish. The hon. gentleman did not get his offer accepted. Why? Because he had left it too late. The hon. gentleman gave the free fishing but he did not get the free fish. The people of this country saw what was national humiliation, if anything was; they saw their territorial and their fishing rights, which has been secured to them by treaty, given up absolutely to the people of the United States for a whole season, and not a single concession asked in return. The hon. gentleman, two or three years afterwards, tried to take credit in this House and before this country, that that was on his part a conciliatory and friendly act. It was nothing of the sort. He acted only when it was forced from him,

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when he could do no better. He let the golden moment go by, he refused to listen to advice from this side of the House, and he refused to listen to the advice of Lord Derby who tendered it to him on four separate occasions; the result was that he found himself in a fix, he had to surrender, and he surrendered ignominiously. Sir, when the season went by what did the hon. gentleman do? What did he do at the end of 1885? He found a very strong feeling had grown up in the Maritime Provinces among the fishermen that their rights were not being looked after, that the hon. gentleman, as the common feeling down in the Maritime Provinces expressed it, did not care a snap for the fishermen or for the fisheries as long as he could remain in power. What did he do then? Prompted by fear and the result of his previous policy, he turned around and adopted a bellicose policy. He told us that he was going to teach the Americans that they would not only not have access to our fisheries, not only would they not have the right to come in to fish in our waters at all, but they were not to have even those common rights which one nation extends to another in the matter of its mercantile marine. Why, Sir, we had in 1886 the spectacle of the Customs laws of this country being dragged in, nominally to carry out the article of the Convention of 1818, but practically to drive the American people to desperation. Sir, they did not try to carry out the Treaty of 1818 in an honest, square and manly way; they resorted to every conceivable regulation of the Customs, with the result of driving the American people to desperation. The hon. gentleman adopted a policy the result of which was that in 1886 he had seized over 68 vessels of the Americans, he had refused them access to our harbors, he had seized them every time they had come into a harbor unless they reported themselves, he had refused them the right to purchase such supplies as belong to an ordinary merchant ship, he had put upon record his deliberate policy that if he allowed an American vessel to enter our harbor for any purpose whatever, that would be a surrender of the rights and privileges we had under the Treaty of 1818. Sir, he tried that policy for one year, he seized these vessels, and at the end of the year what did he find? He found himself brought into collision with the American Government, he found that the American Government, representing the American people, were in an irritated state, and were determined to defend themselves from the suicidal policy he had adopted; he found they had passed their Non-Intercourse Bill and a spectacle was seen in the American Congress seldom seen there, of an entire Congress rising with unanimity and passing a Non-Intercourse Bill with Canada, because they believed that their people had been treated unkindly, unfriendly and in a harsh and bellicose spirit. The hon. gentleman thought he was bringing the Americans, as he said, to their knees, but he did not do it, he simply brought them to their senses, and they told him then and there: If this policy is to be pursued by you we will adopt a retaliatory policy on our part. What was the consequence? The hon. gentleman who would not even negotiate with the Americans in 1885, who thought it was an indignity on the part of Canada to send an ambassador there, or a plenipotentiary even, to negotiate unofficially, was obliged to send down his Minister of Finance to see if the troubled waters could not be quieted. We had Sir Charles Tupper going down to Washington in the year 1887, and, Sir, before he went, the American Government had laid before the British Government their complaints. Their complaint was not so much that we had put a wrong construction upon the Treaty of 1818; it is true, they did not agree with our construction, but their main complaint was not that our construction was incorrect. Sir, the construction put upon the Treaty of 1818 by our Government, technically, was correct, there is no doubt about that. I think that construction was endorsed and approved of by every lawyer on both sides of the House. But the construc-