

CANADA.

organization is still in full vigour, and that there seems no reason to hope that the United States' Government will perform its duty as a friendly neighbour any better in the future than in the past, leads them to entertain a just apprehension that the outstanding subject of difference with the United States is the one of all others which is of special importance to the Dominion. They must add, that they are not aware that during the existence of this Fenian organization, which for nearly seven years has been a cause of irritation and expense to the people of Canada, Her Majesty's Government have made any vigorous effort to induce the Government of the United States to perform its duty to a neighbouring people, who earnestly desire to live with them on terms of amity, and who during the civil war loyally performed all the duties of neutrals to the expressed satisfaction of the Government of the United States. On the contrary, while in the opinion of the Government and the entire people of Canada, the Government of the United States neglected, until much too late, to take the necessary measures to prevent the Fenian invasion of 1870, Her Majesty's Government hastened to acknowledge, by cable telegram, the prompt action of the President, and to thank him for it. The Committee of the Privy Council will only add, on this painful subject, that it is one on which the greatest unanimity exists among all classes of the people throughout the Dominion, and the failure of the High Commissioners to deal with it has been one cause of the prevailing dissatisfaction with the Treaty of Washington.

The Committee of the Privy Council will proceed to the consideration of the other subject of dissatisfaction in Canada, viz. the cession to the citizens of the United States of the right to the use of the inshore fisheries in common with the people of Canada. The Earl of Kimberley, after observing that the Canadian Government took the initiative in suggesting that a joint British and American Commission should be appointed, with a view to settle the disputes which had arisen as to the interpretation of the Treaty of 1818, proceeds to state that "the causes of the difficulty lay deeper than any question of interpretation," that "the discussion of such points as the correct definition of bays could not lead to a friendly agreement with the United States," and that "it was necessary therefore to endeavour to find an equivalent which the United States might be willing to give in return for the fishery privileges."

In the foregoing opinion of the Earl of Kimberley the Committee of the Privy Council are unable to concur, and they cannot but regret that no opportunity was afforded them of communicating to Her Majesty's Government their views on a subject of so much importance to Canada, prior to the meeting of the Joint High Commission.

When the Canadian Government took the initiative of suggesting the appointment of a Joint British and American Commission they never contemplated the surrender of their territorial rights, and they had no reason to suppose that Her Majesty's Government entertained the sentiments expressed by the Earl of Kimberley in his recent Despatch. Had such sentiments been expressed to the delegate appointed by the Canadian Government to confer with his Lordship a few months before the appointment of the Commission, it would at least have been in their power to have remonstrated against the cession of the inshore fisheries; and it would moreover have prevented any member of the Canadian Government from acting as a member of the Joint High Commission unless on the clear understanding that no such cession should be embodied in the Treaty without their consent. The expediency of the cession of a common right to the inshore fisheries has been defended on the ground that such a sacrifice on the part of Canada should be made in the interests of peace. The Committee of the Privy Council, as they have already observed, would have been prepared to recommend any necessary concession for so desirable an object, but they must remind the Earl of Kimberley that the original proposition of Sir Edward Thornton, as appears by his letter of 26th January, was that "a friendly and complete understanding should be come to between the two Governments as to the extent of the rights which belong to the citizens of the United States and Her Majesty's subjects respectively, with reference to the fisheries on the coasts of Her Majesty's possessions in North America."

In his reply, dated 30th January last, Mr. Secretary Fish informs Sir Edward Thornton that the President instructs him to say that "he shares with Her Majesty's Government the appreciation of the importance of a friendly and complete understanding between the two Governments with reference to the subjects specially suggested for the consideration of the proposed Joint High Commission."

In accordance with the explicit understanding thus arrived at between the two Governments, Earl Granville issued instructions to Her Majesty's High Commission, which, in the opinion of the Committee of the Privy Council, covered the whole ground of controversy.

The United States had never pretended to claim a right on the part of their citizens to fish within three marine miles of the coasts and bays, according to their limited definition of the latter term; and although the right to enjoy the use of the inshore fisheries might fairly have been made the subject of negotiation, with the view of ascertaining whether any proper equivalents could be found for such a concession, the United States was precluded by the original correspondence from insisting on it as a condition of the treaty. The abandonment of the exclusive right to the inshore fisheries, without adequate compensation, was not therefore necessary in order to come to a satisfactory understanding on the points really at issue.

The Committee of the Privy Council forbear from entering into a controversial discussion as to the expediency of trying to influence the United States to adopt a more liberal commercial policy. They must, however, disclaim most emphatically the imputation of desiring to imperil the peace of the whole Empire in order to force the American Government to change its commercial policy. They have for a considerable time back ceased to urge the United States to alter their commercial policy, but they are of opinion that when Canada is asked to surrender her inshore fisheries to foreigners, she is fairly entitled to name the proper equivalent. The Committee of the Privy Council may observe, that the opposition of the Government of the United States to reciprocal free trade in the products of the two countries was just as strong for some years prior to 1854 as it has been since the termination of the Reciprocity Treaty, and that the Treaty of 1854 was obtained chiefly by the vigorous protection of the fisheries which preceded it; and that but for the conciliatory policy on the subject of the fisheries, which Her Majesty's Government induced Canada to adopt after the abrogation of the Treaty of 1854 by the United States, it is not improbable that there would have been no difficulty in obtaining its renewal. The Committee of the Privy Council have adverted to the policy of Her Majesty's Government, because the Earl of Kimberley