

*The Earl of Rosebery to Mr. Howard.*

Sir,

*Foreign Office, May 3, 1893.*

HER Majesty's Government have had under their careful consideration the note from M. Chichkine, forwarded in Sir R. Morier's despatch of the 18th ultimo, relative to the proposed arrangement for the protection of Russian sealing interests in the North Pacific Ocean during the present year.

They note with satisfaction that their proposals for this purpose are accepted by the Russian Government with one exception, and they trust that the difficulty in regard to this single point will be removed by the suggestion which has since been made, that any British vessels which may be seized by Russian cruisers on the charge of contravening the Agreement shall be delivered at Yokohama for adjudication by the British Consular Court there.

In the hope that this matter will have been satisfactorily settled before this despatch reaches you, I inclose herewith the draft of an Agreement embodying the principles of the arrangement, which you are empowered to sign at once with M. Chichkine or any other member of the Russian Government who may be similarly authorized to that end.

In case of any alterations being suggested in the wording of the Agreement, you will report them by telegraph.

You will impress upon the Russian Government that a speedy conclusion is of capital importance, in order that the necessary legislation may be at once obtained from Parliament, and public notice given to all concerned.

For this reason, I defer for the present any discussion on the claim which appears to be advanced in M. Chichkine's note, of a right on the part of Russia to take of her own motion, and without previous agreement with other Powers concerned, the measures contemplated in the arrangement now under negotiation. It will be necessary, however, that in presenting the draft Agreement, you should intimate clearly that Her Majesty's Government cannot admit such a claim, and that they must reserve to themselves full freedom to object to any interference with British vessels outside Russian territorial waters, according to the usual acceptance of the term, which is not based on an express Agreement between the two Governments.

I am, &c.

(Signed) ROSEBERY.

Inclosure in No. 18.

*Draft Agreement between Great Britain and Russia relative to the Seal Fisheries.*

WITH the view to avoid difficulties in regard to the seal fisheries, and to aid in the preservation of the seal species, the Government of Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Empress of India, and the Government of His Majesty the Emperor of All the Russias, have concluded the following Agreement:—

I.

During the year ending the 31st December, 1893, Her Britannic Majesty's Government will prohibit British subjects from killing or hunting seals within the following limits:—

(a.) Within a zone of 10 marine miles following the sinuosities of the Russian coasts which border on the Bering Sea and any other part of the North Pacific Ocean.

(b.) Within a zone of 30 marine miles round the Komandorsky Islands, and round Tulénew (Robben Island).

II.

Her Britannic Majesty's Government engage to co-operate, with British cruisers, in preventing British subjects from killing or hunting seals within the aforesaid limits.