

been diminished in any wise since I have returned, except by the cordial support of my colleagues, and I believe also my friends in this House, (cheers). In order to show that I did not for a moment forget that I was there to represent the interests of Canada, I must ask you to look at the despatch of 16th February, 1871, which reached me at Washington, a few days after I arrived there—it will be seen that Lord Kimberly used this expression, “as at present advised. Her Majesty’s Government are of opinion that the right of Canada to exclude Americans from fishing in the waters within the limits of three marine miles of the coast, is beyond dispute, and can only be ceded for an adequate consideration. Should this consideration take the form of a money payment, it appears to Her Majesty’s Government that such an arrangement would be more likely to work well than if any conditions were annexed to the exercise of the privilege of fishing within the Canadian waters.” Having read that despatch, and the suggestion that an arrangement might be made on the basis of a money payment, and there being an absence of any statement that such an arrangement would only be made with the consent of Canada, I thought it well to communicate with my colleagues at Ottawa, and although we had again and again received assurances from Her Majesty’s Government that those rights would not be affected, given away, or ceded, without our consent, it was thought advisable, in consequence of the omission of all reference to the necessity of Canada’s assent being obtained to any monetary arrangement, to communicate by cable that Canada considered the Canadian Fisheries to be her property, and they could not be sold without her consent. That communication was made by the Canadian Government on the 10th March, and of that Government I was a member; and not only did that communication proceed from the Canadian Government to England, giving them fair notice that the Canadian Government, of which I was so a member, would insist upon the right of dealing with her own fisheries, but I took occasion to press upon the Head of the British Commission at Washington, that my own individual opinion, as representing Canada, should be laid before Her Majesty’s Government. The answer that came back at once by cable was extended in full in the despatch of the 17th March, 1871; and it was most satisfactory, as it stated that Her Majesty’s Government had never any intention of advising Her Majesty to part with those fisheries without the consent of Canada. Armed with this, I felt that I was relieved of a considerable amount of my embarrassment. I felt that no matter what arrangements might be made—no matter whether I was out-voted by my colleagues on the Commission, or what instructions might be given by Her Majesty’s Government, the interests of Canada were safe, because they were in her own hands, and reserved for her own decision. Now, Mr. Speaker, it must not be supposed

that this was not a substantial concession on the part of Her Majesty’s Government. It is true that Lord Kimberly stated in his despatch of 17th March, that “when the Reciprocity Treaty was concluded, the Acts of the Nova Scotia and New Brunswick Legislatures relating to the Fisheries were suspended by Acts of those Legislatures, and the Fishery rights of Canada are now under the protection of a Canadian Act of Parliament, the repeal of which would be necessary in case of the cession of those rights to any foreign powers”—it is true in one sense of the word, but it is also true that if Her Majesty, in the exercise of Her power, had chosen to make a Treaty with the United States, ceding not only those rights, but ceding the very land over which those waters flow, that Treaty between England and the United States would have been binding, and the United States would have held England to it. No matter how unjust to Canada, after all her previous promises, still that Treaty would be a valid and obligatory Treaty between England and the United States, and the latter would have had the right to enforce its provisions, override any Provincial Laws and Ordinances, and take possession of our waters and rights. It would have been a great wrong, but the consequence would have been, the loss practically, of our rights forever, and so it was satisfactory that it should be settled as it has been settled without a doubt, appearing upon the records of the Conference at Washington. Now the recognition of the proprietary right of Canada in Her Fisheries forms a portion of the State Papers of both countries. Now the rights of Canada to those Fisheries are beyond dispute, and it is finally established that England cannot, and will not, under any circumstances whatever, cede those fisheries without the consent of Canada. So that in any future arrangement between Canada and England, or England and the United States the rights of Canada will be respected, as it is conceded beyond dispute that England has not the power to deprive Canada of them. We may now rest certain that for all time to come England will not, without our consent, make any cession of these interests. Now, Mr. Speaker, to come to the various subjects which interest Canada more particularly, I will address myself to them in detail, and first, I will consider the question of most importance to us, the one on which we are now specially asked to legislate, that which interests Canada as a whole most particularly, and which interests the Maritime Provinces especially. I mean the articles of the Treaty with respect to our fishery rights. I would in the first place say that the protocols which accompany the Treaty, and which are in the hands of every member, do not give chronologically an everyday account of the transactions of the Conference, although, as a general rule, I believe the protocols of such Conferences are kept from day to day; but it was thought better to depart from the rule on this occasion, and only to record