

alone with the view of nourishment and trade, but especially to preserve the mastery of the seas. And this day, if Britain is the first naval nation in the world, if her commerce is the most outspread, its colonial possessions the vastest and the most important, does she not owe this almost incalculable wealth, according to the opinion of her most distinguished statesmen, to the importance of her fisheries which are the foundation of her present prosperity? And where does the English navy recruit its best sailors, if not among that hardy people, among those bold fishermen who, brought up, as it were, in a fishing-boat are, from infancy, accustomed to face with calm the perils of the ocean and to regard as their territory and their own property the several seas that are crossed by English men of war and merchantmen? And, Mr. Speaker, when we consider the thousands of miles of marine coasts which offer inexhaustible riches to our toil, the 100,000 seamen who, in our young country, are already directly or indirectly employed in the fisheries; when we witness the energy, hardihood and skill of our fishermen, as many of us have had personal opportunity of doing, I cannot help believing that the future, the future more especially of the Provinces of Nova Scotia, Quebec, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island—perhaps, in their whole extent, not as adapted to tilling as our western Provinces—depends in a great measure on the encouragement and protection which we will give our naval population, and that one of the chief sources of our national prosperity is to be found in the depths of the seas, whose value we may not have sufficiently known and appreciated. We are informed by the distinguished writer, Lacépède:

"The fisheries preceded the tillage of the field. It is proper to civilised peoples, and so far from being opposed to the progress of farming, to trade and manufactures, it increases the fruits of the latter.

"If in the beginning of societies, fishing afford men, still half savage, a sufficient and wholesome food, if it teaches them not to fear the danger of the deep, if it makes sailors of them, it gives to more advanced people plentiful harvests for the needs of the poor, varied tributes for the luxuries of the rich, choice preparations for commerce abroad, fertile composts for barren fields. It forces men to cross the seas, to brave the ice of the poles, to stand the fires of the equator, to struggle against storms, and it breeds experienced seamen, bold tradesmen and doughty warriors."

All nations that figure to-day at the head of progress, civilisation and commerce, and, in special, the British, the French, the Dutch, the Americans, the Norwegians and others, attribute and attach as much importance to the products of the sea as they do to the products of the land, and this importance is due not only to the immense riches which may be drawn from the depth of the sea, without visibly draining its supply, but because the fisheries are a school like to no other for a large number of solid men, schooled against danger, skilled in trade during times of peace, and among whom their country will always find valiant defenders in the day of national peril. Bounded on the north by the Arctic Ocean, on the east by the Atlantic Ocean, and on the west by the Pacific Ocean, Canada can boast, Mr. Speaker, of at least 10,000 miles of naval coast, bordered by waters rich in marketable fish of all kinds. It is to these splendid fisheries that our neighbors of the American Union desired to have access. They pretended to have, equally with ourselves, the right to draw from this well of richness. The fact that the Americans have always held, with steadfastness, to a common right and privilege of working these fisheries, the eagerness which they always manifested to obtain the enjoyments of these extensive and lucrative privileges, are so many proofs of the importance of their possession, and their manufacturing and commercial value. We owe a debt of acknowledgment, Mr. Speaker, to the present Government for having understood the importance and value of this national property, and having employed the means of defending it against the encroachments of our neighbors, without ceasing, however, to maintain the good

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understanding which should never cease to exist between two nations having identical interests to shield and shelter. Although our fisheries are far from having acquired, as yet, all the development which is within them, the yearly product which, in 1870, was only \$7,000,000, now rises almost to the sum of \$20,000,000. And yet, although the extensive organisation of our Department of Fisheries, and our mode of collecting statistical information are cited as models, our system, as indeed all those of the same sort elsewhere, is deficient in several respects, and one can easily understand that in a country vast and extensive as is Canada where every dweller on the sea-shore, or the lake shore—these lakes a real inland seas. Can, on stepping a few feet away from his door, draw food for his family, it is impossible for our statistical writers to make reports with mathematical accuracy. Thus these \$20,000,000, just mentioned, do not represent, so to speak, the value of the fish prepared for the market only. It would be necessary to add to this amount the value of the fish taken for local consumption, and even the fish taken in Canadian waters by foreign fishermen, especially of the neighboring republic. Thus, as was said by my hon. friend, the member for Northumberland, (Mr. Mitchell), when he presided, with equal talent and honor to himself and his country, over the destinies of the Department of Marine and Fisheries of Canada, whether we consider them from the standpoint of the extent, importance, and abundance of food which they afford, as from the point of view of their still greater value as resources susceptible of constantly increasing development and unlimited production, the fisheries of the Canadian coasts are a national property at once precious and enduring. These fisheries annually employ a capital of several millions of dollars, give occupation and the means of livelihood to hundreds of thousands of persons, favors the development of our commercial marine and our foreign trade, keeps ever in activity and ready for use a plucky and stalwart race of sailors, and for these reasons, they deserve our serious attention, an enlightened appreciation, and a protection commensurate with their value and their importance. And still, Mr. Speaker, while acknowledging their whole value and their importance, we should claim from the Government full protection for our fisheries. But we have not the right, however, to ask that greater interests should be sacrificed to this protection. Neither must we overlook the fact—indeed we should seriously consider it—that it is altogether in our interests to maintain, with the 60,000,000 inhabitants of the neighboring republic, the most friendly relations possible in all manner of commercial affairs. Neither must we forget that a continuation of the strained relations existing last year between the United States and Canada, might give rise to serious conflicts and work immense harm to the business of both countries. This has been properly understood by the members of the present Administration, who have surely a right, not only to the greetings, but also to the gratitude of the country. It is a clear case, Mr. Speaker, that to remove the uneasy feeling arising out of the interpretation of the Treaty of 1818, and reaching an understanding on a question which placed so many interests at stake, mutual concessions were imperative, but the debate on the clauses of the treaty which we shall be called upon to ratify, will show that we have not conceded too much; that we have yielded nothing of major importance, and that the complaints already put forth in certain quarters are not well founded. Representing in this House a county deeply interested in the protection of the fisheries, I should be the first to withdraw my support from the Government if I thought that they had sacrificed us in the Washington Commission; but I am happy to be able to proclaim my satisfaction and to state that the interests of my constituents have been guarded by this treaty which is dispel to develop the relations between the two countries and despite an element