

Inclosure 2 in No. 1.

Mr. Fish to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir,

Department of State, Washington, January 30, 1871.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your note of the 26th January, in which you inform me, in compliance with instructions from Earl Granville, that Her Majesty's Government deem it of importance to the good relations which they are ever anxious should subsist and be strengthened between the United States and Great Britain, 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, and as to any other questions between them which affect the relations of the United States towards those Possessions; and farther, that as the consideration of these questions would involve investigations of a somewhat complicated nature; and as it is very desirable that they should be thoroughly examined, you are directed by Lord Granville to propose to the Government of the United States the appointment of a Joint High Commission, which shall be composed of members to be named by each Government, shall hold its sessions at Washington, and shall treat of and discuss the mode of settling the different questions which have arisen out of the Fisheries, as well as all those which affect the relations of the United States towards Her Majesty's Possessions in North America.

I have laid your note before the President, who instructs me 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, and he fully recognizes the friendly spirit which has prompted the proposal.

The President is, however, of the opinion that without the adjustment of a class of questions not alluded to in your note, the proposed High Commission would fail to establish the permanent relations, and the sincere, substantial, and lasting friendship between the two Governments, which, in common with Her Majesty's Government, he desires should prevail.

He thinks that the removal of the differences which arose during the rebellion in the United States, and which have existed since then, growing out of the acts committed by the several vessels which have given rise to the claims generically known as the "Alabama Claims," will also be essential to the restoration of cordial and amicable relations between the two Governments.

He directs me to say that, should Her Majesty's Government accept this view of this matter, and assent that this subject also may be treated of by the proposed High Commission, and may thus be put in the way of a final and amicable settlement, this Government will, with much pleasure, appoint High Commissioners on the part of the United States to meet those who may be appointed on behalf of Her Majesty's Government, and will spare no efforts to secure, at the earliest practicable moment, a just and amicable arrangement of all the questions which now, unfortunately, stand in the way of an entire and abiding friendship between the two nations.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HAMILTON FISH.

Inclosure 3 in No. 1.

Sir E. Thornton to Mr. Fish.

Sir,

Washington, February 1, 1871.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your note of the 30th ultimo, and to offer you my sincere and cordial thanks for the friendly and conciliatory spirit which pervades it.

With reference to that part of it in which you state that the President thinks that the removal of the differences which arose during the rebellion in the United States, and which have existed since then, growing out of the acts committed by the several vessels which have given rise to the claims generally known as the "Alabama" claims, will also be essential to the restoration of cordial and amicable relations between the two Governments, I have the honour to inform you that I have submitted to Earl Granville the opinion thus expressed by the President of the United States, the friendliness of which I beg you to believe I fully appreciate.