

terminated. In the course of the negotiations which preceded the Peace of 1814, this question was revived, and the alleged right of American citizens to fish and cure fish within British jurisdiction was fully gone into by the British and American Commissioners, who were assembled at Ghent for the purpose of drawing up the Articles of Peace. At that time, however, the circumstances had very considerably changed since the Treaty of 1783 had been concluded. The British North American possessions had become more thickly populated, and there were fewer unsettled bays, harbours, and creeks in Nova Scotia than formerly. There was consequently greater risk of collision between British and American interests; and the colonists and English merchants engaged in the fisheries petitioned strongly against a renewal of the privileges granted by the Treaty of 1783 to the American fishermen.

Negotiations at Ghent, 1814.

It was under these circumstances that the negotiations for peace were entered into. At the first meeting, which took place on the 8th of August, 1814, the British Commissioners stated "that the British Government did not intend to grant to the United States gratuitously the privileges formerly granted to them by Treaty, of fishing within the limits of British territory, or of using the shores of the British territories for purposes connected with the fisheries." They contended that the claim advanced by the United States of immemorial and prescriptive right was quite untenable, inasmuch as the inhabitants of the United States had until quite recently been British subjects, and that the rights which they possessed formerly as such could not be continued to them after they had become citizens of an independent State.

Signature of Treaty of Ghent,  
1814.

After much discussion it was finally agreed to omit all mention of this question from the Treaty, which was signed at Ghent on the 24th December, 1814, and which contains no reference to the Fisheries Question.

Orders were now sent out to the Governors of the British North American Colonies not to interfere with citizens of the United States engaged in fishing on the Newfoundland Banks,