

is essential to our prosperity—but I say we got the Government of the United States to agree, as the papers show, to a commission being issued, under which the fishery question can be dealt with; and, with the question of our fisheries, the wider question of the development of international trade will be gone into. Now, Mr. Speaker, we were quite well aware of the difficulties of the question; they are candidly stated in these papers. We stated that we knew it would look like a one-sided bargain. We knew perfectly well that there are certain interests that will feel that it is so, and that they are to some extent prejudiced. But our first proposition was, as the papers disclosed, that inasmuch as the treaty ended on 1st July, when the fishing season had, for some time, commenced, and it was in active prosecution, we suggested—and remember, we did not suggest it to the present Government only, but it was a suggestion to the last Government as well—that, for mutual convenience and to mark our neighborly feelings, so far as we, in Canada, were concerned, we would agree that the term should be extended from 1st July. That was refused by the late Government, but the offer was repeated by us. The hon. gentleman has said, in his speech, that we put it on the ground that it would be a great convenience to the poor, honest, innocent American fishermen, instead of for the convenience of our own fishermen. It is quite true we put it on that ground. If we go to the United States for the purpose of trying to make an arrangement, we should scarcely hope them to agree to our proposition, if we pleaded that it was to suit the convenience of our fishermen. We put it on the ground that it would greatly meet the convenience of their fisherman if they were allowed to fish during the remainder of the season, from 1st July to 1st November or 1st December, as the case might be. That would be the course pursued by the hon. member for St. John (Mr. Weldon), if he were a negotiator, instead of a member trying to make a point against the Administration, and forgetting the interest of his own Province and of the whole Dominion. We put it that the American fishermen had been fishing in our waters for twelve long years, that they had had the value of our fisheries from the beginning of the season, and would be fishing there on 30th June, and on 1st July all their vessels would be seized. It was a reasonable ground on which to approach the United States. Does the hon. gentleman want to have a treaty with the United States, or does he prefer to make a flourish before the fishermen of his Province, or to make, perhaps, a speech to the fishermen in the neighborhood of St. John, when he goes down there at the end of the season. Does he prefer the interests of his Province to the interests of the Dominion—those interests which are now trembling in the balance—all those great interests which may affect the whole Dominion. Why, I believe we were told a short time ago that the trade of St. John would be ruined unless certain things were done, thus killing our chances, so far as the people of St. John could kill them, with the United States. The hon. gentleman has not gone so far, but his remarks lead in the same direction. It is of very great importance that the Government of Canada should be sustained in their action by this House, by the representatives of the people, in their honest, straightforward and earnest attempt, which has gone further towards success in negotiations than any attempt since 1873, and gone further towards a return to reciprocity and reciprocal relations. This is a question which affects the whole Dominion. We have done a good deal, I must say, for the fishermen of the Maritime Provinces.

Mr. MITCHELL. Yes, for some of them.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. We have done a great deal for some of them—I think for all of them.

Mr. MITCHELL. Not for the fishermen of New Brunswick.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. The hon. gentleman is New Brunswick mad, as he should be. He persistently fights the battle of New Brunswick, and no one, perhaps, fights it more energetically and earnestly and thoroughly than that hon. gentleman. What have we given up? We have simply stated that so far as the Canadian Government is concerned they would not send a fleet down to fight the American fishermen, that they would not have a recurrence of the trials and convictions and irritations that were caused before the Treaty of Washington, if they could avoid it. The Canadian fishermen, from all I can learn, will be quite willing to have a renewal of the treaty; they will be quite willing, if they had their fish admitted free into the United States market, to allow American vessels to fish in Canadian waters. It is not because the American vessels are really driving them off their grounds, or really depriving them of their catch of fish, or really diminishing the catch every year, that they offer opposition. They do not oppose it on that ground, or otherwise we would not attempt to renew the treaty by which the Americans would continue to go upon the Canadian fishing ground. They argue as reasonable men: Why should the Americans be allowed to come and fish in our waters when our fish are excluded from the American market? But they do not object, and would not object to the Americans coming within the three mile limit, if Canadian fish were admitted free into Boston, Portland and other American markets. This shows that their catch is not diminished in quantity, but that they have not access to the American markets. I admit the whole of the force of that argument. But our answer would be this: That it is of great consequence to you, the fishermen of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Quebec to get your fish into the American market, duty free; that that market should be open, and in order to get that promise from the United States Government, in order to obtain an engagement that they would enter into negotiations, is it not worth while to allow the American vessels to come into our waters, as they have done for 12 years, and fish from 1st July to 30th November, or whatever may be the close of the season? That is the whole sacrifice made. The American vessels will come into our waters as they do now. There will be no more sacrifice of Canadian interests by American vessels after 1st July than there was before that date; they will be in the same position in our waters as they have been for the last 12 years. We acknowledge that it is pretty hard upon you, the Canadian fishermen; but if you want the benefit of the American market, is it not worth while to give the Americans the use of our waters for three months longer, and then sit down with their representatives and endeavor to settle the whole fishery question, and afterwards have a treaty, or endeavor to negotiate a treaty, to open the markets of the two countries to the products of each? That is the way we put the matter to the Canadian fishermen. It is natural they should grumble; but is it not better that something of this kind should be done, rather than that Canadian fish should be kept for all time to come out of the American market? They will have to pay duties for all time on their catch, and is it not worth while to do that much, with the good chances and prospects we have of having some kind of satisfactory negotiation with the United States, not only on the fishing question, or questions which affect fishermen, but on all the products of the country. We cannot expect, as the hon. member for North Norfolk said, and we do not expect, that in any reciprocity treaty there will be an exact return to the lines of the treaty of 1854, but I believe there will be, and that there may be, unless it is thwarted by our own ambitions, or by violent faction, an arrangement by which there will be reciprocal trade in very many articles, the growth of the Provinces on the one hand, and of the United States on the other. I have no hesitation in admitting that it is on the paper, as the hon. gentleman stated, a one-sided arrange-