

in this House, and of their press in the country. We know, Sir, that in order to obtain a prolongation of the fishery articles of the Treaty of 1871, coupled with a trade arrangement which would be to the advantage of the two countries, he proposed that the benefits conferred upon American citizens by the fishery articles of the Treaty of 1871, should be extended until the close of the fishing season which had then begun, and that the cry went up in this House, and it went through the press of this country: "But the Americans will never accept that, because it is suspected by them that you are going to demand a money equivalent, such as you obtained before." But in order to be explicit and clear the right hon. gentleman and his colleagues communicated with the home authorities, and the home authorities communicated with Washington and declared: "You are to have, for the remainder of the fishing season, the advantages which the fishery articles of the Treaty of Washington conferred upon you, and that without stint and without price." Then the cry in the House and country changed, and it was: that we had made a dishonorable sacrifice to the United States; we were told that we should have manned our fleet, that we should have run up the flag and run out the guns, and taken a vote of \$50,000 in the Estimates for fisheries protection. But for that purpose the last two or three years the cry is that we folded our hands and did nothing—that we let the fishery articles expire without attempting to renew them. The hon. gentleman who addressed the House this evening says that at the expiration of the fishery articles of 1871 the Opposition proposed a policy to this House which would have been successful. By some extraordinary inspiration he is able to tell the House that if we had adopted his resolution in favor of reciprocity in 1885, that policy would have been accepted by the United States. He has other sources of information than those which are open to all the rest of the people of North America, for every journal which has spoken upon the subject, every public man in the United States whose utterances are worth reading, have with one voice declared in regard to this fishery question, that the one thing that they would not submit to is to have fishery negotiations and reciprocity negotiations mixed up. The one supreme difficulty which the negotiators had to meet with in Washington last year, as everybody knows now, was the conviction which has gained ground in the United States, and which has gained ground more than anything else by reason of the persistence with which this question of reciprocity has been projected into the discussion by the Opposition in this House—the one supreme difficulty they had to meet was the conviction that we did not care so much about our fishing rights, but that we were perishing for reciprocity, and that we were raising the fishery question in order to compel reciprocity. Sir, if the Government in 1885 had linked the two questions together they would have both met a common fate that would have disposed of the question for a good many years to come. But the proposal made to the American Government was to consider the whole question of the fisheries, and in order to get a broad and liberal settlement of the question, as I have said, we threw open the fishing grounds as well as commercial privileges to the American fishermen for the remainder of the season of 1885, on the assurance of the President of the United States that he would recommend to Congress that a commission should be appointed to consider the whole question of the fishery relations of the two countries. That, I suppose, was a policy that should have been acceptable to gentlemen opposite as well as to the Government; and yet, in relation to this matter we are told that the whole fault was on the Government of Canada. What was the result? After the United States had enjoyed our fishing grounds for nearly six long months, together with the right of obtaining supplies, transshipment, and all that, when the President sent down his Message recom-

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mending the commission to Congress, how was it received by the Senate? That body would not take action affirmatively or otherwise on the President's Message, but a resolution was passed declaring that such a commission was unworthy of receiving a vote from Congress for its expensess. Was the Message of the President sustained in Congress even by his own supporters? No, Sir; and there were only seventeen members of the Senate of the United States voting against a proposal that such a commission was not worthy of receiving a dollar from the public Treasury. Yet we are told that we have made no concessions to these people, and that every fault in the whole negotiations of the last twenty years has been with us. Then we were told by the leader of the Opposition, and by the gentleman who addressed the House to-night, that we had put an unwarrantable interpretation on the Treaty of 1818, as soon as we found in 1886 that we could not obtain the settlement of the question. The leader of the Opposition was very distinct and specific as to what this unwarrantable interpretation was—a refusal to tranship was too narrow a construction of that treaty. The hon. member for South Oxford (Sir Richard Cartwright) dignified it with a more caustic name than that the other evening—he declared that our interpretation of the Treaty of 1818 was pedantic. The leader of the Opposition said it was narrow and inhuman, and that vessels were sent to sea without provisions under our interpretation of that treaty. Now let me be plain and specific with the House in stating, at least, what I humbly believe the interpretation to have been, historically and as a matter of fact. The hon. member from Queen's, Prince Edward Island (Mr. Davies) to-night quoted from the despatch of Mr. Phelps, in which Mr. Phelps said that he did not so much complain of the treaty itself as of the harshness with which it was executed, and the suddenness with which it was put in force. It was put in force by themselves, because they revoked the fishery articles of 1871, which had suspended its operation. Sir, that interpretation—I state it with the utmost emphasis—the interpretation which we put on the Treaty of 1818 in 1886, was precisely the interpretation which it had received from the Provincial Governments, backed up by the guns and fleets of Great Britain for 70 years. The hon. member for Northumberland (Mr. Mitchell) gave hon. gentlemen opposite a lesson upon that subject when he assured the House that for the first forty years of the treaty, not only was it put in force and carried out by the fleets of England, but that it was carried out far beyond the limits at sea where we ever attempted to enforce it, away beyond the headlands where, he said, the fleets of England alone could keep the peace, and it was by the fleets of England that the treaty was enforced during the first forty years of its existence. Yet we are told by an hon. member, whose words will have weight as a leader of a party—whose words I am sure will be received with great weight in the United States, that it was a new, an illiberal construction that we sought to enforce, and the despatch of Mr. Phelps was read to this House to-night stating that it was a sudden and new interpretation that was put upon the Treaty of 1818. I ventured in as strong language as could courteously be used, in a report to His Excellency upon that despatch of Mr. Phelps, not only to assert, but to prove that our interpretation had been concurred in by Great Britain herself for seventy years, and I venture to think I so far succeeded in this, that, in the first place, Mr. Phelps made no attempt to controvert my argument, and, in the second place, Mr. Phelps was informed by Lord Roseberry that there were no two opinions in England upon the question. Let me state that, instead of adopting a new interpretation of the Treaty of 1818, we were enforcing just in its plain terms an Imperial statute passed in 1819, and the statutes of Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia passed before Confederation and the statute of Canada passed twenty years