

Mr. Bagot notified Mr. Rush, who was acting as Secretary of State until Mr. Adams could arrive from London, and, on the 28th and 29th of April, 1817, a formal agreement was entered into by an exchange of notes. This agreement at once became effective. There is no evidence that the British Government ever gave to it the formalities of a treaty, and it was not until April 6, 1818, nearly a year after its enactment, that it was submitted by President Munroe to the Senate at Washington; it was proclaimed by him on April 28th. The exact wording is as follows:—

“The naval force to be maintained upon the American Lakes by His Majesty and the Government of the United States shall henceforth be confined to the following vessels on each side, that is—

“On Lake Ontario to one vessel, not exceeding 100 tons burden, and armed with one 18 pound cannon.

“On the upper lakes to two vessels, not exceeding like burden each and armed with like force.

“On the waters of Lake Champlain, to one vessel not exceeding like burden and armed with like force.

“All other armed vessels on these lakes shall be forthwith dismantled and no other vessel of war shall be there built or armed.

“If either party should be hereafter desirous of annulling this stipulation, and should give notice to that effect to the other party, it shall cease to be binding after the expiration of six months from the date of such notice.

“The naval force, so to be limited, shall be restricted to such service as will in no respect interfere with the proper duties of the armed vessels of the other party.”

Never in the history of nations has an international document, so far-reaching in its effect, been compressed into so small a compass as the Rush-Bagot Agreement of 1817. It is a model of brevity and comprehensiveness, and in many respects a hundred years ahead of the times. Edward Atkinson, of Boston, said that it was “the greatest step in progress toward the maintenance of peace and without precedent in history.” The London Times said in reference to it, “No wiser act was ever agreed upon between two nations than the limitation of the naval force on the lakes.”

A rapid review of the past century is necessary to understand the effect of this agreement upon the development and progress of the North American Continent. The first twenty-five years after the signing of the Treaty of Ghent witnessed marked industrial progress, and a gradual shifting of population and industry towards the West. Relations between the United States and Great Britain, and particularly between the United States and Canada, became pleasant, and even cordial. In 1837 clouds appeared upon the horizon owing to the strong sympathy of certain Americans with the Mackenzie rebellion. There was much talk of