

islands in order to discuss matters with the local authorities, and to obtain information from them as to the working and results of the arrangement. The place and the time of his visit should of course be fixed hereafter.

There would certainly be no modification as regards the facilities which English vessels enjoy in Russian ports for refuge, repairs, or supplies.

The arrangement agreed upon would have no retrospective force, because the different cases of seizures effected last year have been already examined by a special Commission on the basis of the general principles of international law.

Finally, in regard to the first point of the proposal contained in Lord Rosebery's despatch, the Imperial Government are of opinion that it would be quite impossible to apply it as it stands, at any rate under the circumstances existing for the present fishing season, especially as to the engagement to hand over to the English cruisers or to the nearest British authority the English vessels caught trespassing outside territorial waters within the forbidden zones of 30 and 10 miles.

It may be that means may hereafter be found by common consent to remedy the practical difficulties in the way of such an undertaking; but for the moment, there is no doubt that it would completely paralyze the action of the cruisers of the Imperial navy, and render illusory the supervision which they should exercise along the coast and round the islands.

In practice, any Russian cruiser which had captured an English vessel would have to choose between the alternatives of searching for an English cruiser, which might take a long time, considering the extent of the coast, or else of undertaking a voyage of 3,000 miles to conduct the captured vessel to the nearest port, that of Victoria in Columbia.

The Russian cruisers would thus be exclusively occupied in looking for the English cruisers, or in making voyages to Port Victoria and back throughout the fishing season; and the "co-operation" of the cruisers of the two nations could, therefore, only be a nominal one.

Under these circumstances, and without insisting for the moment on another essential point—that of the absolute absence of reciprocity in the British proposal, as there are not, nor can there be, any vessels under the Russian flag engaged in sealing—the Imperial Government consider that for the current year it would be more simple and practical to submit the new prohibited zones, as is the case as regards territorial waters, to the exclusive supervision of the cruisers of the Imperial navy, who would continue to conduct to Petropaulovsk all vessels caught trespassing until the conclusion of an ulterior agreement.

By accepting four points out of five in the English proposal, and by only objecting to the complete and immediate application of one of the five points, the Imperial Government give evidence of their sincere wish to see the pending negotiations result in an understanding sufficient to prevent their partial objection, based upon purely geographical considerations, from being interpreted as a sign of mistrust.

If the British Government on their side should accept, as I firmly hope, the whole of the *modus agendi* explained above, it might be considered that provision had been made against all possible complications for the current sealing season, and, on the other hand, the necessary time would have been gained for the negotiation of a more definite *modus vivendi*.

Accept, &c.  
(Signed) CHICHKINE.

Inclosure 2 in No. 17.

Sir R. Morier to M. Chichkine.

Chère Excellence,

St. Petersburg, April 6, 1893.

I HAVE just received your note on the subject of the seals, and have only a few moments before my departure within which to give you my first impressions.

I perfectly understand the practical difficulties in the way of the Russian cruisers delivering their captures to the British cruisers or at a British port. On the other hand, I think I may state confidently that Her Majesty's Government would not consider themselves justified in handing over British subjects and property captured outside of *bond fide* territorial waters to the jurisdiction of any Government but their own. But there ought to be some way of turning the difficulty, such, for instance, as a British cruiser being stationed at Petropavlovsk or Vladivostock.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) R. B. D. MORIER.