

Government and the people of England generally have shown little zeal in the defence of our rights.

I have always thought it exceedingly unfortunate that our fishery disputes were mixed up with the settlement of important Imperial questions, which were the principal object of the Washington Treaty. (*Cheers.*) I am bound to say that I, with others, felt deep regret when the First Minister was invited to sit on the Commission at Washington. But whilst feeling that regret I had no doubt whatever that it was absolutely impossible for him, in the interests of the country to take any other course than to accept that position. A refusal to serve would have been taking grave responsibility while in accepting the position he ran the risk of giving dissatisfaction to many of his countrymen.

I shall not dwell on this branch of the question. I want to approach the financial branch of it. We are charged day after day with selling our rights for a mess of pottage, (*Cheers from the Opposition*), and no efforts have been spared to depreciate the value of the concession which has been made to us. It ought not to be lost sight of that England had a very considerable interest in the settlement of this dispute about the fisheries and it is a mistake to suppose it is exclusively a Canadian question. What would our fisheries be worth without the protection of England, and we know perfectly well that England had to employ a very considerable force year after year for their protection and further that there has been constant danger of collisions that might have led to very serious consequences.

It is also well known that trespassers on our fishing grounds have been taught by men of considerable political influence that they have a perfect right to fish in our waters and that they ought to enforce this right in any way possible. We cannot pretend to maintain that England exceeded her strictly constitutional powers. She made a treaty which required the ratification of Canada in all points which affected Canadian interests and this Parliament is free to accept or reject the arrangement which has been entered into.

What, however, should be constantly borne in mind is that by rejecting the treaty Canada would have placed herself in antagonism not to members of the present Government alone, but to all leading statesmen in England. Prior to the question of consequential damages arising, all parties in England had accepted the treaty with satisfaction. Had we refused to recommend the necessary legislation, what would have been our position? We should have placed ourselves in the position of refusing to accept an arrangement which England considered just, and we should have thereby increased the irritation which has long existed amongst the fishermen of the United States.

Under such circumstances, is it certain that English public opinion would have sanctioned further protection of our fisheries? And had England declined to send a naval force, would not there be increased aggressions by United States fishermen? Can it be possible that the opponents of the Treaty have considered the possible consequences of a refusal to carry it out, especially as its most prominent opponents are loud in their professions of

attachment to British connection?

I own that from the time that the treaty was ratified I felt that Canada was subjected to a pressure, which I deplored, but from which there was no escape. It was, in the judgment of the Government most desirable to avoid any misunderstanding with England, but at the same time to state frankly and boldly our grounds of complaint. We have been told of late that no question of money should have been introduced into the discussion. I am at a loss to know how the Fenian claims could have been settled without pecuniary compensation in some way direct or indirect. (*Hear.*)

But it is now said that an Imperial guarantee is of little value. The idea of asking money as a bribe was never thought of, but there was a claim on some one for Fenian losses and the Imperial Government recognized the fact that they had incurred a responsibility to Canada on that account. True, the admission was very guarded, and it is very doubtful whether any amount worth consideration could have been obtained.

At all events the Dominion government had not the slightest doubt that the best mode of settling these claims was by guarantee, and they deemed it expedient to announce their intention of proposing the measures necessary to give effect to the treaty concurrently with the proposal for a guarantee.

Now it is with reference to the value of the guarantee not only in itself, but also as a means of securing the construction of our great public works, that I desire to speak. I wish, in the first place, to endeavor to remove the misapprehension that prevails very generally as to the reduction of the amount proposed by us. Justice has not been done to England, simply because circumstances wholly unforeseen prevented an arrangement that would have been quite satisfactory.

It is possible that some may have thought that we would get the four millions without any difficulty. For my own part I never imagined we would get a guarantee of four millions in addition to the fortification guarantee. I knew that one member of the Imperial Parliament had given it as his opinion that the fortification guarantee would, if Canada desired it, be transferred to Public Works.

I do not know what others may have thought, some of my colleagues may have thought that we would get the four millions and the fortification loan also, and my hon. friend, the Secretary of State for the Provinces (Hon. Mr. Howe), no doubt imagined that we should get nothing at all. His dissatisfaction was very great, and I own that I would have felt a great deal more dissatisfaction than I ever have done, if I had imagined it possible that the proposition we made would have received an unfavourable reply. Under the circumstances we have no right to complain of the reply, no right whatever.

With reference to the question of fortifications I may observe, and I say it, because I know there are some that even yet suppose it would be desirable to erect fortifications, that it makes no