

the reciprocal privileges and exemptions of that treaty, this House is of opinion that steps should be taken, at an early day, by the Government of Canada, with the object of bringing about negotiations for a new treaty, providing for the citizens of Canada and the United States, the reciprocal privileges of fishing and freedom from duties now enjoyed, together with additional reciprocal freedom in the trade relations of the two countries; and that in any such negotiations Canada should be directly represented by some one nominated by its Government."

That resolution was voted down on that occasion. The Government had not only done nothing but did not desire to open any negotiation at all with the United States, which appears to have been the condition of affairs. Congress had opened on the 4th December, 1883, and continued in session until 7th July, 1884, and during three months of this period our House was in session. No steps were taken, however, during the Session or afterward to open negotiations. Matters remained in this state until the 4th December last, when the following despatch was sent by the Colonial Secretary:

"In view of the fact that the fishery articles of the Treaty of Washington will expire on the 1st July next, I have the honor to inform you that Her Majesty's Government are desirous of obtaining at as early date as it may be possible, some definite expression of the views of the Government of the Dominion of Canada as to the course which they may wish to be pursued, in negotiation with the Government of the United States, with the object of arriving at some satisfactory arrangement with that Government in order to avoid the risks and complications which might arise from the fishery question being left in an unsettled and undecided state. You will, therefore, be so good as to lay this despatch before your Ministers and to request them to favor me at their earliest convenience, with such an expression of their views upon this important subject as they may be in a position to supply."

This was written the 4th December, 1884, and appears to have had no response until the 26th December, 1884. On that date, His Excellency the Governor General, after acknowledging receipt of the despatch, explained the delay in replying to it by the absence of the First Minister, and goes on to say:

"3. I have in the first place to point out that these articles have been abrogated by the Government of the United States in compliance with a vote of Congress, without, as far as we are aware, any intimation of a desire on the part of that Government to substitute for them any other arrangement, and without any specific disclosures of the reasons which have induced it to adopt such a course, beyond general and unofficial expressions of dissatisfaction with the result of the award under which the United States were required to pay a sum of five and a half millions of dollars for the privilege of fishing in the waters to which their fishermen were admitted under the Treaty of 1871.

"4. A course similar to that which has now been adopted was followed by the Government of Washington in regard to the Treaty of 1854, which was abrogated in like manner, to the detriment of the commercial relations which had been established between the two countries while it was in operation."

At that time the Government had the letter of Mr. Saurin, of the British Legation, the speech of Mr. Rice, of Massachusetts, and the President's Message, showing the reasons for inducing the Government of the United States to adopt the course they did. The great object of the American Government was to place themselves in such a position with regard to the Washington Treaty that they would not have to pay anything for the use of our fisheries, but not in such a position that other negotiations might not take place.

"5. In the face of these circumstances my Government does not consider that it would be consistent with the respect which it owes to itself to appear as a suitor for concessions at the hands of the Government of the United States. It is moreover certainly open to question whether its negotiations on this subject are to be approached at all, they will not be approached with a better prospect of success if they are commenced and conducted with the Government which will assume office next spring, rather than with that by which the articles have been denounced and which could not reasonably expect to terminate such negotiations before the end of its official existence."

This was written 26th December, 1884. Instead of applying to the then Government while Congress was in session, although they knew Congress would, by law, rise 4th March, 1885, and that it would not be in session later in the year, unless an extra Session were called by the new President, which was highly improbable, the Government took no action:—

Mr. WELDON.

"6. The expiration of the fishery articles, although no doubt it will produce some dislocation of this branch of the commerce of the Dominion, will only replace it in the position which it occupied between the expiration of the Treaty of 1854 and the commencement of the Treaty of 1871. Each party will be restricted to its own waters, and steps would be taken to protect from trespass those of the Dominion which are admitted to be of far greater value than those of the United States. It is probable that a considerable portion of the catch of the Canadian fishermen would find its way, as it did during the period referred to, to the same markets as now, but carried in American vessels, the owners of which would purchase the fish from the Canadian fishing vessels whilst afloat and enter them at their own ports free of duty as their own catch for resale in the West Indies and elsewhere.

"7. In another respect, however, the action of the United States Government is no doubt likely to leave inconvenient and perhaps embarrassing results, though not to Canadian fishermen. The fishery clauses will cease to operate on the 1st of July, 1885. At that time vessels belonging to the United States will be engaged in fishing in Canadian waters.

"These vessels will have been equipped and fitted out for the season's fishing, and will have made all their arrangements in the belief that they would be able to prosecute their business until its end."

Here the Government assumes that these vessels are equipped and ready to set out. But the Government of which these men are the constituents had given ample notice that the treaty would terminate on the 1st of July. Why should our Government undertake to assume that the American fishermen were ignorant of it and would trespass on our fisheries, being convinced that not the slightest attempt would be made to prevent them? Our Government had been notified that the treaty would cease, and it became their duty to give notice that every man who entered our fisheries would be a trespasser and to have taken steps to protect our fisheries against trespass.

"If these vessels were upon the day following that upon which the articles ceased to operate, either captured for trespass, or compelled on pain of seizures to desist from fishing in Canadian waters, considerable loss would be occasioned to the owners, and much ill-feeling created between the two countries. The Government of the Dominion has no desire to be instrumental in producing such a state of things, and I am able to inform your Lordship that should such a course be acceptable to the Government of the United States, we shall be prepared to agree to an extension of the operation of the clause in regard both to "free fishing" and "free fish" until the 1st of June, 1886."

Mark the words. A proposal was made, and they were willing to agree to an extension of the operations of the treaty both as regards free fishing and free fish up to 1st June, 1886; and at the time when they were making that proposal they were doubtless aware that Congress, which had alone the power to grant it, would not be in session, and that the executive had not the power.

"If this were to be done their expiration would take place between the fishing season of 1885 and that of 1886, instead of in the middle of that of 1885, and the result of avoiding those complications of which I have already spoken.

"8. The delay thus gained would, if the United States were to show any desire for the discussion of the commercial relation of the two countries, give time for such a discussion and the Government of the Dominion would have no object in restricting its scope to the subject of the fisheries. It is, indeed, a matter of notoriety that the Dominion has consistently expressed its readiness to become a party to an arrangement which might have the effect of affording increased facilities for international commerce between itself and the United States. It has given the best proof of its sincerity by taking under its existing Customs laws, powers of which Your Lordship is aware, to admit upon favorable terms by proclamation of the Governor General, those products of the United States which were included in the Treaty of 1854, whenever a similar course in regard to the natural products of the Dominion may be adopted by the Government of Washington. It regretted at the time the termination of the Treaty of 1854, which it believed to be advantageous to the interests of both countries, and it would be fully prepared on receiving from the Government of the United States an intimation that negotiations would be likely to produce useful results, to enter into such negotiations in an amicable spirit.

"I think it my duty, in conclusion, to make Your Lordship aware that in a letter to Her Majesty's Minister at Washington, dated the 23rd inst., I asked him to be good enough to inform me whether such an *ad interim* arrangement as I have indicated in paragraph 7, was likely to be agreeable to the Government to which he is accredited."

No such letter is brought down and I am not aware that any answer was made. This proposition was made by the Colonial Office mentioning, and putting forward the fact, that no steps have yet been taken. The next communication is a despatch from Mr. West, dated 23rd April, 1885. This does