

exhausted, and we hope that up to the present hour they have not even been seriously taxed. It is so delicate a question that we approach it with a feeling of restraint, as if we were walking over fires concealed under treacherous ashes. It has been said by an eminent statesman that diplomacy has her triumphs, not less renowned than the triumphs of war. Certainly the history of the fishery question during the last hundred years, between the two great powers who rule over this continent, does not record any great diplomatic triumphs. The history of that question we cannot now enter upon. It is enough to say that the rights and duties of those two nations in respect of the fisheries are to-day governed by what is known as the Convention of London, entered into in 1818—that whatever our rights are in this matter, they rest on that treaty, and are not determined by any earlier treaty, nor by the rules of public law; and if that treaty is clear, our rights and duties are clear. That treaty simply says, with respect to the rights of the two parties to the fisheries along the Canadian coast, that the Americans have hereby renounced forever the liberty to take fish in what are known as the territorial Canadian waters, and also the liberty to enter the bays and harbors of Her Britannic Majesty's possessions in North America for any purpose whatever, except for the single purpose of asylum—for the purpose of shelter and repairs, wood and water. It is true, during the 70 years which have elapsed since that treaty was entered into, the conditions under which American fishermen made use of the deep-sea fisheries have greatly changed. Arrangements which in 1818 did not press heavily on American fishermen are to-day very burdensome. The mackerel, the herring, and the other fish which were found abundantly along their own coasts at that time, have, in the intervening years, migrated eastward and northward, and are now found chiefly along the Canadian coasts; and so the migration of the fish, the changed conditions under which they are taken by the fishermen, and the development of railway and steam communication from the provincial ports to the American markets—all these things have made a treaty that was not found oppressive 70 years ago most oppressive to-day. Therefore, we can sympathize with our neighbors, and can understand their desire to enter our harbors and ports, either for the renewal of supplies, for the purchase of fresh bait, and to tranship their cargoes from their fishing schooners in order that they may be carried by rail and steamship to the American ports. It is very natural that they should desire—for they have a strong commercial interest in doing so—to have a basis of supply near their fishing grounds. But under the plain wording of the treaty they have no right to enter our waters, except for the one single purpose of refuge; and if the Convention of 1818 had been drafted last night by an officer of the Fishery Department of Canada, with the view of governing and protecting Canadian fishermen, I do not know how the terms could be more clearly drawn. Our American neighbors complain that we have been harsh and niggardly and technical in the construction of that great instrument. There is a sentiment of justice under that complaint, namely, that it is not right on the part of any great people to construe a treaty harshly, niggardly, and in a technical spirit. But there are no two interpretations of that treaty possible in regard to the subject-matter in dispute. Its terms are clear and unambiguous, and when we say that we rest on our treaty rights, it is no answer for our American friends to say: "Oh, we are sixty millions of people." If we were disposed, Sir, to reflect upon the way in which our neighbors have construed treaties, we could show, I think, in respect to a much more recent treaty than the London Convention of 1818—in respect to the Treaty of Washington of 1871—that our neighbors have been somewhat technical and narrow in the construction of that treaty. In the first article of the Treaty of Washington a

provision was made for the free admission to American ports for 12 years of fish the produce of Canadian fisheries, and within five years after that contract was entered into, the American Government placed a duty of something like 125 per cent. on the cans carrying the fish. Another provision of that treaty was that Canadians should have free access for 12 years to American ports for fish oils the produce of our fisheries, and not long afterwards their Government decided that seal oil was not fish oil, and a duty of 20 per cent. was imposed on seal oil entering their ports from Canada. It is a matter of pride, I think, to all of us in this House, that our own Administration has not seen fit to adopt that method of construing these instruments. The Canadian Government have not sought to harass American fishermen. They have had no desire to put any compulsion on them with the view of securing a re-opening or settlement of the fishery question, or with the view of forcing our neighbors to enter into new trade relations with us. I think nothing has been farther from the thoughts of our people. But, Mr. Speaker, when we come to rest upon our exact rights, when we read the treaty and find that its words are clear and distinct, we are justified in saying that although the 60,000,000 of Americans to the south of us are conscious of their strength, we are 5,000,000 of Canadians in the north who are equally conscious of our rights. We are children of two great historical races in the Old World who over the sea in times past were not wont under a threat to abate one jot or tittle of their claim to their own property or their rights. We do, nevertheless, anticipate with the Administration that the negotiations which are in progress will result in an arrangement favorable and satisfactory to both nations; and our hopes rest not alone on the clearness of our rights, not alone on the military strength of the Empire to which we belong, and the consciousness of its support, but very largely on the common sense and fair-mindedness of the great body of the American people. In that country there exists a public opinion, somewhat inert, somewhat slow to move, yet with as keen a regard for law and as high a sense of honor as we could have, and when this fishery question has moved along, if unhappily it does, to a more acute stage, when it will cease to be the clamor of a small section of the country whose interests are seriously affected, when it seems to touch the national honor, then the whole American people will consider this question, ascertain their legal position, enquire into their rights and cheerfully accord to us all we are entitled to. That great country has, I am sure, no desire to stain its honor with the unpardonable crime of perfidy. We are glad, therefore, to learn that the necessary provision has been made for the protection of our inshore fisheries, not by way of menace or bad temper, but in simple and manly self-respect. The establishment of a Department of Trade and Commerce, under the supervision of a special Minister, is a proper subject for congratulation. If, unhappily, our trade relations with our neighbors, which are menaced, should be in any way adversely interfered with by any action on their part, it will be our imperative duty to seek other outlets for the produce of our farms, fisheries, mines, mills and factories, and by the establishment of this Department of Trade and Commerce the Government will show that they are fully alive to the interests of the people and to the necessity of making the strongest possible efforts to extend our trade in every direction. I ask to be allowed now to thank the right hon. gentleman who leads the Government for the honor he has done the county which I have the honor to represent in inviting me to second this Address, and I desire to thank him and the other hon. members of this House for the patience with which they have listened to my remarks. May I be permitted also to express, on behalf of the new members, the feeling of pride we all share in finding ourselves sitting here for the first time in this legislative chamber, along with illustrious statesmen on both sides of