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THE FISHERIES QUESTION.

Report of the N. Y. Herald's Special Commissioner.

OTTAWA, Dec. 30, 1870.

It is with great pleasure that I am able to communicate my report of the results of the very interesting mission confided to me of repairing to the seat of government of the Dominion at Ottawa and conferring with the statesmen of that government upon the subject of the complaints made against them of unfriendly and injurious treatment of American interests in the matter of the fisheries and the navigation of the St. Lawrence. I have to acknowledge on behalf of the *Herald* and myself a reception most courteous and friendly on the part of the gentlemen of the administration. They expressed the greatest satisfaction that the leading journal of America should have specially commissioned a gentleman to hear their statements and views upon the very important subjects in question, and thus offered them such a medium of reaching the American public with a full statement of all the facts of their case as could not be obtained in any other way. I have been favored with long and protracted interviews in these matters by the very distinguished and cultivated Dominion Premier, Sir John Macdonald, as well as by Sir Francis Hincks, the Finance Minister; the Hon. S. L. Tilley, the Minister of Customs; the Hon. J. Howe, Secretary of State for the Provinces, and especially the Hon. Peter Mitchell, the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, whose department is more particularly concerned with these matters. I have had the privilege of full and ample discussion with all these gentlemen—and especially with the last—on the difficulty that has arisen, and I think it impossible to speak too highly of the energy and lucidity and fullness with which the whole subject was stated by them on behalf of their government. Your space would not allow that I should particularize the conversations I held with each of these

statesmen upon the fisheries and St. Lawrence questions. Much of the ground, moreover, was naturally gone over again with all of them. It will, therefore, be convenient that I should throw my report into the form of a dialogue between your commissioner and the abstract individual whom I will call "the Dominion statesman." And your readers may be sure that what it is here attributed to that individual is the accurate representation of collective views and statements of the gentlemen whom I have specified, whose studies of these questions seemed to be equally comprehensive. The Minister of Marine and Fisheries, although in departmental charge of them, did not excel his colleagues in the fullness of his knowledge and studies of these important topics. And whatever view the American public may take of the matters which I have the honor to report, I can at least testify that the action of the Dominion Government has been taken by a group of official gentlemen whom, after long personal experience of statesmen and governments, I can pronounce equal to any in the thoroughness and care with which they do their business of governing a great community. Indeed, I have never conversed with any statesmen who seemed so thoroughly masters and authorities in their work.

Your reporter opened his conference with an intimation that the *Herald*, true to its system of tracking subjects to their very source, had despatched me to hear what Canadian statesmen had to say upon the subject of Fisheries and the St. Lawrence, and especially of the charges of unfriendliness against American fishermen. To this question I had the following reply from my Canadian statesman:

DOMINION STATESMAN—Sir, we are glad, indeed, that you have come. We are disposed to go into the whole subject with you comprehensively and exhaustively. And at the outset we desire to say that