

Sir L. West to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received August 22.)

(No. 73. Treaty.)

My Lord,

Washington, August 8, 1887.

I HAVE the honour to inclose to your Lordship herewith an article from the "New York Herald" on the Fishery question, indicating that there should be no serious difficulty in an amicable settlement of it.

I have, &c.

(Signed)

L. S. SACKVILLE WEST.

Inclosure in No. 113.

Extract from the "New York Herald" of August 8, 1887.

THAT FISHERY MUDDLE.—Our correspondent at Halifax reported in yesterday's "Herald" that three British war vessels—Admiral Lyons' flagship, the "Bellerophon," the "Canada," and the "Pylades"—would probably be ordered to the Gulf of St. Lawrence early this week. There are already seven Dominion cruizers policing the shores of the gulf and endeavouring to keep our 250 American fishing-vessels from catching mackerel within the 3-mile limit. A contingent of the North Atlantic squadron also hovers in the vicinity to protect the threatened interests of the United States.

Our fishermen have been so long accustomed to the freedom of Canadian harbours that they find the existing order of things extremely irksome. They chafe at the sudden change of circumstances and are irritated at the exasperating, and, in some cases, high-handed methods of the Dominion Government. They ask—and properly too—why all the acts of courtesy should be on our side, to be repaid on the other side by a stringent and apparently vindictive enforcement of the letter of the Treaty of 1818. Heretofore, our vessels have spent their money freely in buying of the small farmers and tradesmen of Prince Edward Island barrels and woollen articles and ship stores and eggs, butter, and produce. Along the coast of Nova Scotia they have purchased 100,000 dollars' worth of bait per year. This was, of course, an advantage to the Americans, but it was no less an advantage to the maritime provinces.

Now we fall back on the Treaty of 1818 until a new arrangement can be made with Great Britain, and that Treaty stipulates that we shall take no fish within 3 marine miles of the shore, and that we may enter the bays of the coast for shelter or repairs or the purchase of wood or to get water, but "for no other purpose whatever."

There should be no serious difficulty in an amicable settlement of this fishery business. We have no desire to overreach Canada, but we do not propose to be made the victim of Sir John Macdonald's grasping policy. He has been acting under the impression that if he could make things sufficiently disagreeable we would accede to almost any terms, however unreasonable. During the period of the recently annulled Treaty we paid, as the award of the Halifax Commission, 5,500,000 dollars, and Canada was permitted to bring its fish to the United States free of duty. During a single year—1881, for example—the amount of duties remitted amounted to 300,000 dollars, a fair annual average during the twelve years of the Treaty. During this same year 1881 the Canadians caught, north of the 39th parallel, nearly 400,000 barrels, while the American catch amounted to less than 500 barrels all told.

Of course, Sir John would be willing to grant us our old privileges under the same conditions, but we are not in the habit of continuing a bad bargain longer than is necessary. We terminated the Treaty according to the conditions provided by itself, and now stand ready to reach a conclusion with our northern neighbours which will be just to both parties. If we hesitate to swap a thoroughbred for a worn-out nag, to give everything and receive nothing in return, it only shows that, though willing to make a fair exchange, we are not anxious to be imposed upon. The Canadian Government will learn at last that we pay for an article what it is worth, but no more; and if Sir John continues a policy of coercion, he may discover that the staying qualities of Americans are equal to his own.

Our fishermen have not lately been assisting the two Governments to a settlement. On the contrary, they have been tangling the snarl and hurting their own cause. In some cases they have captured mackerel within the 3-mile limit. They argue that