

3. The right of fishery at Belle Isle North, in the Straits, which the French Commissioner asserted was enjoyed by the French up to 1841, without any demur on the part of Great Britain.

The concessions demanded by the French negotiator were not considered admissible, and the British Commissioner, in order to overcome the difficulties arising out of the claim of Great Britain to a concurrent right of fishery, suggested that the question would be best settled if the rights of the fishermen of the two nations were kept separate and distinct. In order to carry out this suggestion, he proposed that the French rights should be made exclusive as against British subjects from Cape St. John to some point on the western coast, such as Cape Verte (Green Point, to the north of Bonne Bay); the French, on the other hand, to renounce their right altogether on the remainder of the coast, which would be that part where the British had been in the habit of carrying on the herring fishery and other fisheries incidental to the requirements of a fixed population.

The French negotiator offered no objection to the plan of recognizing the French "exclusive right" on a diminished extent of coast; but he contended for the retention of a "concurrent right" on that portion of the coast on which their exclusive claim might be renounced, and for other advantages as well, such as admission, concurrently with British fishermen, to the fisheries of Labrador and North Belle Isle, and to the "bait fishery" on the southern coast, all of which, he maintained, were necessary, as an equivalent for admitting British subjects to a free "concurrent right" on the lower portion of the western coast.

The British Commissioner was disposed to accept the demands of the French so far as to extend the French fishery to North Belle Isle, and also to remove all restrictions on the purchase of "bait," on condition that the French should entirely renounce their rights between Cape Verte and Cape Ray; and in June 1855 he forwarded to the Foreign Office the above suggestions in the form of a counter proposal to those which had been made by France.

Mr. Labouchere, Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies, concurred in the adoption of the British negotiator's project of a "compromise" as the basis of negotiation to be offered to the French Government. It corresponded, he believed, with the views of the Colonial authorities; deprived neither nation of any advantage of real value; and there would only be a reciprocal abandonment of barren rights and useless or nominal restrictions; and he prepared a draft treaty which might be substituted for the whole of the existing engagements on the Newfoundland Fisheries question.

The negotiations were continued in the year 1856 by Captain Pigeard, who arrived in London in the month of July of that year, and by Mr. Merivale, the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies. The basis of these negotiations was founded upon the counter proposals made by Sir A. Perrier, and also upon the draft of the treaty proposed by Mr. Labouchere. The negotiations finally terminated by the signature of a Convention in London on the 17th January 1857.

According to the stipulations of this Convention,\* a printed copy of which is annexed, an exclusive right of fishery and the use of the strand for fishery purposes was conceded to the French from Cape St. John, on the east coast of Newfoundland, to the Quirpon Islands, and from the Quirpon Islands, on the north coast, to Cape Norman, on the west coast, in and upon the following five fishery harbours, namely, Port-au-Choix, Small Harbour, Port-au-Port, Red Island, and Cod Roy Island, to extend, as regarded these five harbours, to a radius of three marine miles in all directions from the centre of each such harbour. On other parts of the west coast (the five harbours excepted) British subjects were to enjoy a "concurrent" right of fishing with French subjects, but French subjects were to have the exclusive use of the strand for fishery purposes from Cape Norman to Rock Point, in the Bay of Islands, north of the River Humber, in addition to the strand of the reserved harbours.

A "concurrent" right of fishing was also granted to French subjects on the coast of Labrador, from Blanc Sablon to Cape Charles, and of North Belle Isle.

With regard to the question of fixed establishments, the Convention of 1857 stipulated that no British buildings or inclosures should be erected or maintained on the strand reserved for French exclusive use. It was provided, however, that buildings which had stood for five successive seasons previous to the date of the Convention,

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\* Convention of 1857.