

which the correspondence commenced, proposed that a Joint High Commission should be appointed, "to treat of and discuss the mode of settling the different questions which have arisen out of the Fisheries, as well as those which affect the relations of the United States towards Her Majesty's possessions in North America."

This sentence, very cautiously worded, is obviously intended to mean the Canadian Claims for Fenian raids, and the disputes which had arisen respecting Canadian Fisheries; and it was these questions alone that the British Government was in January, 1871, prepared to discuss.

30 Jan. 1871. Mr. Fish, in his reply, shows plainly that this was the impression left upon his mind by Sir Edward Thornton's letter. He saw that a discussion of the Fenian Claims was by no means to be desired by the United States; he therefore evaded the attack, and while he agreed to the appointment of a Commission, he took occasion to add that the main subject in dispute between England and America was the Alabama Claims.

1 Feb. 1871. Sir Edward Thornton answered in effect—"Very well, we will agree that the Alabama Claims shall be discussed; but do not forget that it is part of the bargain that the Canadian grievances shall be adjudicated upon." Mr. Fish saw his advantage: Sir Edward Thornton had been induced to treat the Alabama Claims as the principal subject to be submitted to the Commission. Mr. Fish was therefore careful to do the same. It was only parenthetically, at the end of his reply, that Mr. Fish says, "With reference to the *remainder* of your Note, the President desires me to say that *if there be other and further claims* of British subjects or of American citizens, . . . he (the President) assents to the propriety of their reference to the same Commission."

3 Feb. 1871. Thus, at the very outset of the discussion, we were diverted from our purpose. We proposed a Commission to decide Canadian grievances, and it was straightway settled that the main subject of discussion should be the Alabama Claims; and, further, Mr. Fish successfully paved the way for a refusal on the part of America to discuss the Fenian Claims at all. No reply was sent to Mr. Fish, his view was taken for granted, and within a week Lord de Grey and Mr. Bernard were on board the Cunard steamer bound for New York, to deal as they best might with the diplomatists of Washington, leaving Sir Stafford Northcote to follow by the next steamer.

11 Feb. 1871 I have insisted upon this point—the change of the subject originally proposed—because it is one of much interest to the Colonial Institute. The original subject proposed for consideration was a Canadian grievance. Far from obtaining satisfaction for that