

whether the Act shall be continued or not, whether the proclamation shall be renewed for another year or not. We are simply taking power in the meantime to say, at the only time when it is of the least value, whether or not these licenses shall be continued for the coming season. I should be very sorry for one to adopt any measure on this subject which should appear, much less be, a permanent surrender of our contentions with regard to the treaty, and I do not recognize this Bill as having that effect at all. The hon. member for Queen's (Mr. Davies) is correct in saying that my colleagues and myself took very strong grounds on this subject, and I have not to withdraw one single word I said or wrote on that subject on former occasions. What I said with regard to the interpretation of the Treaty of 1818 I stand by, and I say now, as the hon. gentleman says I said then, that to admit that what is given by this Bill is a matter of right to the fishermen of the United States, notwithstanding the Treaty of 1818, would be to give away the whole protection of that treaty. But there is the greatest difference in the world between selling, even for a small and inadequate price, a right to a neighbour, and conceding that that right belongs to him by virtue of the instrument that he formerly claimed under. On the contrary, I contend, as has been fully expressed in this House on former occasions, that our rights under the Treaty of 1818 are strengthened from year to year by the fact of the fishermen of the United States taking out these licenses, and purchasing that which, down to 1888, they claimed they had a right to under the Treaty of 1818. It may be, as the leader of the Opposition says, that it might be well to revise the Treaty of 1818. We have always expressed our willingness to revise it. We have always taken the position that whenever a new bargain is desired, we are prepared to discuss the terms, but not to surrender the interpretation which has been held on the part of the British Government and the Governments of the provinces and of Canada, ever since the treaty was made. It is true, as the leader of the Opposition has said, that in 1888, when a somewhat unusual state of things existed, an unsuccessful attempt was made to settle all the questions relating to our Atlantic fisheries. But both sides recognized the fact that our failure to settle matters in 1888 was not a permanent failure, and there is no disposition on the part of either country to abandon faith in our yet reaching a friendly adjustment. There is no disposition on the part of either Government to refuse to sit down and revise the arrangement of 1818, and events since 1888 indicate that questions even more important than this may be settled from time to time, by friendly conference between the two countries, and that, therefore, a settlement of these questions relating to the Atlantic fisheries may be reached without unfriendly feeling and without any very considerable delay. I think that the state of facts now existing with regard to the seal fisheries in the Pacific indicate that that result may be had, and I am sure anybody who has considered the question fully will realize that it is best for all of us, in the meantime, to provide a means of administering our rights in the fishery grounds in a way that may not give offence, break the peace, or create undue disturbance, and that it is better we should submit even to parting

temporarily with our rights from year to year for an inadequate consideration, as I admit this is, provided we keep intact our assertion of the interpretation which we have stood by so long, and which I hold now is just as important for the interests of the country as in 1885, 1886 or 1887 when these questions were all more burning and of more pressing importance than they are to-day.

Mr. CASEY. The hon. Minister pointed to the necessity of preserving good relations with the United States, and in that respect the House is entirely with him. The only question is whether this Bill does not involve such a surrender of our rights as may injuriously affect our future negotiations with that country with regard to the fisheries. The hon. Minister thinks this measure is saved from being a surrender by the fact that we charge something for the use of our ports by American fishermen, and that the selling of these privileges saves the principle to which we still adhere. Now, I think with my leader, who has already pointed out the difference, that if you allow American fishermen to obtain these privileges every year, without regard to any temporary state of circumstances such as those which existed while negotiations were pending, they will acquire the habit of coming to our ports for the privileges, and believe they have a right to them on the payment of a very small fee; and we know how prompt American statesmen are in taking advantage of anything that has become customary, even although it may not have been admitted in principle. I say that the constant use of our fisheries from year to year, not under a *modus vivendi*, but under a permanent Act of Parliament, will impress on their minds the idea that they have the right to use these privileges, if not for nothing, at least on payment of a small fee. This impression will reach Washington and affect our relations. In the second place, I understood the Minister formerly, in his correspondence on this subject, not only to contend for the principle that American fishermen should not use our ports in those waters, but further, that if they were allowed to use them on any terms the damage to our fishermen would be tremendously great. Now, the damage to our fishermen caused by the competition of these American fishermen will be just as great, whether they pay a license of \$1.50 or go in free. Whatever may be the force of the Minister's contention that we are not surrendering a principle, the fact remains that we are surrendering the interests of our fishermen, by allowing competition on the payment of a trifling fee. How he will make that consistent with his former utterances, I do not know. As to the question of principle, it seems to me that although, perhaps, the fee charged may save the absolute principle and may save our right to maintain that we have never admitted the contention of the United States on this subject, it is a surrender of the principle to this extent: that it is admitting that this House is willing, for an indefinite time whether negotiations are pending or not to allow the entrance of these fishermen on certain terms. It is as complete a surrender of the right to fish after paying a small fee as could possibly be made except by a formal treaty. There is a very great distinction between annually empowering the Government to make such an arrangement and putting it into a permanent