

upon the consideration of Her Majesty's Government the propriety of England making on our behalf a demand on the United States Government for reparation of the wrongs known as the Fenian Raids. England agreed to press upon the United States both these matters, and to ask that all the disputed questions relating to the inshore fisheries under the Convention of 1818 should be settled in some mode to be agreed upon between the two nations, and also to press upon the United States the wrong sustained by Canada at the hands of citizens of the United States who had invaded our country.

Before Her Majesty's Government had actually, in compliance with their promise, made any representation on these two subjects to the United States Government, England had been engaged on her own behalf in a controversy of a very grave character. It was known that what was commonly known as "the Alabama claims" was a subject of dispute between the two countries, involving the gravest consequences and that hitherto the results had been most unsatisfactory. An attempt had been made to settle the question by what was known as the Stanley-Johnson Treaty, but that treaty had been rejected by the United States authorities. So long as this question remained unsettled between the two nations there was no possibility of the old friendly relations that had so long existed between them being restored, and England felt that it was of the first importance to her that those amicable relations should be restored. It was not only her desire to be in the most friendly position towards a country which was so closely associated with her by every tie—by common origin, by common interest, by common language—but it was also her interest to have every cloud removed between the two nations because she had reason to feel that her position with respect to the other great powers of the world was greatly affected by the knowledge which those other nations had of the position of affairs between the United States and herself.

The prestige of Great Britain as a great power was affected most seriously by the absence of an entente cordiale between the two nations. Two years ago, England was, as a matter of course, greatly interested in the great and serious question which was then convulsing Europe and was in danger of being drawn by some complication into the hostile relations of some of the conflicting powers, and she felt,—and I speak merely what must be obvious to every hon. member in the House—that she could not press or assert her opinion with the same freedom of action, so long as she was aware and so long as other nations were aware that in case she should be unfortunately placed in a state of hostility with any nation whatever, the United States Government would be forced, by the United States people, to press it at that very time when she might be engaged in mortal conflict with another nation—for a settlement of those Alabama claims.

Hence, Mr. Speaker, the great desire of England, in my opinion, is that that great question should be settled, and, hence also, the intermingling of the particular questions relating to Canada with the larger Imperial questions. Sir, in my opinion, it was of greater consequence to Canada than to England that the Alabama question should be settled. (*Cheers.*) Sir, England has promised to us, and we have all faith in that promise, that in case of war the whole force of

the Empire should be exerted in our defence. (*Cheers.*) What would have been the position of England, and what would have been the position of Canada, if she had been called upon to use her whole force to defend us when engaged in conflict elsewhere. Canada would, as a matter of course, in case of war between England and the United States, be the battle ground. We should be the sufferers, our country would be devastated, our people slaughtered, and our property destroyed; and while England would, I believe, under all circumstances, faithfully perform her promise to the utmost (*Cheers*), she would be greatly impeded in carrying out her desire if engaged elsewhere.

It is, therefore, as much the interest of this Dominion as of England that the Alabama and all other questions that in any way threatened the disturbance of the peaceful relations between the two countries should be settled and adjusted. Therefore, although to a considerable extent I agree with the remarks that fell from the Minister of Finance (Hon. Sir Francis Hincks) when he made his Budget speech—that looking at the subject in a commercial point of view, it might have been better in the interest of Canada that the fishery and Fenian questions should have been settled free and apart from the Imperial question—I am pleased, and I was pleased that the fact of Canada having asked England to make these demands upon the United States, gave an opportunity for reopening the negotiations with respect to the Alabama and other matters. It was fortunate that we made that demand, for England could not, with due self respect, have initiated or reopened the Alabama question. She had concluded a treaty in London with the representative of the United States, and this treaty having been rejected by the Supreme Executive of the United States, England could not herself have reopened negotiations on the subject. Therefore, it was fortunate, I say, for the peace of the Empire and for the peace of Canada, that we asked England to make these demands upon the United States as it afforded the opportunity of all these questions being made again the subject of negotiations.

The correspondence which is before the House between the Secretary of State of the United States and the British Ambassador, Sir Edward Thornton, has shown how that result was arrived at. The invitation was made by the British Ambassador to consider the Fishery Question. The United States Government, I have no doubt, although I do not know it as a matter of fact, by a quiet and friendly understanding between the two powers replied acceding to the request on condition that the larger and graver matters of dispute were also made a matter of negotiation. Hence, it was, Sir, that the arrangements were made under which the Treaty of Washington was effected.

Sir, I have said that it was of the greatest consequence to Canada, and to the future peace and prosperity of Canada, that every cloud which threatened the peace of England and the United States should be dispelled. I was struck with an expression that was used to me by a distinguished English statesman, that those powers in Europe who are not so friendly to England heard with dismay that the entente cordiale between the two nations was to be renewed (*Hear, hear*),