

Si le Gouvernement Britannique de son côté acceptait comme j'en ai le ferme espoir, l'ensemble du *modus agendi* développé ci-dessus, l'on pourrait considérer toute complication éventuelle pour la saison courante de chasse comme étant écartée, et l'on aurait gagné, d'autre part, le temps nécessaire pour s'entendre sur un *modus vivendi* plus défini.

Veillez, &c.
(Signé) CHICHKINE.

(Translation.)

M. l'Ambassadeur,

April 6 (18), 1893.

IN reply to my note of the 12th (24th) February, your Excellency was good enough to send me a copy of Lord Rosebery's despatch of the 17th March, in which the British Government proposes to establish at once a *modus vivendi* on the following bases:—

1. The British Government would forbid their subjects to fish for seals within zones of 30 and 10 miles, and would offer the co-operation of their cruisers to carry out that measure. The Imperial Government would engage to hand over to the English cruisers or to the nearest British authority the English vessels seized outside territorial waters in the above-mentioned zones, whilst the English cruisers would, in reciprocity, hand over the Russian vessels seized under the same circumstances.

2. The Imperial Government would limit to a specified number the amount of seals to be killed on the islands.

3. The Imperial Government would authorize an Agent of the British Government to proceed to the islands in order to confer with the local authorities as to the working and result of the arrangement.

4. It would be understood that this arrangement should in no way affect the facilities hitherto afforded in Russian ports to English vessels for refuge, repairs, or supplies.

5. The arrangement would not have any retrospective effect, more especially as regards the English vessels seized last year.

I cannot discuss the subject, M. l'Ambassadeur, without calling your attention in the first instance to this fact, viz., that the object of my note of the 12th (24th) of February was to warn the British Government of certain legitimate measures of defence necessitated for the moment by exceptional circumstances, and not to lay down the bases of a regular *modus vivendi*, that is to say, of a bi-lateral arrangement, which might be prolonged until the question was definitively settled.

The only idea was to provide a minimum of protective measures, intended to prevent the disappearance of the subject of the dispute, even before the negotiations with regard to it were commenced.

In view of the near approach of the fishing season, which has now already begun, the Imperial Government considered at the date of my note that there would not be sufficient time to discuss and to establish a *modus vivendi*, which would necessarily affect not only questions of interest, but also questions of principle.

If it had been intended to lay down bases of a *modus vivendi* of this kind, the Imperial Government would not have failed to claim that a restriction of territorial rights, that is to say, the engagement to limit the number of seals to be killed on land, should in equity carry with it the corollary of a complete suspension of pelagic sealing in the open sea. They would have especially regarded it as indispensable to make their reservations as regards the definitive settlement of the seal question, in order to retain their entire freedom of view as to the measures to be agreed upon for the preservation of the seal species, whether by the prohibition or regulation of sealing in the open sea, or by the extension of special rights of protection of that species beyond the various distances commonly designated as the limits of territorial waters.

Yet, after making these observations, I am authorized, M. l'Ambassadeur, to inform your Excellency that the Imperial Government, being anxious to meet half-way any conciliatory offer on the part of the British Government, are ready to accept the proposal made in Lord Rosebery's despatch, with the exception of some modifications on the first point.

Thus, the Imperial Government would be disposed to limit for the current year the number of seals to be killed on the islands to a maximum of 30,000, reducing thus by 20,000 the average of 50,000 provided for in their contract with the Sealing Company.

They would not object to an Agent of the British Government coming to the