

What I have written I have written, and reviewing it in the cold black type of the papers that have been tabled I see no reason to regret one word of what has been recorded. In dealing with this question the Government did what they believed was right, and ventured to point out respectfully but firmly what the country desired. We did not cloak or dissemble what we assumed, it was for the interest of this people should be made plain. We set forth our views frankly and freely, feeling that many of the difficulties with which this Colony has had to contend in the past might be traced to a want of frankness.

In the correspondence that has been exchanged I have had the hearty co-operation and loyal sympathy and support of my executive colleagues. We have done everything possible to uphold the dignity and the honour and the rights of those who sent us to this House to represent them. We could not do more. I want it to be distinctly understood that the difficulty that has arisen has not been by reason of any attempt on the part of this Government to deny to Americans their full rights under treaty, for such an attempt has not been made. It has arisen out of the determination of this Government to enforce those laws within the jurisdiction of the Colony that have received the approval of the Crown, and also through His Majesty's Government allowing the Americans privileges not possessed under Treaty.

Am I to be told that under the Treaty of 1818 Americans are exempt from our local laws? If so, I deny it. I deny it upon the authority of those great American statesmen who fifty years ago gave it as an instruction to Americans exercising treaty rights on our coast "that the laws of this Colony are as obligatory upon the citizens of the United States as upon our own people."

I deny it upon the authority of the late Sir John Thompson, statesman and lawyer, one of the ablest men that the Dominion of Canada has produced, who declared that, "the efforts made on the part of the Government of the United States to deny and refute the validity of Colonial Statutes on the subject of the fisheries have been continued for many years, but in every instance have been set at naught by the Imperial authorities and by the judicial tribunals."

I deny it upon the authority of the law officers of the Crown, Messrs. W. Asherton and Roundell Palmer, who, on the 10th of January, 1863, declared as follows:—

"That in our opinion inhabitants of the United States, fishing within waters in the territorial jurisdiction of the Legislature of Newfoundland, are bound to obey and are legally punishable for disregarding the laws and regulations of the fisheries enacted by or under the authority of the provincial Legislature. The plain object of the treaties above referred to was to put the inhabitants of the United States as regards the 'liberty to take fish' within the parts described of the British Dominions on the same footing as 'subjects of His Britannic Majesty,' 'in common with whom,' under the terms of the Treaty, such liberty was to be enjoyed. The enactments subsequently passed would not confirm the treaties and provide for the suspension during the operation of those treaties of such laws, etc., as were or would be inconsistent with the terms and spirit of the treaty, which 'terms and spirit' are, it appears to us, in no respect violated by the regulations bona fide made by the Government for the conduct of the fishery and applicable to British subjects so employed."

I would also point out that by the Conventions of 1890 and 1902 it was provided that Americans should only be subject to our customs and revenue laws and to such regulations as governed our local fishermen. Therefore by necessary implication these treaties concede the right of this Colony to subject United States fishing vessels to our municipal law.

If for Reasons That do Not Appear to Us

it was necessary to give way to the demands of the American Government, then Ministers of the Crown in this Colony should have been fully and frankly apprised of this fact and have been invited to repeat what they did last year at the instance of His Majesty's Government, viz.: to refrain from enforcing the law. If we had declined to do this then it would have been within the competency of the Imperial Parliament, which is supreme throughout the Realm, on being satisfied of its necessity, to have suspended the law, but the course adopted by His Majesty's Ministers was most humiliating and unjust to the people of this Colony, as well as a menace to every Colony possessing Responsible Government. What we desire—what we expect—is a strict interpretation of the Treaty of 1818. No allusion is made in that treaty to the laws of nations as furnishing canons for its interpretation, and it has therefore to be inferred that its meaning is to be gathered alone from its