

THERE is a class of questions, which, belonging emphatically to politics in the highest sense of the word, lie outside the range of party disputes, and are judged by all good citizens on grounds altogether separate from their party predilections. To this class belongs the treaty lately concluded with the United States of America.

I propose to submit to the Royal Colonial Institute a balance-sheet, showing on one side the profit, and on the other the loss, accruing from this Treaty to the people of Great Britain and of her Dependencies.

It cannot be wise, it cannot be patriotic, to exaggerate any advantages we may have obtained, or to extenuate concessions we have been obliged to make—we should try to strike an honest balance between the two. Allow me, having said so much by way of preface, to take the protocols of the conferences of the Joint High Commission as my text, and to make a running commentary on the various clauses of the Treaty.

The questions placed before the Joint High Commission were—

- (1.) The Fisheries.
- (2.) The Navigation of the St. Lawrence, and privilege of passing through the Canadian Canals.
- (3.) The Alabama Claims.
- (4.) Claims of British subjects arising out of the War, but having no reference to the Alabama Claims.
- (5.) The claims of the people of Canada on account of the Fenian raids.
- (6.) The revision of the Rules of Maritime Neutrality.

If we turn to the correspondence which preceded the appointment of the Joint High Commission, we shall see that the English Government did not at first propose to include the Alabama Claims among the matters to be referred to the Commission. Our Minister at Washington, Sir Edward Thornton, in his letter to Mr. Fish, with 26 Jan. 1871.