

Americans appear in great numbers off the coasts, and do not confine themselves to the prescribed limits. The British Admiral on the station is therefore instructed to resist their encroachments to the utmost of his ability, but the means at his disposal being extremely scanty, and his vessels not well calculated for the service, the assistance which he is disposed to render, if he could, has proved very ineffectual. The Legislatures, therefore, of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island, have been compelled in self-defence to equip and maintain, at their own expense, small cruizers to repel the intrusion of the Americans, and have frequently urged the British Government to afford them more efficient protection, representing that the high bounties given by France and America to their fishermen, place the British colonial fishermen comparatively in a very disadvantageous position, and entitle them to the best attention of Government. This application for protection has, however, only been met by reiterated directions to the Admiralty to instruct the Admiral on the station to watch more carefully the proceedings of the Americans, and to check their aggressions. These orders have been observed so far as the means at his disposal admitted. In the meanwhile, the apparent neglect of the British Government to protect a source of most valuable trade, has engendered a strong feeling in the breasts of the colonists that their interests are treated with indifference: and they observe with dissatisfaction the fact that protection is granted to the fishermen of other countries, whilst they are themselves exposed to aggressions which they are unable to resist.

In this state of things a Convention was held at Halifax in September 1849, consisting of delegates from the Governments of Canada, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island (Newfoundland declining to send any), for the purpose of securing, if possible, a unity of action among all the North American Provinces on the subject of the negotiations with the United States for establishing reciprocity of trade. At that meeting, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island were both desirous of offering the United States a participation in their coast fisheries as an inducement to that country to consent to reciprocity of trade, provided