
PART XIII.

The Fisheries Commission and the Halifax Award

A summary of the history and proceedings of the Fisheries Commission, at Halifax, resulting in an award of *five and a half millions of dollars*, in gold, in favor of Great Britain, was given in the Parliamentary Companion of last year. The Treaty of Washington provides for the payment of any sum of compensation that might be awarded within twelve months. This time had nearly expired when the money was paid by the United States Government. The interim was occupied in discussing the whole subject between the public press of both countries and the respective Governments. Generally speaking, United States journals advised prompt and honorable settlement. In the United States Senate an acrimonious attack on the Umpire was accompanied by wholesale denunciation of the award. This assault failed to accomplish anything more than to show that the selection of the third Commissioner was the joint and deliberate act of the parties to the treaty, substantially in conformity with its provisions, and to embitter somewhat the excited state of public feeling. A message by President Hayes, submitting the record to Congress, suggested an appropriation of the necessary sum, with such instructions regarding its payment as Congress should deem advisable. The requisite sum was voted, subject to the discretion of the Executive, after further correspondence with Great Britain. Secretary Evarts discussed the matter ably and at great length, taking several grounds to invalidate the award. It was contended:

1. That the award was excessive and inconsistent with the evidence;
2. That it was not conformable to the submission;
3. That the dissent of the United States Commissioner rendered it void.