

It says, "The right of preserving our naval forces on the lakes to any extent we please is a *sine qua non* by our instructions. Suppose the British proposed mutual restriction in that respect either partial or total, should we still adhere to the *sine qua non*?" No reply to this note has been found, but about the same time Gouverneur Morris, a prominent American, who had been desirous for peace and not desirous for Canada, also suggested an idea for disarmament but solely on the ground of economy. Writing to a friend, he said, "It would be wise to stipulate that neither party should have ships of war on the lakes nor forts on their shores, both being an idle and useless expense."

This discussion seems to have been the genesis of the Rush-Bagot Agreement. The Treaty of Ghent was ratified by the United States on February 17th, 1815, and ten days later the President was authorized "to cause all armed vessels of the United States on the Lakes to be sold or laid up, except such as he may deem necessary to enforce proper execution of revenue laws, such vessels to be first divested of their armament, tackle and furniture, which are to be carefully preserved."

There does not seem to have been any marked activity to put this authorization into operation. At this time extremely bitter feelings still prevailed along the lake shores and there were numerous events which required careful diplomatic handling between the two governments. It was felt, however, that either both countries would have to increase their naval armament or to agree to mutual disarmament. On November 16th, 1815, Secretary Munroe wrote to John Q. Adams, who was at that time Minister of the United States to Great Britain:

"It is evident, if each party augments its force there, with a view to obtain the ascendancy over the other, that vast expense will be incurred and the danger of collision augmented in like degree. The President is sincerely desirous to prevent an evil which it is presumed is equally to be deprecated by both governments. He, therefore, authorizes you to propose to the British Government such an arrangement respecting the naval force to be kept on the lakes by both governments as will demonstrate their pacific policy and secure their peace. He is willing to confine it, on each side, to a certain moderate number of armed vessels, and the smaller the number the more agreeable to him; or to abstain altogether from an armed force beyond that used for revenue. You will bring this subject under the consideration of the British Government immediately after receipt of this letter."

These instructions resulted in an interview between Mr. Adams and Lord Castlereagh on Jan. 25th, 1816. Mr. Adams' proposal was well received by the British Minister, who said that everything beyond what was necessary to prevent smuggling was calculated only to produce mischief; but he was cautious and required time to ascertain whether any ulterior motive lay beyond the proposition. He proposed to submit the matter to his government for consideration, and the interview closed without any indication of the British attitude being given. The debates in Parliament gave little evidence that the proposal would be considered.