

May 3, 1872

we came to the conclusion that it would be humiliating to Canada to make any further exertions at Washington or to do anything more in the way of pressing for the renewal of that instrument, and the people of this country with great energy addressed themselves to find other channels of trade, other means of developing and sustaining our various industries, in which I am happy to say they have been completely successful.

Immediately upon the expiration of the Treaty our right to the exclusive use of the inshore fisheries returned to us, and it will be in remembrance of the House that Her Majesty's Government desired us not to resume that right to the exclusion of American fishermen, and that the prohibition of Americans fishing in those waters should not be put in force either by Canada or the Maritime Provinces. All of the Provinces, I believe, declined to accede to these suggestions, and it was impressed strongly on behalf of the late Province of Canada that it would be against our interest if for a moment after the Treaty ceased we allowed it to be supposed that American fishermen had a right to come into our waters as before; and it was only because of the pressure of Her Majesty's Government and our desire to be in accord with that Government, as well as because of our desire to carry with us the moral support of Great Britain and the physical assistance of her fleet, that we assented with great reluctance to the introduction of a system of licences for one year at a nominal fee or rate. This was done eventually by us for the purpose of asserting a right.

No greater or stronger mode of asserting a right and obtaining the acknowledgement of it by those who desired to enter our waters for the purpose of fishing could be devised than by exacting payment for the permission, and therefore it was that we assented to the licensing system. (*Hear, hear.*) Although in 1866 that system was commenced, it did not come immediately into force. We had not then fitted out a Marine Police Force, for we were not altogether without expectation that the mind of the Government of the United States might take a different direction, and that there was a great possibility of negotiations being renewed respecting the revival of the Reciprocity Treaty, and therefore although the system was in force, it was not rigidly put in force, and no great exertion was made to seize trespassers who had not taken out licences.

In the first year, however, a great number of licences were taken out, but when the fee was increased so as to render it a substantial recognition of our rights the payments became fewer and fewer, until at last it was found that the vessels which took out licences were the exception and that the great bulk of fishermen who entered our waters were trespassers, and in addition to that the fact that our fisheries were invaded, and that we were receiving no consideration for the liberty, that our rights were invaded boldly and aggressively. It was now stated by the American Government or members of the American Cabinet that the renewal of the Reciprocity Treaty was not only inexpedient, but unconstitutional, and that no such renewal would be made.

The Government of Canada then, in 1870, after conference with the Imperial Government and after receiving the promise of the

Imperial Government that we should have the support of their fleet in the protection of our just rights—a promise which was faithfully carried out—prepared and fitted out a sufficient force of Marine Police Vessels to protect our rights, and I am glad to believe that that policy is perfectly successful. Great firmness was used, but, at the same time, great discretion—there was no harshness, and no seizures were made of a doubtful character. No desire to harass the foreign fishermen was evidenced but, on the contrary, in any case in which there was doubt, the officers in command of the seizing vessels reported to the head of their Department, and when the papers were laid before the Government they in all cases gave the offending parties the benefit of the doubt.

Still, as it would be remembered, some of the fishermen laid complaints, which complaints although unjust, I am sorry to say, were made and supported on oath, of harshness on the part of the cruisers, and an attempt was made to agitate the public mind of the United States against the people of Canada. There was at that time a feeling on the part of a large portion of the people of the United States, which feeling I am however happy to say has since disappeared, that the action of Canada was very unfriendly. Her Majesty's Government was, of course, appealed to by the authorities of the United States on all these subjects, and the complaints were handed by one Government to the other, and proved a source of great irritation.

While this feeling was being raised in the United States, there was, on the other hand, a feeling among our fishermen that our rights were to a very great degree invaded. In order to avoid the possibility of dispute, in order to avoid any appearance of harshness, in order, while we were supporting our fishery rights, to prevent any case of collision between the Imperial Government and the United States or between the Canadian authorities and the United States, we avoided making seizures within the bays, or in any way bringing up the "headland question." This was very unsatisfactory, because, as it was said by the fishermen, "if we have these rights, they should be protected." And it was, therefore, well that that question should be settled at once and forever.

In addition, however, to the question of headlands, a new one had arisen, of an exceedingly unpleasant nature. By the wording of the Convention of 1818, foreign fishermen were only allowed to enter our waters for the purposes of wood, water, and shelter; but they claimed that they had a right, although fishing vessels, to enter our ports for trading purposes; and it was alleged by our own fishermen that under pretence of trading, American fishermen were in the habit of invading our fishing grounds, and fishing in our waters. The Canadian Government thought it therefore well to press, not only by correspondence but by a delegate, who was a member of the Government, upon Her Majesty's Government the propriety of having that question settled with the United States, and consequently my friend and colleague, the Postmaster General (Hon. Senator Campbell), went to England to deal with that subject. The results of his mission are before Parliament. At the same time that he dealt with the question I have just mentioned, he pressed