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ANNOUNCEMENT comes with the New Year of a preliminary agreement upon certain outstanding questions between the United States and Great Britain. With the consent of the Dominion and Newfoundland authorities, the British and United States Governments have agreed to submit to the decision of commissioners a number of matters, either now in dispute or likely to lead to opposing claims. The Newfoundland fisheries question is to be referred to the Hague Tribunal for interpretation of the treaty under which United States fishermen make their disputed claims. Matters pertaining to Canadian fisheries and boundaries are to be settled by reference to commissions—assurance being given by the United States that no future claims by individual state governments can interfere with any arrangement formally agreed to by the federal power.

At a time when war clouds still lower over the Near East, the world is apt to forget how many international disputes are settled quietly and amicably. In the five years following the Arbitration Agreement between France and England in 1903, there have been over sixty special treaties signed between various nations along the lines laid down in Article 19 of the Hague Convention of 1899. England leads with twelve treaties to her credit.

It will be remembered that at the second conference at the Hague in 1907, effort was made to extend and unify these individual results, by means of a general engagement including all forty-four states there represented. Thirty-five countries declared themselves ready to establish among themselves, under certain reserves, a common obligation to have recourse to arbitration. While want of uniformity prevented a resolution along foregoing lines being made a motion of the Conference itself, the expression of opinion that was evoked certainly indicated a noteworthy advance in arbitration sentiment since the

first Hague gathering in 1899. In view of the growth of this spirit it has been hard to believe, at any time, that the Balkans difficulty would eventuate in war. Still, its threatenings have made it clear that preparedness is yet the part of discretion for even a peace-loving nation. Unhappily, the time is not yet when Christmas carols may altogether omit the jarring note: that after "two thousand years of wrong, man at war with man hears not" the message of peace on earth.

IN his speech before the Canadian Club on Wednesday, the Hon. J. P. Brodeur reminded his hearers that the present year is the centenary of steam navigation on the St. Lawrence. It was in the summer of 1809 that the Hon. John Molson built at Montreal the "Accommodation," a steamer seventy-five feet long, which on November the first of that year started on her first trip from Montreal to Quebec. This was the modest inauguration of one of the greatest steamship routes in the world, and we cordially agree with Mr. Brodeur that the centenary is well worthy of celebration as a national event. Many millions of dollars have been spent in improving the St. Lawrence route; but upon the whole the money has been well spent and the total expenditure represents a wise investment for the nation. When the work of deepening the channel was commenced sixty years ago, it was practically a ten-foot channel, because a channel is no deeper than its shallowest stretches. To-day there is a 30-foot channel from Montreal to the sea and work has commenced for a 35-foot channel. Much still remains to be done in lighting, buoying, widening and the installation of wireless telegraphy, but Canada is committed to the work. The most significant indication of the value of the improvements already made is the reduction of 60 per cent. in insurance rates on the St. Lawrence route since 1900 while rates on the New York route have only fallen 25 to 40 per cent. in the same period.