

Seward, the American Secretary of State, gave notice that "owing to recent hostile and piratical proceedings on the lakes" it would be necessary to increase "the observing force" maintained there. At the same time, following the precedent set at the time of the Canadian rebellion, he explained that the steps taken were merely defensive, and would be discontinued as soon as the danger they were designed to meet had passed away. Mr. Seward further and rightly insisted that "neither party meant to relinquish the right of self-defense in the event of civil war." At the same time, to make the position of his Government absolutely correct, and to secure a free hand in the future, he gave the requisite six months' notice to terminate the Agreement. This was accepted by Great Britain with the expression of a hope that the old arrangement might be restored after peace. This action of Secretary Seward was formally approved at a joint session of the Congress in February, 1865. But at that time the triumph of the Northern Armies was in sight, and, before the six months had elapsed, the notice to terminate the Agreement was withdrawn. The United States Government informed His Majesty's Government that they were willing that the Agreement should remain "practically" in force, which has been construed to mean that the arrangement must be regarded as still in existence.

It would be hard to overrate the blessings that that Agreement has been to both countries. It has been the keynote of their policy of peace for a hundred years, and at the same time has happily influenced the attitude of both Governments towards the whole question of fortifications. And what an object lesson has been here for the rest of the civilized world. The longest frontier on the earth's surface has at the same time been the most defenseless—and the most safe. If there had been the slightest disposition to bad faith on either side, the Rush-Bagot Agreement would have broken down a score of times. It made no distinction between vessels of war and ships armed for the revenue service, which remained outside its restrictions; and yet neither side has ever thought of taking advantage of that loop-hole of evasion. The Agreement just because it was founded in good will has outlived all the conditions of its birth. Sailing vessels have given way to steam, and wood to iron, and Lakes that were then isolated and independent have now free access to the sea, while their shores which were then almost tractless solitudes are now thick with great and crowded cities. Sir Wilfrid Laurier, speaking in the Commons at Ottawa, six years ago, used these memorable words:

"If my voice could be heard that far, I would presume to say to our American friends; 'there may be a spectacle, perhaps, nobler than that of a United Continent—a spectacle that would astound the world by its novelty and grandeur—