

had the promise of the Imperial Government that they would be considered. When we found that the letters which had passed between Lord Kimberley and Sir Edward Thornton were not sufficiently comprehensive to include these claims, the people of Canada were exceedingly dissatisfied. They were dissatisfied also because they believed the consideration which was given for the fisheries was inadequate. They had been desirous of obtaining Reciprocity, but that was not given in its entirety by the Treaty; and I think when the first Minutes of Council were written they represented the feelings of the people very correctly. Time passed on and opportunity was given for that sober second thought which often leads to the safest conclusions on questions. In the first place, we supposed that those engaged in the fishing trade were against the Treaty, but we found in the course of time that the Maritime Provinces were decidedly in favor of the measure; and that has now been conclusively proved by the vote given in the other branch by the representatives of those provinces. When we found that the feeling of dissatisfaction was disappearing, that those most affected by the Treaty were ready to accept it, a new view of the case was submitted to the Government, and justification afforded for the language used in the second of these despatches to which reference has been made with the view of showing the inconsistency of the Government. There remained, however, the Fenian claims and we submitted a proposition with respect to those claims which we hoped would enable us to satisfy Parliament. It has been said by some English newspapers that the British Government should either have enforced those claims or refrained from giving us any consideration for them. I am not prepared to say that I concur in that view. It is, of course, the bold and magnanimous view; but at the same time there is a great deal of consideration due to those great topics which affect the peace of nations. If it was believed that these Fenian claims could not be enforced without endangering the peace of the two countries, it was a wise although it may not have been a bold thing, not to have pressed them. I do not think the people of this country are open to any accusations or imputations because they accept this guarantee. We had a fair claim for compensation for the damage we suffered from the Fenian invasion. We had discharged our obligations towards the United States—we were living quiet, peaceable lives—showing no disposition

whatever to be aggressive, when from time to time these Fenian raids took place and the country was put to a large loss of life and property. When Great Britain, for Imperial reasons, refused to press the claims of Canada, there was no reason either in morals or good sense why the people of the country should not ask the Imperial Government to give such compensation as would satisfy us in some measure for the losses we had sustained. In the next place, as to the merits of the Treaty, I apprehend when we look at the vote elsewhere, we have a strong indication as to the feelings of the country at large. The merits of the measure were there discussed at length, but I think this is remarkable that those members of Parliament who come from the Maritime Provinces and who are best able to form opinions upon that part of the Treaty which affects the Fisheries, are for the most part—particularly those representing fishing counties—favorable to it. Amongst others I was particularly struck with the speech of one of the members for Halifax, who spoke with a great knowledge of the subject—engaged as he has been for many years in the fisheries—knowing all the circumstances of the trade before 1854 down to the present time; and his arguments were particularly strong in favour of the adoption of the Treaty. I may say here at once that there is no giving away of Sovereign rights—we have admitted the United States to a common fishery for a certain period and certain conditions, but when that period expires we can if we wish have our rights restored. Under the old Reciprocity Treaty, and the licensing system the American fishermen were giving away our Sovereign rights. It must be borne in mind that there is in the Treaty an acknowledgment of the right of fishing within the three miles limit to be exclusively our own. And this right will revert to us exclusively at the expiration of the period of twelve years allotted for the duration of the Treaty. A good deal has been said with respect to the navigation of the St. Lawrence. By the comity of nations the St. Lawrence is open to the world as far as Montreal, and the United States in consequence of owning the country alongside of us have the right of navigating the great lakes as far as St. Regis. What has been done under the Treaty is to give them the right of navigating the river between St. Regis and Montreal; they cannot well use it unless they pass through our canals, and we do wish to see their ships pass through the St. Lawrence and our canals, and the wealth and prosperity of Canada in that way enhanced,