

May 3, 1872

lumber from Canada would be received into the United States free of duty. (*Hear, hear.*)

I have reason to believe that had it not been for the interposition of this Legislature, and I speak now of political friends as well as foes, those terms which were offered by the United States would have been the compensation to have been settled by arbitration and position of the Treaty instead of as it is now. (*Applause.*) I will tell the House why I say so. The offer was made early by the United States Government. The answer made by the British Commissioners that under the circumstances it was not a fair and adequate compensation for the privileges that were asked, and the British Commissioners at the suggestion of the Canadian Government referred the question to Her Majesty's Government whether they had not a right in addition to this offer of the United States to expect a pecuniary compensation, that pecuniary compensation to be settled in some way. That took place on the 25th of March, 1871. On the 25th of March I think the proposition was made by the U.S. Government and on the 22nd March I think two days before the resolution carried in this House by which the duty was taken off coal and salt and the other articles mentioned. Before the resolution was carried no feeling arose against the taking off of the duty on the admission of Canadian coal and salt into the United States; the American public raised no difficulty about it.

I am as well satisfied as I can be of anything which I did not see occur that the admission of Canadian coal and salt into the United States would have been placed in the Treaty if it had not been for the action of this Legislature. On the 25th of March that offer was made and it was referred to England. The English Government stated that they were quite agreed in the opinion that in addition to that offer there should be compensation in money, and then on the 17th of April the American Commissioners withdrew, as they had the right to do, their offer altogether. And why did they withdraw their offer altogether? One of the Commissioners in conversation said to me "I am quite surprised to find the opposition that has sprung up to the admission of Canada's coal and salt into our market. I was quite unprepared for the feeling that is exhibited."

I know right well what the reason was. The monopolists having the control of American coal in Pennsylvania and salt in New York so long as the Treaty would open to them the markets in Canada for their products, were willing that it should carry because they would have the advantage of both markets at once; but when the duty was taken off in Canada, when you had opened the market to them, whether or not they had the whole control of this market, whether for coal or salt, the monopolists brought down all their energies on the Senate for the admission of Canadian coal and salt into the American market and from that I have no doubt came the withdrawal by the American Commissioners of their offer.

When my hon. friend from Bothwell (Mr. Mills) said last Session, "there goes the Canadian National Policy", he little was aware of the reckless course he had taken. (*Hear, hear.*) Hon. gentlemen may laugh, but they may find it no laughing matter. The people of Canada, both East and West, will hold to strict account those who acted so autocratically in this matter. Under these circumstances, Mr. Speaker, I as a British Commissioner and as representing Canada, felt myself powerless, and when the American Commissioners made their last offer which is now in the Treaty, offering reciprocity in fisheries, that Canadians should fish in American waters and that Americans should fish in Canadian waters, and that fish and fish oil should be reciprocally free, and that if on arbitration it were found that the bargain was an unjust one to Canada, and Canada did not receive sufficient compensation for her fisheries by that arrangement, it was committed to Her Majesty's Government to say what should be done, and as will be seen by the last sentence of the protocol: "The subject was further discussed in the conference of April 18th and 19th, and the British Commissioners having referred the last proposal to the Government, and received instructions to accept it, the Treaty articles, 18 to 25, were agreed to at the conference on the 23rd of April".

Thus then it stood and it now stands that these articles from 18 to 25 are portions of the Treaty, that one of these articles reserves to Canada the right of execution or adoption, and it is for this Parliament to say whether under all the circumstances it should reject it. It is thus seen, sir, that this Reciprocity Treaty is not a mere matter of sentiment—it is a most valuable privilege, which is not to be neglected, despised, or sneered at.

With respect to the language of these articles, some questions have been raised and placed on the papers, and I asked the hon. gentlemen who were about to put them to defer them; and I now warn hon. members, and I do it with the most sincere desire to respect and vindicate the interests of Canada, if this Treaty becomes a Treaty, and we ratify the fishery articles—I warn them not to raise questions which otherwise might not be raised. I think, Mr. Speaker, there is no greater instance in which a wise discretion can be used than in not suggesting any doubt. With respect, however, to the question which was put by the hon. member for Gloucester (Hon. Mr. Anglin)—and it is a question which might well be put, and which requires some answer—I would state to that hon. gentleman, and I think he will be satisfied with the answer, that the Treaty of 1871 in that respect is larger and wider in its provisions in favour of Canada than was the Treaty of 1854, and that under the Treaty of 1854 no question was raised as to the exact locality of the catch, but all fish brought to the United States market by Canadian vessels were free. I say this advisedly, and I will discuss it with the hon. gentleman whenever he may choose to give me the opportunity. The same practice will be continued under the Treaty of 1871, unless the people of Canada maintain an objection. The warning I have just