

PRESENT POSITION OF THE FISHERY QUESTION.

VERY lively discussions have been going on in the United States upon the fishery question for some time. The matter has come before Congress, and the unfortunate position regarding the fisheries, in which they have placed themselves by abolishing the Reciprocity Treaty, is exercising our neighbours considerably. The fishery disputes which took place before the late Treaty was negotiated in 1854, are well remembered, and not the least evil which has arisen from its abrogation is the re-opening of that vexed question in a more vexed form than ever. The Fenians have lately created some fears that our peace was about to be disturbed. But the fishery question is more dangerous than the ravings of the Fenian windlows, and it will require the exercise of mutual forbearance by the American and British Governments to prevent serious difficulties.

Before the Reciprocity Treaty was negotiated, the danger of war arising out of the squabbles between the American and Colonial fishermen was very imminent. How close both countries were to this great evil may be known from the fact stated by Lord Elgin at that time, that, "A British admiral and an American commodore were sailing on the coast with instructions founded on opposite conclusions, and a single indiscreet act on the part of either of these officers would have precipitated all the horrors of war." The main cause of difficulty at this time was with regard to the interpretation of Article II. of the Treaty of 1818. The Convention which negotiated this Treaty was held purposely to settle the fishery disputes which had arisen immediately after the close of the war of 1812. After hostilities ceased, the Americans claimed that they still were entitled to the privilege of fishing on the coast of Newfoundland, according to the Treaty of 1793, on the other hand, the British Government contended that the war had set aside the Treaty altogether. The Convention of 1818 settled the matter by confirming the rights of the American people to fish on the Newfoundland and certain adjacent coasts, on the express condition that they "renounced forever" all right to take or cure fish within three marine miles of all the rest of the British possessions. Article II. contains the following clause bearing upon this point:—

And the United States HEREBY RENOUNCE FOREVER any liberty heretofore enjoyed or claimed by the inhabitants thereof, to take, dry, or cure fish within three marine miles of any of the coasts, bays, creeks, or harbours of His Britannic Majesty's dominions in North America, not included within the above mentioned limits."

The particular difficulties referred to by Lord Elgin arose from different interpretations of this clause. The fishermen first, and then their respective governments, began to squabble as to the meaning of the three marine miles—the Colonials contending that their American competitors could not enter the bays or harbours which indent the shore, but must keep three marine miles outside of a line drawn from headland to headland, the United States fishermen strongly maintaining that they were entitled to go where they pleased so long as they never went nearer than three miles to any point of land. This was the position, and only point in dispute, when the Reciprocity Treaty so happily set the matter at rest.

The annulment of this Treaty has brought both countries face to face with these fishing difficulties again. The British Government has now a small fleet stationed at the fishing grounds, and the American Government, it would appear, by recent telegrams, has sent, or is about to send, some war vessels thither. We very much regret to see that some very absurd claims are being put forth by some American politicians and journalists, regarding this matter. Before the Reciprocity Treaty, the only disputed point was, as we have seen above, with regard to whether the three marine miles should be measured from an imaginary line running from headland to headland, or from the nearest point of land. But now, we find some Americans contending that the Treaty of 1818 has been set aside altogether, that the laws of nations must now decide how close American fishermen can go to the shore, and, under any circumstances, that they have a right to enter any Bay so long as they keep three miles from the shore. The latter point is the old dispute, and may fairly be considered open to discussion, but to speak of a temporary Treaty like that of 1854, having set aside the Treaty of 1818, and that the law of nations now comes into force, is too absurd to

be for a moment entertained. The few American politicians who have taken up this view, may justly be charged with seeking to embroil the two nations in war, for it has neither sense nor reason to support it. We are happy to believe that neither the American Government nor the leading statesmen of the Republic have given any countenance to these unjust and dangerous pretensions.

The fact is, many of our Republican neighbours are just beginning to realize what they have lost by giving up the fishing rights we had temporarily allowed them, and the unscrupulous portion of the *genus* politician, would like to hold on to these rights after they have taken from us the *quid pro quo*. It is difficult to get at the exact amount of wealth obtained from our fisheries by our Republican neighbours annually, but it is pretty generally admitted, that doing away with the three-mile limit, fully doubled their yearly catch. At the Detroit convention, an estimate was put in as to their catch in the Bay and Gulf of St. Lawrence alone, the figures given were as follow. Before the Treaty, the gross proceeds were \$825,000, and after it, \$4,657,500. In 1860, Maine, Massachusetts, and Connecticut alone, caught (according to their own statistics) fish to the value of \$4,106,148. The total wealth derived by the Republic from this source must, therefore, be something quite handsome. The New York *World* admits in a recent issue, that their fishermen cannot continue their occupation successfully without going within three miles of the British coast, so that it is quite apparent that the American fishing interests must be almost totally destroyed unless some new arrangements are made with us regarding them.

Some American journals favourable to new and liberal trade regulations between the two countries, are recommending that we should continue to American fishermen their present privileges, on their paying a certain tax. We fear the adoption of this recommendation would not, as contended, prevent all danger of collision between the two Governments, but at any rate, we are not prepared to make such very valuable concessions without some equivalent. It is matter of deep regret that the present position of the question is such that disputes can hardly be avoided. But unless a *census belli* is sought for or desired,—which God forbid should be the case,—we would vainly hope that no dispute is possible which the cabinets of London and Washington could not peacefully settle. As regards the fisheries, our American cousins can have them again whenever they please. Whenever they signify their willingness to open their markets to us on reasonable terms, we shall be happy to re-open our fisheries to them. Until then, we can afford to wait.

THE BRITISH PROVINCES.

WE hear of a company about to be formed for the purpose of establishing a line of suitable boats to run regularly between Canada and the Lower Ports, and it has also been mentioned that steamers are now building in the Clyde for the purpose of being placed in this trade. The necessity which exists for suitable intercolonial communication by the Gulf route demands prompt action in this matter. The people of Canada and the Lower Provinces are equally interested, and should give to the enterprise all possible encouragement. The accounts from our Commissions in the West Indies are also favorable, and we may reasonably look for an increased and more valuable trade with the islands as soon as proper postal communication is established. It is only necessary for the natural resources of the Provinces to be developed by the energy of their people, to render their united power great, politically and commercially, and to secure that independence in trade which is the only guarantee to permanent prosperity. The Provinces have resources of a magnificent character which are only beginning in their growth, and are capable of indefinite expansion. A country possessing such great variety in her sources of wealth is always a very desirable trade connection with any other country, but it becomes necessary that those resources be generally known to foreign countries to produce a desire for commercial intercourse. For this purpose it is that the Commissions are visiting the West India Islands and South America. The connections of the home trade between the Provinces demands equal attention. Their interests cannot longer remain divided. Tariffs which operate against reciprocal trade should be abolished, sectional prejudices discarded, and the public mind of the people of all the Provinces be directed to the resources, ability, and strength which

lie in their united action. What is the extent of the Provinces, and what their resources?—

Canada contains 330,000 square miles: Newfoundland, 40,200; New Brunswick, 27,710; Nova Scotia, 18,000; Prince Edward Island, 2,131; British Columbia, 213,500; Vancouver Island, 16,000; Hudson Bay Territory, 1,670,000; making 2,218,611 square miles, a territory nearly twice as large as all Europe, if we deduct Russia.

According to the statistics of 1861, the area of land held by private individuals in the North American Provinces was. In Upper Canada 17,703,232 acres, of which 6,651,619 were under cultivation. In Lower Canada 13,650,000 acres, of which 4,804,325 were under cultivation. In Nova Scotia 6,748,893 acres, of which 1,028,032 are under cultivation. New Brunswick 6,637,829 acres, 835,103 under cultivation. Newfoundland 100,000 acres, 41,103 under cultivation. Prince Edward Island 1,365,400 acres, 368,127 acres under cultivation. The annual agricultural products of the Provinces now yields \$160,000,000. Competent authorities have given the actual annual yield of the Fisheries at \$20,000,000, much of which is lost by those who should profit by it, and has gone to the enrichment of foreigners. "The British North American Provinces," says a recent writer, "possessing 5,000 miles of sea coast, if consolidated into one power, would possess not only all the materials necessary for constructing ships of war, but also bands of skilful and hardy seamen wherewith to man a powerful fleet." The tonnage of the commercial marine of the Provinces, inward and outward, required for the accommodation of trade is 18,419,614, of which Nova Scotia requires 1,432,954 tons, New Brunswick 1,386,980, Prince Edward Island 167,098, Newfoundland 1,802,345, and Canada 9,040,337. The sea going tonnage of Canada amounts to 2,138,000 tons. In 1832 the tonnage of vessels built in British North America amounted to only 33,776 tons. In 1863 the number of vessels built was 645, with a capacity of 219,763 tons, (according to the speech of the Finance Minister, February 7, 1865,) costing 39,000,000. According to the last census returns the number of sailors and fishermen of the Colonies was 69,256, and the population of the six Provinces, by the census of 1861, was: Upper Canada, 1,896,091; Lower Canada, 1,111,666; Nova Scotia, 339,857; New Brunswick, 252,047; Newfoundland, 122,635; Prince Edward Island, 80,857; total, 3,294,059. The whole population is at present over 4,000,000. The imports and exports of 1863 were:

	Imp. rts.	Exports	Total.
Canada	\$45,964,493	\$41,831,532	\$87,776,025
New Brunswick	7,764,821	8,664,781	16,729,698
Nova Scotia	10,211,311	8,420,968	18,622,369
Prince Ed. Island.	1,423,023	1,627,640	3,055,668
Newfoundland	5,232,720	6,002,312	11,245,032

Besides a fertile soil and magnificent forests the Provinces possess inexhaustible mineral resources. Gold, iron, coal, and copper are found in Nova Scotia in abundance, and the coal beds are not exceeded, in richness and availability for mining, by any in the world. The mineral wealth of New Brunswick is also enormous, and her coal formation is of a thickness almost incredible. Canada has her mines of copper and iron ore in abundance, which only need development to become a great source of wealth. Gold has been found on the Chaudiere and elsewhere to some extent. The coal of New Brunswick will, by and by, be required to work the furnaces in iron mines of Canada. Reciprocal free trade between the Provinces is an absolute necessity forced upon them by the termination of the Reciprocity Treaty. They will find in a commercial union of their interests, and a unanimity of purpose with regard to their foreign trade relations, more than a sufficient compensation for its loss. It is plain that the British North American Territory, possessing such magnificent resources, should be a power on this continent.

Wood Trade of St. John, N. B.

The shipments from St. John, for the quarter ending March 31st, 1866, were—of Deals, &c., 1,041,990; Pine, 471; Birch, 1070; Palings, 170,000.

The Free Ports of Canada.

The total Exports from Quebec to the Free Ports were:

In 1855	\$423,370
In 1861	835,947
Increase	\$412,577

The total Imports from those ports to Quebec were:

In 1855	\$237,266
In 1861	207,918
Increase	\$29,348

The principal articles of Export are Flour, Blunt and Bread, and Provisions. The leading items of Import are Fish and Fish Oil.