

that if he could succeed in bringing this about he would confer a great benefit on both countries, and establish good relations between them for years to come, and that probably he might find that the United States Government not disinclined to entertain the proposition. Who, that owns a property of enormous value, would voluntarily consent to dispose of it for a price to be determined by three persons of whose very names he was ignorant? Would he not say, "let us dispense with arbitrators; tell me the compensation you propose, and then I will tell you if I will dispose of it?" Who can tell what view may be taken of our fisheries by the empire selected by the Austrian ambassador? Would the Americans be satisfied if he gave an award equal to the great estimate that we place upon them? And what would be the feeling of our people if he named a sum much under their expectation? Nay, in view of the vast annual value now drawn from the St. Lawrence fisheries—the exhaustless character of those fisheries—the rapidly increasing population of this Continent depended on them for daily supplies of fish—and the fact that there is no other fishery in the world to enter into competition with them—what greater folly could be imagined than to have a money value placed upon them at all? Mr. Rothery went on to Washington, and some weeks after I had the pleasure of learning from him that he had suggested the substitution of a general commercial treaty for the Fishery Arbitration—and there was some hope of its being favourably entertained. But, meantime, the Canadian Government had been moving in the matter, and in February, of last year, I was informed by them that there was some movement at Washington in favour of a renewal of the old Reciprocity Treaty, and they were anxious that I should visit that city, unofficially, and ascertain what were the prospects of success. I went immediately to Washington and had the advantage of discussing the whole subject with many of the prominent public men of the Republic. I heard a very general desire expressed for the establishment of better commercial relations with Canada, if terms could be arranged to mutual satisfac-

tion; this I communicated to Government on my return home. Of the official action that followed I have no personal knowledge, but on the 17th March a commission was issued, under the great seal of Great Britain, appointing Sir Edward Thornton and myself joint-plenipotentiaries on the part of Her Majesty to negotiate a Treaty of Fisheries, Commerce and Navigation with the Government of the United States. On the 28th March the negotiation was formally opened, and I will now read, from the official record, an extract showing the position held in the matter by the Canadian Government:—

"When Her Majesty's advisers invite the Government of the United States to reconsider the whole commercial relations of the Republic and the Dominion, with a view to placing them on a friendly and durable basis of reciprocal advantage, the question naturally presents itself, how it comes that, having prospered so well since the repeal of the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854, Canada now seeks for its restoration. The answer is as natural as the question. The population of the United States is forty millions, and that of the Dominion is but four millions. The boundary between them is for the most part but a surveyor's line, often unknown even to those who live beside it; and it is of the utmost importance to Canada that common interests and mutual good will should exist between the countries. And what so conducive to this end as commercial intercourse generously carried on and mutually profitable? The people of Canada are not ignorant that a market near at hand is better than a distant one; and good as their present markets are, they would gladly have the old one in addition. They comprehend the barrier that custom-house restrictions throw in the way even of the existing traffic; and they seek to have these withdrawn. They are proud of their own St. Lawrence route, and intend to improve it to the uttermost for the benefit of the great West and Canadian traffic: but would gladly use the ocean ports and other channels of commerce of the Republic, when freights and fares and friendly reciprocity draw them in that direction. And very great as have been the advantages always accruing to the United States from reciprocity, the Canadians can find only cause of rejoicing at that, so long as they themselves continue to enjoy that moderate degree of prosperity with which Providence has blessed them. There is no mystery in their desire that the commercial relations of the Republic and the Dominion should be placed on the most kindly and unfettered and mutually advantageous basis consistent with their respective existing obligations, and with that connection with Great Britain which the Dominion so happily enjoys.

"It was with these views, and in this spirit, that the Canadian Administration availed itself of the opportunity presented by the twenty-second Article of the Treaty of Washington to represent to Her Majesty's Government the advantage that would accrue to both countries by the substitution of a satisfactory commercial treaty in lieu of the money compensation