

Imperial Government, and demanded also consideration at their hands. These new difficulties were those which grew out of the Alabama claims, and had become of Imperial interest, and it so happened after the Canadian Government made their request for the settlement of these fishing rights, a proposition was made for the arrangement of these and other matters between the two countries. Up to this time the Government of Canada had desired simply the settlement of the rights for exclusive fishing. We had also made strong representations as to the losses which had been inflicted upon this country by the Fenian invasions. Those representations had also met with attention at the hands of Her Majesty's Government, and it was also understood that representations would be made to the American Government upon that point. That subject accordingly passed at that time I have mentioned into the consideration of the Imperial authorities, and was included among the matters which they proposed submitting to the Government at Washington. During the negotiations at Washington an effort was made to separate those questions which more immediately affected Canada from those of Imperial interest, but that was found impossible; and then the general result followed of the adoption by the Commissioners of the Treaty, to which this bill gives effect so far as it concerns Canada. It will be seen from the whole course of the proceedings, the Government of Canada had distinct objects in view which they attempted to have settled without reference to other disputes. They attempted to obtain these objects by having a separate decision in the first instance on the limits of exclusive fishing and on the Fenian claims, and secondly on those questions whilst the Joint High Commission was sitting at Washington, by dealing separately with those which immediately affected Canada. I do not understand from anything that has transpired elsewhere, or from the newspapers that up to this stage of the matter any adverse criticism had arisen with reference to the conduct of the Government. After the results of the Treaty became known very serious objections were taken to the course pursued by the Government. These objections were of a three-fold character. In the first place, objections were taken as to the inconsistency of the Government as developed in the minutes of Council which were sent to England with respect to the Treaty. Another objection was taken with reference to the direct responsi-

bility of the gentleman who was a member of the Commission and also a member of this Government. The objection was urged that his responsibility was to the people of this country, and that under these circumstances he was not justified in signing the Treaty. The third class of objections was as to the merits of the Treaty. With respect to the objection—regarding the responsibility of Sir John Macdonald—I think that has lost all its interest and need not be discussed inasmuch as the Government of which he is the head has asked both branches of the Legislature to adopt the Treaty which he signed. At present there is no use in discussing what is a merely theoretical question. As respects the charge of inconsistency against the Government, because in the first place we objected to the Treaty in such strong terms, and suggested afterwards the mode by which it might be made more acceptable to the people of this country, I think that can be easily refuted. That objection is susceptible of easy explanation when one bears in mind the change which took place in the feelings of the country from one period to another. When the Treaty was originally signed there was a considerable feeling excited against it, arising out of several causes. In the first place there was a feeling that the right of common of fishing had been given away over our heads—that the Parliament of Canada had not been asked beforehand whether they would or would not give up their fishing rights within the three miles limits. The Government, representing the confidence of this Parliament and country, had not been consulted, and consequently there was considerable feeling on the subject in every section. Again, the people of Canada felt that they had been unjustly treated with respect to the Fenian claims. Everybody knows that each of the Fenian invasions had been rendered abortive not by the exertion of the United States but by the patriotic efforts of the people of this country. (Cheers.) If England appeared to give more credit to the United States than was their due, it arose in a great measure from the fact that the telegraph wires are in the possession of the Americans, and the news of the invasion and movement of the United States Government to arrest the Fenians reached England simultaneously and created the impression that their interference was really more prompt than it was. Under those circumstances knowing the great losses which had been inflicted upon the country, we were anxious that the Fenian claims should have been dealt with at Washington and indeed we