

Why, Sir, the result was this most lame and impotent conclusion, that whereas Canada had been within her legal rights all through, that whereas the United States had been wholly without warrant for anything they did, nevertheless that from the date of that award Canadians are forbidden to hunt in Behring Sea except for a few short weeks, during the rest of the time the sea being shut up by ice; that a tract of sixty miles on either side of the Pribyloff Islands is reserved as a special reserve for the United States; and as I am informed that the Pribyloff Islands cover an area of some sixty miles by twenty or thirty, it follows that a tract of 30,000 square miles is set apart out of the Behring Sea as an exclusive reserve for the United States, within which no Canadian sealer dare to enter at any time. More than that, not merely is this reserve established in Behring Sea, but we are forbidden to hunt in the Pacific, except under restrictions which, I am informed, as well as my hon. friend will so enormously reduce the value of the sealing privileges that to all intents and purposes, as he truly said, sealing in Behring Sea by British Columbia fishermen is practically a thing of the past. It may be true, as the hon. gentleman said, that sealers are fitting out from Vancouver or from some port in British Columbia, but I apprehend, if the truth were known, it will be found that they go, not to fish in Behring Sea waters, but to fish in Japanese waters, or in some other region where the United States cannot invent a pretext for interfering with them? Now, what is the result of all this? It may be summed up in two words: Canada gets the shells and the United States gets the oyster. I do not pretend to say that correspondents of newspapers are always accurate in their report of what happens, especially at the conference in Paris, but I do recollect seeing certain statements which led me to the suspicion that during a great part of the time the conference was in progress the Minister of Justice slept, while the United States Commissioners were very wide awake. Now, as I have said, I have examined this award with care. The award is of some length. I am aware that people at large do not care to wade through several pages of legal phraseology, and therefore, for the benefit of the public, I have boiled down the award into a few lines of plain English, so that he who runs may read. Sir, condensed and translated into plain English, the award as I read it, ought rather to have been delivered as follows:—"Gentlemen of the United States: You are utterly in the wrong and you know it; you have not a shadow of a claim, morally or legally, to interfere with these Canadians. But you represent a very great power, which must be humoured. So, while we must for very shame's sake, decide against you on the legal merits of the question, we will annex such regulations as will give you everything you desire

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and we will not hurt your feelings by even hinting at compensation for your very high handed proceedings." Then turning to the unhappy representatives of Canada the officer delivering the award should have proceeded as follows:—"Now, as to you Canadians; you have all the right on your side no doubt, but you are only a dependency whose good-will or ill-will is of no sort of importance to us, and, what is more, your suzerain state has very solid reasons of her own for wishing to keep on good terms with the United States, so you will please understand that you are to have a moral victory and the United States a material one. Go home and meditate on the great truth underlying Mr. Lowell's celebrated dictum as to the position of the United States in a similar case:

We air a bigger nation, and so our rights air bigger.

"You know you have been told if a man goes to law with you for your cloak let him have your coat also—so, as the United States have claimed the Behring Sea, let them have the Pacific Ocean, too—and pay your own costs." Well, Sir, I defy any man, any plain, straightforward, honest man, to say whether my version of the award is not the true and literal one and the one that ought to have replaced the somewhat lengthy document now in my hand. Mr. Speaker, there are very important issues indeed underlying this whole question. I admit, Sir, that there is one thing gained and one thing only, by the course hon. gentlemen have taken. I admit it, Sir, and I am not disposed to undervalue it, that it is a very important gain to Canada to have subjects of dispute and difficulty between her and the United States removed from the arena of contention. But, Sir, I can tell the hon. gentleman, because I too have had some experience in the conduct of negotiations with the United States, that he and his Government committed, in my opinion, a very gross error of judgment indeed in consenting to become parties to the arbitration without securing these two conditions—first of all, Sir, that our rights on the Atlantic coast should have been considered by these arbitrators simultaneously with our rights on the Pacific Coast, and, next, that the broad outlines of the principles upon which compensation should be awarded to our people for the wrongs they had suffered should be passed upon by the arbitrators, and I tell him that had he fully appreciated the importance of the position, it would have been infinitely better for Canada not to have been represented at all on that occasion or to have conceded what the United States originally asked. Mr. Speaker, I do not arraign the hon. gentleman of purposely or dishonestly betraying the interests of this country, but I do arraign the hon. gentleman and his friends of utter lack of statesmanship in the whole conduct of this matter. There were three courses, Sir, open to the