

Mr. WELDON (Albert). I will not say, as the right hon. gentleman who leads this House said with respect to another Opposition member, that the hon. member for Bothwell (Mr. Mills) is a perfect Bourbon, forgets nothing and learns nothing. The hon. gentleman is an imperfect Bourbon, he learns nothing, but he forgets everything. He forgets, if he was present in the House, the adequate answer which the Minister of Marine and Fisheries gave to those charges. He has not in substance made a new charge, but he has given the appearance of novelty to old statements by giving the names of five or six new vessels, and he has taken the responsibility, as a member of the Canadian Parliament, speaking to five millions of people and beyond, to say what the responsible Ministers of the United States never said and never dared to say, namely, that in the case of the vessels *Rattler*, *Caroline Vought*, *Sarah B. Putnam*, *Newell B. Hawes*, *Stowell*, and *Sherman* we were guilty of cruelty and inhumanity. Let us go into this matter a little more fully. The facts are that specific charges of inhumanity against the Canadian Government in regard to those fishing vessels were actually distributed through the American press. What was the origin of the distribution of that news, what did it begin with, whence did it all come? It came from this. The American Senate appointed a committee to take evidence as to the extent of those alleged inhumanities on the part of the Canadian Government. Their commissioner, the late Spencer F. Baird, sent out a circular letter, which I will read to substantiate what I said:

"UNITED STATES COMMISSION OF FISH AND FISHERIES,
WASHINGTON, D. C., 5th February, 1887.

"SIR: I forward herewith for your information a copy of a communication from Mr. R. Edward Earle, in charge of the division of fisheries of this commission, accompanied by a list of New England fishing vessels which have been inconvenienced in their fishing operations by the Canadian authorities during the past season; these being in addition to the vessels mentioned in the revised list of vessels involved in the controversy with the Canadian authorities furnished to your committee on the 28th January by the Secretary of State.

"The papers containing the statements were received from the owners, masters, or agents of the vessels concerned, and though not accompanied by affidavits are believed to be correct.

"SPENCER F. BAIRD,
"Commissioner.

"HON. GEORGE F. EDMUNDS,"
"Chairman Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate."

I have here the letter of Mr. Earle, to whom Mr. Baird's letter was written. After stating:

"Some time since, at your request, I mailed circulars to owners or agents of all New England vessels employed in the food-fish fisheries"

He says, as follows, in the concluding sentence:—

"I enclose for your consideration a list of these vessels, together with a brief abstract of the statements of the owners or masters regarding the treatment received. The statements were not accompanied by affidavits but are believed to be entirely reliable."

Evidence was not taken, witnesses were not examined or cross-examined, and there were none of the guarantees which the British law throws around evidence to prevent imposition, but, on the contrary, those unsupported, unsworn statements were sent throughout the United States, but I am proud to say the Secretary of State would not take on himself the responsibility which the hon. member for Bothwell (Mr. Mills), has taken to-day of distributing those infamous falsehoods broadcast throughout the whole country. To come to the question proper: It was to all of us a feeling of relief when we learned that the Finance Minister and his confrères had returned from Washington with a treaty. The one disturbing element in the relations of the two great powers, Great Britain and the United States, for a hundred years has been this fishery question. That was the devil, so to say, which the diplomatists would lay for a time but never exorcise. We adopted a measure

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in 1818, we obtained a temporary adjustment in 1854, we had a temporary adjustment in 1871, but we have before us in the schedule of the Bill the draft of a treaty which, if ratified, will put an end forever to those quarrels of a century's standing. Let us very briefly clear our minds of all matters of detail and once more very rapidly turn our attention to the main substantial outlines of this matter. In all our fishery negotiations with the United States we have held in our hands three properties, and it is desirable that in considering this question we should keep them distinct. First we have exclusive fishing in the three-mile limit, and our legal right in this matter has never been contested. We have, secondly, our exclusive fishery in the territorial bays or in the words of the old treaty, "British bays," and, thirdly, we have the advantages of neighborhood to the fishing grounds. How are we to deal with these, one after the other, in this treaty? The policy of 1854 was to sell our rights in that matter for a market and we sold the rights of our fishermen in the inshore fisheries for a market, a market for our fishermen it is true, a market for the farmers, a market for the miners and a market for the lumbermen. You may say that was "robbing Peter to pay Paul" and the friends of the fishermen 30 years ago felt that way about it, but there is the fact. I will not dwell as the hon. member for Bothwell (Mr. Mills) did on the cause of the termination of that treaty. No doubt he was in part right when he attributed the abrogation of the Elgin Treaty to the ill will between the northern States and ourselves. But that is not a fair statement of the entire cause in my judgment. I think the material reason why the Elgin Treaty of 1854 was abrogated in 1866, was that there was a profound jealousy in the city of New York, and among the carrying companies west of New York, of the St. Lawrence route and the St. Lawrence cities. That had something to do with the abrogation of the Treaty of 1866. Under the Elgin Treaty we sold our inshore fisheries for a market. In 1871, we sold them for gold. The hon. member for Bothwell (Mr. Mills) said that every view he had in respect to the Washington Treaty of 1871 he held to-night. I say again he is not correct and that he has a bad memory. If he will look back on a speech he made in 1871 he will find some predictions of his that certainly have not been verified. The hon. gentleman is much more successful in his historical than his prophetic utterances. The role of a prophet is dangerous to all men, and they who prophesy least have least to take back. At the time of the Halifax Commission the hon. gentleman made a speech in which he said it was utterly impossible for a commission to decide on the relative value of Canadian and American fisheries, leading us to suppose we could get nothing out of that commission. Well, we did get something out of the commission. We got a round five and a half million dollars. It may have been a small sum altogether, but it was quite a respectable sum and enough to falsify this prophecy so confidentially made by the hon. member for Bothwell (Mr. Mills). What is our policy in this treaty with respect to the inshore fisheries? One statement was made the other night by the hon. the Minister of Justice, in his encounter with the hon. member for Queen's, P.E.I. (Mr. Davies), and a statement which got a quicker response from this House than any other statement made, and than which, in my judgment, there was no more statesmanlike remark made in the course of this debate—I refer to the statement that it was a wise policy for the Canadian people, looking to their future, to hold those inshore fisheries and to preserve the fisheries within this three mile limit, and that we have pursued a wiser course here than we did in 1854 or 1870. Those marginal seas, as we call them, are, so to speak, the fisherman's farm. Our fishermen leave the shore at early morning before daylight, take their boats, lines and nets and go to their farms on the