

with the British Isles. I have never doubted that our neighbours, if they did not already recognize this fact, would come ere long to acknowledge it—and that the value of the vast carrying-trade they derive from us, of the great saving in cost of transportation realized from the free use of our internal navigation, and of their lucrative enjoyment of our Atlantic-coast fisheries, would come home to them more clearly as the settlement loomed nearer in the distance, that must be made, and cannot be evaded, some seven or eight years hence, when the concessions of the High Joint Commissioners shall come to an end. It was in this belief that the present Canadian Government re-opened negotiations at Washington—not, as has been diligently asserted by their political opponents, with hat in hand, but in the frank, independent attitude of men who asked no favours but believed they had ample equivalents to offer for all they sought to obtain. The time of their going to Washington was not of their selection—they had to go. The 22nd and 23rd articles of the Washington Treaty rendered it absolutely necessary that they should do so. Let me read the words:—

“ARTICLE XXII.—Inasmuch as it is asserted by the Government of Her Britannic Majesty that the privileges accorded to the citizens of the United States under Article XVIII of this Treaty are of greater value than those accorded by Articles XIX and XXI of this Treaty to the subjects of Her Britannic Majesty, and this assertion is not admitted by the Government of the United States: it is further agreed that Commissioners shall be appointed to determine, having regard to the privileges accorded by the United States to the subjects of Her Britannic Majesty, as stated in Articles XIX and XXI of this Treaty, the amount of any compensation which, in their opinion, ought to be paid by the Government of the United States to the Government of Her Britannic Majesty in return for the privileges accorded to the citizens of the United States under Article XVIII of this Treaty; and that any sum of money which the said Commissioners may so award shall be paid by the United States Government, in a gross sum, within twelve months after such award shall have been given.”

“ARTICLE XXIII.—The Commissioners referred to in the preceding Article shall be appointed in the following manner, that is to say: One Commissioner shall be named by Her Britannic Majesty, one by the President of the United States, and a third by Her Britannic Majesty and the President of the United States conjointly; and in case the third Commissioner shall not have been so named within a period of three months from the date when this Article

shall take effect, then the third Commissioner shall be named by the representative at London of His Majesty the Emperor of Austria and King of Hungary. In case of the death, absence or incapacity of any Commissioner, or in the event of any Commissioner omitting or ceasing to act, the vacancy shall be filled in the manner hereinbefore provided for making the original appointment, the period of three months in case of such substitution being calculated from the date of the happening of the vacancy.

“The Commissioners so named shall meet in the City of Halifax, in the Province of Nova Scotia, at the earliest convenient period after they have been respectively named, and shall, before proceeding to any business, make and subscribe a solemn declaration that they will impartially and carefully examine and decide the matters referred to them to the best of their judgment, and according to justice and equity; and such declaration shall be entered on the record of their proceedings.

“Each of the High Contracting Parties shall also name one person to attend the Commission as its agent to represent it generally in all matters connected with the Commission.”

Mr. Rothery, a distinguished English juris consult and Registrar of the High Court of Admiralty, arrived in Canada shortly before the late Government left office in 1873, as the duly appointed agent of the British Government to get up the case of Canada in the Fishery arbitration provided for by these articles. I know nothing of what passed between either the late or the present Government and Mr. Rothery, while he was at Ottawa; but in passing through Toronto on his way to Washington, Mr. Rothery saw several prominent public men with a view to acquiring information as to the value of our sea-coast fisheries and the best mode of collecting evidence to sustain our claim, and amongst whom I had the honour to be included. I availed myself of the opportunity to express to Mr. Rothery my strong conviction that the submission to any three arbitrators of the power to place a cash value on our great sea fisheries was exceedingly distasteful to the great mass of the Canadian people. I reminded him that Canada in 1854 conceded these fisheries to the United States for a term of years as part of a commercial arrangement between the two countries, and I ventured to suggest how much better it would be were the same thing repeated now, and the concession of the fisheries merged in a general treaty of commercial reciprocity for a term of years and on a mutually advantageous basis. I expressed my belief to Mr. Rothery