

402. A conference, at which all the British North American Provinces, with the exception of Newfoundland, were represented, was held at Halifax in September 1849, and a memorial to the Imperial Government was adopted asking that negotiations might be opened for reciprocal terms with the United States, and the British Minister at Washington in November, 1849, received special instructions with reference to such negotiations.

In 1850 a Bill similar to the one passed by the House of Representatives in 1848, was reported by the House Committee on Commerce and re-committed, "with a view to provide therein for the free navigation of the "River St. Lawrence."

The introduction of this idea appears to have suggested the propriety of proceeding by way of a treaty instead of by concurrent legislation.

403. In 1851, at the direction of the United States Senate, the Secretary of the Treasury took steps to collect all possible information bearing on the matter, and the report (Andrew's) prepared in consequence and presented to the Senate in August, 1852, had a very important influence on the subsequent proceedings. Negotiations being re-opened in 1852, considerable correspondence took place between the respective Governments, and the question was much debated, both in the United States and also in the Provincial Legislatures, the Maritime Provinces in particular being very unwilling to admit Americans to their coast fisheries, while the Americans endeavoured to have the fishery question dealt with separately, but to this the British Government would not consent.

404. The introduction of the question of the fisheries increased the interest taken in the trade question especially in the Maritime Provinces, and in 1853 Mr. Breckinridge moved in Congress for the suspension of the rules for the purpose of introducing a resolution requesting "the President to arrange by treaty the questions connected with the fisheries on the coasts of British North America, the free navigation of the St. Lawrence and the St. John Rivers, the export duty on American (United States) lumber in the Province of New Brunswick, and reciprocal trade with the British North American colonies on the principles of liberal commercial intercourse."

405. Finally, what is commonly known as the Reciprocity Treaty was signed at Washington on the 5th June, 1854, the Earl of Elgin, at that time Governor General of the Province of Canada, acting for Her Britannic Majesty, and Mr. D. L. Marcy for the United States.

406. The following were its principal provisions: It removed the three-mile limit imposed by the convention of 1818, and gave to the inhabitants of the United States free liberty to take all kinds of fish, except shell-fish, along the shores and in the bays and harbours of the provinces of Canada, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, and adjacent islands, with permission to land for the purpose of drying their nets or curing their fish. All salmon, shad and river fisheries were, however, reserved exclusively for British subjects. Similar liberties, with similar reservations, were given to all British subjects to fish on the eastern sea coasts of the United States, north of the 36th parallel of north latitude.