

Lowering the
British flag on
a Canadian
vessel.

demands were made on the captain to haul down the flag, accompanied by threats, to which no attention was paid until an officer of the Customs arrived who made the same demand and claimed that the floating of the British flag on Independence day was an insult. The captain protested that it was not intended as an insult and should not be so regarded; but having raised the flag, as he thought he had a right to do on his own vessel, he declined to lower it. To another officer the captain stated that the flag had been raised as a compliment to the celebration, but he was told that it could not remain unless he would fly the Stars and Stripes along side of it. "I told him that I would be glad to do so, but I had no Stars and Stripes to fly," the captain states in his report, "and having raised the British flag would not take it down on my own vessel." The demand was repeated, more threats were made by the crowd, and finally the officer said that he would hold the vessel and would not give the captain clearance unless he lowered his colours; and so, although refusing to lower the flag on the threats of force, he was compelled to do so in order to get his clearance. A statement of the matter as made in a Minute of Council was communicated by the Governor General to the British Ambassador at Washington, with a request that it should be brought to the attention of the United States authorities. This was done, and an inquiry took place at which it was shown that Captain Simmons was in error as to the name of the officer who made the threat to refuse him clearance, and the officer also denied that he had made such a threat. Collector Roth, who conducted the inquiry for the Secretary of the Treasury, stated in his report that while he was of opinion that the officer had acted unwisely in asking the captain to lower his flag, he was sure from the captain's account given to himself "that he did not lower the flag by reason of anything that Torpy said to him, but that he thought to save himself trouble from the mob on the pier that he finally lowered the flag." In giving to the British Minister the explanation of the occurrence offered by the United States official, Acting Secretary of State Loomis wrote: "This incident, arising out of what seems to have been a misunderstanding, is to be greatly regretted. The Department hopes however that Collector Roth's statement will sufficiently indicate that the deputy collector's action, although perhaps misjudged, was not actuated by offensive motives." In view of

An expression
of regret.