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THE NEWFOUNDLAND FISHERIES.

By an Imperial Rescript proclaimed last Wednesday the Newfoundland authorities have been placed under what must be regarded as a prohibitive regulation of some stringency. Sir Robert Bond recently announced his decision to enforce the colonial laws, and this implied that he would prosecute colonial fisherfolk hiring themselves on board American vessels. The threat has been met by the Imperial Government in a manner which Sir Robert Bond has stigmatized as unconstitutional, as a "disgrace to British diplomacy", and as a "shameful sacrifice of the interests of the people of the colony", but which, in view of Sir Robert's unmeasured denunciation of last year's *modus vivendi* must be accepted as an unpleasant but necessary check on his discretion. The Rescript forbids the service by any authority of a legal process on board an American vessel in a suit questioning either rights under the Convention of 1818, or against persons employed on board such vessels as members of the crew, except with the consent of the senior British naval officer of the district. Similarly, the Rescript suspends all colonial statutes or fishery regulations authorizing colonial officials to board, seize, or arrest American vessels for alleged offences in connection with the fisheries. If the Premier of the colony is placed in an undignified and difficult position, he can blame no one but himself. The Imperial Order in Council, it is true, could not, in the best of cases, be viewed with satisfaction by the Premier and his party, or indeed by those whom it most nearly touches, the fisherfolk themselves: the concessions are entirely in favour of America. But it is plain that Sir Robert, who claims to be the first, and still ardent, advocate of arbitration, has little moral or political justification in struggling against compromises of which he is himself the cause. He has, however, reached an unstatesmanlike extreme from which he must find it equally difficult to advance or to withdraw.

"All we desire" he says "is to live and let live, but we are not disposed to let others live by killing us". The relations between the Governments of Great Britain and the United States are not of a character to admit of such implications. Neither the Ambassador at Washington, we may be sure, nor the British Government is to be intimidated into humble acceptance of American interests. Sir Robert has no reason to be satisfied, but he has also no need to cause mischief; and such phrases, whatever their intention, must tend to vitiate the public mind. Sir Robert's following in the colony is determined and outspoken; but it is significant that those who are reluctant to accept his uncompromising attitude include many of the fishermen and businessmen whose interests are closely involved with the question. A number of mass meetings have been held, and the patience displayed by the interested parties in resolving to await the decision of the Hague Tribunal might well serve as a pattern for the Premier himself. Of even greater importance were the resolutions passed at Bay of Islands, Bay of St. George, and Bourne Bay on Tuesday, by which it was urged that the present restrictions should be removed so as to enable colonial fishermen to sell herrings without hindrance to the highest bidder. This would at once avert the exercise of the Imperial authority and restore to Americans the conditions existing before 1905. To this request the Colonial Government has apparently acceded.



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