

John A. Parker.
June 28th.

(Copied)

OFFICE OF THE

Great Western Insurance Company,

GREAT WESTERN BUILDINGS, NO. 33 PINE ST. 39 WILLIAM STREET.

New York, June 28th 1891.

Hon John Bigelow
Care of Hon Geo Bancroft
U.S. Legation Berlin Prussia.

My dear Sir,

Your two letters from London of the 19th and 20th of May were received in due course. They were carefully read, and although it was plain to be seen, that my proposition involved difficulties in the way of carrying it out, yet the manner of its reception as described by you, was as encouraging as could have been expected on its first introduction, and in view of the very important principle, international, and otherwise, which would be affected by it.

My success here is not altogether such as I could wish. I returned from Washington on Saturday 25th, & found your letter of June 9th from Annapolis, and its contents accord very accurately with the impression that I had received at Washington, that the British Gov^{ts} is desirous of some arrangement that will take the

subject of claiming out of ^{the} Diplomatic relations between
the two countries, to be settled whenever with discrim-
-inating justice to both parties. and as a means to such
an end they thought my proposition worth considering.

Before I went to Washington I received a
letter from a friend, making enquiries about "Alaba-
-ma claims", such as led me to believe that the applica-
-tion was from the British Minister Thornton. I an-
-swered it with a little evasion, but said, that I should
be in Washington in a week and would be more expli-
-cit. - that brought another letter from my friend in-
-viting me to the hospitality of his house, which I ac-
-cepted, and was pleased to learn that my friend, was
the friend also of Mr Thornton who called on me
-immediately on my arrival at Washington.

His communication was frank and cordial, but
such only as the Diplomatic Agent of a Foreign Na-
-tion might properly make. He said he had received
a communication from Lord Clarendon, chiefly of enquiry
relating to "Alabama Claims". He showed that he under-
-stood thoroughly the nature of my proposition, and of the
suggestions which you had thrown out in regard to it.
He offered nothing and promised nothing. He said
decisively that in his opinion the Government of England
would yield no more than was yielded in the
-Convention agreed to by Mr Rensselaer Johnson, but he

he left me to believe that the Cobden Clarendon
convention, the spoliation by the "Alabama" specially
was as good as admitted, and with the permission
of this Government England would be willing to
settle with the individual claimants fairly and justly.

How however my good luck ended, - Mr
Fish, appointed me an Audience, at an early hour, it being
the Diplomatic day, but at the very first mention of a liberty
to be given for individuals to present their claims to the
British Government, he shook his head significantly, and as
conversation progressed he said, "The parties interested having
petitioned the Government to intervene and filed their
claims in the State Department, - the Govt having accepted
the trust and already entered upon negotiations they would
not now permit the trust to be withdrawn". To my argument
that such a course was obstructing private interests he answered
that in matters where the Govt was concerned private interests
must surrender to public Policy, and that in this case it was
the Policy of the Govt not to let private interests intervene.

As I had sent a copy of my Petition to him some months
ago, and had written to some members of Congress to whom
the Petition was sent, that if Congress did nothing for us in
the present session we should go to England for redress, the
idea was not new to him, and he has evidently been ex-
pecting some movement of the kind. As a palliation
however of his refusal to grant my request he said, very

it had been the decided and uncontradicted principle of law throughout Christendom, that the assurer in case of loss or capture of any kind succeeded to all the rights of the assured, and hence if the owner of a captured vessel had any claim, that claim was good in us as the assurers. -

I think he saw his mistake and therefore was disposed to say little more. I endeavored to come back to his first remark but he was perfectly stolid. He did however say that he would bring the subject of my application up at the Cabinet meeting which was to take place ~~that same~~ ^{the next} day.

On the following morning I called again on Mr. Fish Secretary of State and related what the President had said and I remarked to Mr. Fish that if it were known in New York that the opinion expressed by the President, in regard to the claims of Insurance Companies were supposed to be largely entertained by the Members of the Government and of Congress, I could and would, leave New York in a week, for England, with five millions of claims in my pocket for collection, either with or without any promise from the Government to do so. To this very bold speech Mr. Fish replied with a little sharpness, that there was a Statute making it a misdemeanor for any individual to attempt any interference with the Diplomatic negotiations. - I replied that I did not propose to interfere, but simply to ask the British Govt. to pay me a private and just claim. -

Much more was said but without any excitement
on either side, and I think Mr Fish saw that
it will be difficult for him to persist in refusal.

The Statute of Misdomianus referred to by
Fish was approved by Pres Adams, Jan'y 30th,
and concludes with the following proviso.

"Provided always that, nothing in this act
-tained shall be construed to abridge the right
" individual citizens of the United States, to apply
" by themselves or their lawful agents to any foreign
" Government or the Agents thereof for the redress of
" any injuries in relation to person or property which
" such individual may have sustained from
" Government or any of its Agents Citizens or subjects."

In writing to Mr Fish since my return
I assure that this Proviso is a perfect authorization
of the right claimed and therefore the Government
cannot refuse to grant the liberty and aid our
wishes.

While I have been writing this I have
heard by cable of the death of Lord Clarendon
which may work some change but I hope no
injury to our plans.

It is evident that our Government intends
to hold their claims in abeyance for ulterior purposes,
Mr Thornton thinks, Canada is the object, and
that they will continue to entorrop us. I shall write

John A. Parker
Very truly
yours
John A. Parker