CESSION OF HORSESHOE REEF

Protocol of a conference held at London December 9, 1850
Entered into force December 9, 1850

18 Stat. 325 [1]

PROTOCOL OF A CONFERENCE HELD AT THE FOREIGN OFFICE, DECEMBER 9, 1850, CEDING HORSE-SHOE REEF TO THE UNITED STATES

Abbott Lawrence, Esquire, the Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States of America at the court of Her Britannic Majesty, and Viscount Palmerston, Her Britannic Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, having met together at the foreign office:

Mr. Lawrence stated that he was instructed by his Government to call the attention of the British Government to the dangers to which the important commerce of the great Lakes of the Interior of America, and more particularly that concentrating at the town of Buffalo near the entrance of the Niagara River from Lake Erie, and that passing through the Welland Canal, is exposed from the want of a lighthouse near the outlet of Lake Erie. Mr. Lawrence stated that the current of the Niagara River is at that spot very strong, and increases in rapidity as the river approaches the falls; and as that part of the river is necessarily used for the purpose of a harbor, the Congress of the United States, in order to guard against the danger arising from the rapidity of the current, and from other local causes, made an appropriation for the construction of a lighthouse at the outlet of the lake. But on a local survey being made, it was found that the most eligible site for the erection of the lighthouse was a reef known by the name of the "Horse-shoe Reef," which is within the dominions of Her Britannic Majesty; and Mr. Lawrence was therefore instructed by the Government of the United States to ask whether the Government of Her Britannic Majesty will cede to the United States the Horse-shoe Reef, or such part thereof as may be necessary for the purpose of erecting a lighthouse; and if not, whether the British Government will itself erect and maintain a lighthouse on the said Reef.

Viscount Palmerston stated to Mr. Lawrence in reply, that Her Majesty's Government concurs in opinion with the Government of the United States, that the proposed lighthouse would be of great advantage to all vessels navigating the Lakes; and that Her Majesty's Government is prepared to advise

[1] For a detailed study of this protocol, see 5 Miller 905.

Her Majesty to cede to the United States such portion of the Horse-shoe Reef as may be found requisite for the intended lighthouse, provided the Government of the United States will engage to erect such lighthouse, and to maintain a light therein; and provided no fortification be erected on the said Reef.

Mr. Lawrence and Viscount Palmerston, on the part of their respective Governments, accordingly agreed that the British Crown should make this cession, and that the United States should accept it, on the above-mentioned conditions.

ABBOTT LAWRENCE
PALMERSTON