

this have been assured that the colonies have lately employed in it 5000 men, and been informed, though with less certainty, that the number of other *British* subjects lately employed amounted to 20000 at least: but I must proceed to mention an unpleasing fact, which is that a scarcity of fish has of late years taken place in some parts of the fishing grounds. *Peter Martyr* says that *Sebastian Cabot* found in the seas about the country which he named *Baccalaos* so great multitudes of big fishes called by that name by the inhabitants, that they sometimes stayed his ships, whereas fish on several banks whereon many *English* vessels used annually in times past to catch their fares of late years have been so scarce that the fishermen have quitted them, and gone to other fishing banks. The consequence of several parts of the pasture becoming bare, and of so many *French* fishermen now coming into it, I leave to time and the opinion of others. The best expedient for preserving a plentiful and perpetual supply for *Europe* from this fishery that I have heard mentioned would be to prevent all persons from catching fish in the spawning time. A gentleman lately informed me that in the war which began in 1744 he bought a *French* prize fishing vessel, on board of which were 20 tuns of spawn, or more, the intended use whereof was unknown to him; and it need not be said that in case this fishery had happily remained entire to its original owners the expedient aforementioned, or any other, might have been used with greater ease.

All persons solicitous for the advancement of the commonweal with one consent declare that a proper plan of public conduct, formed with wisdom, comprehension and foresight, and suited to the nature and condition of a state, and its relation to others, with such subsequent alterations as special occasions require, is essential to its lasting welfare. The noble figure which the *American* fishery entire would have made in the plan of a naval empire is more fit for the conception  
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