



*Alert (Br.)*

*Isly (Fr.)*

*Comus (Br.)*

*Huzzard (Br.)*

*Fronde (Fr.)*

*Columbine (Br.)*

FRENCH AND BRITISH FISHERY PROTECTION SQUADRONS IN ST. JOHN'S HARBOR.

petitors, the French ranking next. In 1583 Sir Humphrey Gilbert set up Queen Elizabeth's standard in the port, in the presence of the fishing skippers of these several nations, and made formal proclamation that it was henceforth English territory. The authority of the Crown, however, was but nominal until well into the next century. By this time the fishery, as far as England was concerned, was centred in the hands of merchant-adventurers from the west country, who fitted out and maintained large fleets of ships to engage in it. Apprehensive of competition, they secured the passage of laws dividing up the coast into plantations to be apportioned among them. The resident population, then a few hundred people, were ordered to be removed from the soil, and it was forbidden any person to winter on the island under pain of death. It was to be a mere summer fishing station; every shipmaster had to

give bonds to bring back each autumn all the men he took out in the spring, and no women were to be taken there on any pretext. The captain of the first fishing vessel arriving was admiral for the season, the second was vice-admiral, and the third rear-admiral, and this was the only judicial machinery provided by the English council for the maintenance of law and order among some thousands of fishermen.

The pirates and privateers of the period frequently harassed the town, and the changing fortunes of war saw it pass into different hands. De Ruyter, the famous Dutch sea-rover, took it in 1676, and though the English soon regained possession, it fell into the hands of D'Iberville, the French freebooter, in 1697. For the next twenty years it was a bone of contention between the two nations, the French having it one year and the English the next. Such a state of things