

REPORT  
ON FURTHER  
DEEP-SEA DREDGING OPERATIONS  
IN THE  
GULF OF ST. LAWRENCE,  
WITH NOTES ON THE PRESENT CONDITION OF THE MARINE FISHERIES  
AND OYSTER BEDS OF PART OF THAT REGION.

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[INTRODUCTORY.

The instructions received from the Department prior to my leaving Montreal were, to use my own judgment as to the selection of points for examination during the early part of the summer, and later on to devote a portion of the time to an investigation into the present condition of the oyster beds of Northumberland Straits and of the coast of New Brunswick.

This being the case, the plan of operations which was ultimately carried out, was to devote a week or two to dredging in the greatest depths between Anticosti and Gaspé, then to make a complete circuit of Prince Edward Island, examining first the entrance to the Bay des Chaleurs, the Orphan and Bradelle Banks, the area between Cape Breton and Prince Edward Island, and, lastly, the whole of Northumberland Straits on both sides, back to the Bay des Chaleurs.

The Government schooner *J. H. Nickerson*, which for nine weeks was exclusively employed in these investigations, is a vessel of some 70 tons burthen. She carried only three sails, and had no flying-jib, staysail, or gaff-topsail. The want of these was often felt in fine weather, when the breeze was very light. Her crew consisted of the captain, six seamen, a carpenter, steward (who also acted as cook), and steward's boy. We were authorized to hire two or three additional hands if required, but did not succeed in getting even one man to strengthen our small crew.

Our apparatus consisted of two dredges, fitted with inner bags of closely netted heavy seine twine, and outer ones of untanned hide; sifters, two deep-sea leads, and between 500 and 600 fathoms of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch manilla rope. We also constructed rough but tolerably effective towing nets and "tangles," both of which did good service. A small winch would have saved much heavy manual labor, and it would have been better if we had been provided with rope enough to use a dredge and tangles on separate lines at the same time, especially in very deep water. Although the weather was exceptionally stormy, and many other grave disadvantages had to be contended with, the number of specimens collected was much larger than on any previous occasion. This is mainly to be attributed to the circumstance that, for the first time, the schooner and her crew were placed entirely at my disposal during the greater part of the summer.

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