

Appendix, N<sup>o</sup> 15.

To the Worshipful John Reeves, Esquire, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Judicature of the Island of Newfoundland.

May it please your Worship;

**W**E, the principal Merchants and Inhabitants trading to, and carrying on the Fishery in the District of Conception Bay, beg Leave to congratulate your Worship on your Arrival; and, perfectly convinced of your Abilities and good Intentions to place the Fishery and Commerce of this Island upon a respectable Footing, and to establish such Courts therein as may be most conducive to the Welfare thereof,

We shall proceed with profound Respect, to point out some of the many Evils and Inconveniencies we are liable to, in the Want of a permanent Court being established to act as usual in this District.

And in order thereto, we shall first state to your Worship, in as concise a Manner as possible, the Mode in which our Trade and Fishery have ever been carried on.

The Boat-keepers, or as they are usually called Planters, are most of them Natives of the Island; they hire their own Servants, and plan out their own Voyages, independent of the Merchant (except being supplied by him) which is not the Case in many Parts, where Master and Crew are in Fact Servants to the Merchant.

In the Month of April (frequently at the Close of the last Fishery) these Planters agree with different Merchants, to supply them with Provisions, Salt, Cloathing, Canvas, Cordage, and other Necessaries for prosecuting the ensuing Fishery, and who in Return are to take all the Fish and Oil they may catch and cure, after paying the Servants Wages; and if any Balance remain due to the Planter, the same is usually paid in Goods or Bills of Exchange, at his Option.

Thus the Merchant begins to issue Supplies many Months before a Fish is taken; and is in Advance from 1 to £. 300 to each Boat-keeper, before he receives the First Payment, which generally commence in September, besides being at the vast Expence (contrary to the Custom of other Parts of the Island, where the Planters bring their Fish and Oil to the Merchant) of employing Boats and Servants to proceed to the different Harbours of the District, and collect the same.

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