

(No. 63.)

REPORT ON FISHERIES—FISHING STATION No. 6.

SIR,

H.M.S. *Valorous*, Halifax, 17th September, 1870.

Agreeably to Article 3 of your Instructions, dated 3rd May last, I have the honour to make the following report:

Owing to the seizure of the schooner *S. G. Marshall*, on the 31st July, the ship has been much detained at Charlottetown in prosecuting her to condemnation.

In consequence of the evidence obtained of various vessels in the employ of, and belonging to, Mr. J. C. Hall, an American citizen, doing business in Charlottetown, being *illegally* registered, and *wearing English colours*, to enable them to prosecute the inshore fishery, my attention has been greatly given to the detection of these irregular vessels.

The presence of a ship of war at Charlottetown I consider would be of great assistance in exercising supervision, and checking those frauds on the Statutes.

This port being on no fishing station is rarely visited, and in consequence the officials to whom it was my duty to apply were unable to render me the assistance I required.

In exercising a supervision over the shipping here, which is much wanted, owing to the class of persons who form the Customs authorities, and who here are appointed solely from political reasons, the irregular vessels would in time be suppressed.

It must be remembered that these irregularly-owned vessels are fitted out to obtain their cargoes in a short space of time, e.g., the *S. G. Marshall* had on board two seines—one of 200 fathoms long and 18 feet deep, the other 100 fathoms in length and 12 feet in depth. The cost of the first one was about £400, the smaller one about £200.

In addition she had four boats.

In evidence, the master stated that if he had remained where he was taken he would have filled his vessel in forty-eight hours.

With regard to the Fishery on No. 6 Station I have, owing to the limited space of time actively employed, but little to record.

The cod fishery was a good average catch from the Bay of Chaleur along the coast to Peter Point.

The mackerel fishery was hardly an average, if the American fishermen are to be believed.

The English vessels made good catches off Bathurst and other places close to the shore where the fish schooled.

By this I do not mean it to be inferred that the American fishermen do not fish inside the limit and share in all the advantages of the in-shore fishing.

I have seen as many as thirteen vessels at one moment fishing close in-shore, but of course the whole were outside the limit before they could be approached.

The inhabitants of Port Daniel complained that prior to this season the Americans were in the habit of hauling their seines in the bay, greatly to the loss and impoverishment of the inhabitants.

The inhabitants of Gaspé Basin and the neighbourhood complained of the behaviour of an American, Mr. Ebenezer Marshall, of the schooner *S. T. Marshall*, last year. They stated that he hauled his large seines on Sandy Beach, forming the harbour, and had brought to land large numbers of young cod-fish which, were useless to him.

The spot always had been a favoured breeding place for the cod, and they feared that its character would be totally changed and great loss to them ensue if that practice was pursued.

They also stated that they feared the mackerel would avoid the bay for a season if the seining was persisted in.

With regard to the best method of protecting the fisheries during the ensuing season, I beg to make this suggestion:

That in the Gulf of St. Lawrence the Stations 4, 5 and 6 be placed under a Senior Officer, so that any one of the cruisers under the altered system might be able to refer any question or difficulty to him. The Senior Officer would then be able to clear up questions and explain matters of a delicate character on the spot.

He also would be able to relieve the cruiser in the event of a capture having been made by her, by receiving the necessary witnesses on board instead of the capturing ship being kept off her station for a length of time.