

by the shippers has not been changed, and only slightly improved. Yet several circumstances have modified the conditions of this branch of trade. In the first place, the banks of fish, worked without discernment or precaution, because they were thought to be inexhaustible, are now drained. Then formidable competitors have arisen in the Newfoundland fishermen, who have become numerous, and in the American and Canadian fishermen. These competitors, living on the spot, are in a position to sell cod at such prices that the French cannot keep up with them in foreign markets. Finally, the numerous lines of railway in France enable the towns of the interior to supply themselves easily with fresh fish taken on the coast, and the sale of dry or salt cod has sensibly decreased and become very deficient.

The situation is not new; it has attracted the attention of the Government on several occasions in the past forty years. The cod fishery, being a training-school and nursery for excellent sailors, is not an ordinary industry; it forms part and parcel of the national forces, and has, consequently, become in different shapes the recipient of large subsidies.

Government grants, indispensable in the case of new or declining industries, or such as may be going through a difficult pass, lose much of their effect when they become a permanency. The Government's money being depended upon, no other activity is displayed than that which is required to fill the official conditions and win the proposed gratuity. No industry is worthy of encouragement unless it can find within itself the means of self-support. These means are to be found in improved materials and modes of transportation, rather than in subsidies, and thus alone is it deserving of public assistance. No amount of Government help has sufficed to secure the prosperity of our fisheries. They have continued to decline, and are at present in a low condition. It has been found impossible to compete with foreign fishermen, and a further reason for this is the distance of their fisheries from their market. As France has only the right of taking and drying fish on the Newfoundland banks, she could not form establishments thereon. The islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon, being small and barren, did not offer any field for colonization, and French fishermen could not settle on them as English fishermen from Jersey, for instance, settled on the coasts of Canada and the Gulf of the St. Lawrence. They are, therefore, obliged to come from France and thus cross the Atlantic twice. Further-

more, and what is a very grave drawback, they are obliged to employ large vessels, unfit for fishing purposes, but indispensable for their passage and the transportation of their provisions.

By the new line of steamers, which will call at the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon, we believe—

1. That our fishermen will be able to use the same boats and the same improved machinery as the Canadians, the Americans and the Newfoundlanders, and will be placed on a footing of equality with them in the way of material;

2. That the transportation by the steamers will be cheaper, because more rapid and more regular;

3. That a new demand will be created on the French markets by weekly consignments of cod kept fresh in refrigerators.

I. The schooners used exclusively by foreign fishermen, and especially by the men of Gloucester, Massachusetts, are admitted to be the type of a fishing boat. They are light, of low tonnage, but easily managed, and can thus be readily directed to all points where the catch is the most advantageous. These schooners carry a number of boats, fitting one into another, which being taken out and distributed over a large surface, enable a number of men to secure an abundant harvest of fish. French fishermen have not seen their way to employ these schooners, being encumbered, as we have said, by the heavy vessels which convey them from home, but when these vessels will be replaced by the steamers of this line, our fishermen will not hesitate to adopt the model schooner.

When the new Customs tariff will be promulgated and the duty on Canadian built vessels will be reduced to two francs in French ports, these schooners can be constructed at Quebec one-half cheaper than in France, owing to the cheapness of labor in that city.

II. The annual importations from France to St. Pierre and Miquelon reach actually about 7,000 tons. The cost of freight is from 30 to 35 francs per ton, which is a high price and could be reduced. Besides, the goods carried by steamer will pay less insurance, and the shipper, being able to export as the consumption requires, will not need any great stock, and will not lose interest on capital employed for the purpose. Out of 15,183 tons of salt imported in 1879, 13,000 tons came from Cadix. The Cadix salt being less strong than our Western salt, is preferred for salting fish. The Newfoundland, French, American and Canadian fisheries, put together, import 40,000 tons of it yearly.