

of Newfoundland, 1622, is at great pains to show how beneficial it would be for their fishing operations if each ship left one-fifth part of her crew to take care of the property left behind, and to make ready stages and fish flakes for the next summer. One of the harbours strongly recommended by him to be thus utilized was St. John's. This was a new and original proposition, and was urged with great insistence; if there had been at that time houses in St. John's and people living in them all the year round, he would have surely stated it, as he would have needed no other argument to prove its feasibility. It is 1626, before we have definite information of any houses erected at St. John's, although, as we shall hear later, a portion of Sir Wm. Alexander's company, intended for Nova Scotia, wintered there in 1622-3. In 1627, one William Payne wrote to Catherine, Lady Conway, expressing the hope that Lord Conway would come in for a proportion in the lot of St. John's, Newfoundland, well known to be the chief and prime lot in the whole country. Great hope of good commodities from thence; some houses having been already built there, it would require no great charge to follow. Forty years, therefore, had elapsed after Sir Humphrey's assumption of sovereignty before St. John's was permanently inhabited.

But other parts of Newfoundland had been inhabited before St. John's. On February 9th, 1609, certain merchants of London and Bristol, who had been interested in the fishing trade to Newfoundland, petitioned the Privy Council for letters patent to permit the colonization of the country. The articles submitted by them began by stating their confidence that the country was habitable in winter, and their reasons for the belief. They said that 200 English ships and 6000 fishermen annually visited the country, and that if any foreign Power were to take possession and fortify it, the loss to English trade "would be of more consequence than now can be imagined." It was therefore highly import-