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**ARCHIPELAGO OF ST. PIERRE AND MIQUELON**

The Last Remaining Part of France's Once Great Empire in British North America

(By Rev. F. W. BROWNE, in "The Canadian Fisherman.")

ALL that now remains of the once vast empire ruled by France in North America—the last parcel adroit—is the Archipelago of St. Pierre and Miquelon lying off the south coast of Newfoundland, at the mouth of Fortune Bay, about twelve miles distant from Danczic Point.

This little group of islands has a most interesting, if chequered, history; and as it is likely to become prominent in diplomatic circles at the conclusion of the war, the story of its vicissitudes will be of interest to readers of this paper, as the traffic with St. Pierre has been frequently the subject of discussion in Canadian prints.

Not long ago, a Montreal newspaper stated that some of the parishes of the lower St. Lawrence have become completely demoralized by the illicit traffic emanating from one of the greatest smuggling centres in the Western Hemisphere. Farmers neglect their land and fishermen their nets to engage in ventures that promise such large returns as the smuggling of whiskey blanc, gin and tobacco, and the excitement attendant upon it offers great attractions to the venturesome fisher-folk in the Gulf ports. The parish priests complain bitterly of the demoralizing effects upon their people of the intemperance that prevails wherever the whiskey blanc is sold and landed; and many of the country cures have complained of the traffic to the Government.

**Known Early.**

St. Pierre was evidently known to Portuguese and Basque fishermen at an early date. In a map drawn in 1508 the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon are represented by "Barbatois In." Cartier visited St. Pierre in 1535 when returning from his second voyage to Hochelaga, and found several fishing vessels there; but there is no historic account of its importance as a French fishing base till 1662, when Placentia, in Newfoundland, was taken possession of by Gargot, its first Governor. It is doubtful if St. Pierre was permanently inhabited until about the end of the seventeenth century.

Then, a small fort, mounting six guns, was erected, to prevent incursions by the English. This was destroyed in 1702 by Captain Leake, R.N. When all the French inhabitants were compelled to leave Newfoundland, by the terms of the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, the official returns show that only one hundred and eighty persons resided permanently in St. Pierre.

From 1713 to 1763 St. Pierre remained in possession of the British. Then, by the Treaty of Paris it was restored to France to serve as a port of refuge for her fishermen; but it was stipulated that it should not be fortified, and that only fifty men should be kept there as a guard for police purposes.

On July 14, 1763, Baron L'Esperance, Captain of Infantry, was given possession of the Colony; a considerable number of the new settlers were Acadians who had refused to become British subjects.

The local catch of fish, from 1763 to 1777, averaged about six thousand quintals a year; there being, besides the fish caught by the two hundred and twenty fishing vessels from France, manned by eight thousand sailors and fishermen. St. Pierre, during this period, carried on a large contraband trade, both with Newfoundland and other British Provinces; and New Englanders especially did an extensive business in French wines, brandies, silks and velvets.

At the outbreak of the War of Secession, in 1778, Rear-Admiral Montague, Governor of Newfoundland, captured St. Pierre, destroyed all the buildings, and deported to France 1,932 inhabitants—fishermen and farmers. From 1778 to 1815, the inhabitants, who had returned after the close of the American War, were chucked around like shuttlecocks by battledeers.

The history of St. Pierre from that time has been uneventful. It gradually increased in population and importance as a fishing centre, its exports (dry and green fish) being over 250,000 kilograms in 1890, while its imports amounted to nigh 18,000,000 francs. The abnormal showing of imports is explained by the fact that St. Pierre was a literal smugglers' paradise until within a comparatively recent period, when the passage of the Bait Act by the Newfoundland Government made it prohibitory for Newfoundland fishermen to sell bait to the French. In this smuggling business the Pierrais plundered the revenues, not only of Newfoundland, Canada, and the Maritime Provinces, but for years they even made greater depredations on the revenues of France; thousands of quintals of British-caught fish were taken to St. Pierre by sale and barter, received the enormous bounty paid by the French Government (about \$2 per quintal), and went to swell fictitiously the French catch of fish.

**Smuggling Business.**  
Some Newfoundlanders are engaged in the smuggling business. They sail from St. Pierre in some unfrequented part of the Canadian Labrador, where (choosing foggy weather for the run), amongst the inner islands, they meet smaller craft; their cargo into punts and dories farther up the St. Lawrence; and lastly, it is distributed about the Province of Quebec in carts. The activity of the Canadian cruisers and the operation of the Bait Act have now largely curtailed the illicit trade. The statistics of St. Pierre show that from these causes the imports have fallen from twenty million to eight million francs.

A conservative estimate of the illicit trade between Newfoundland and St. Pierre in former years sets down the loss to the revenue of Newfoundland as being about \$100,000 annually. Though the smuggling trade has been curtailed, yet Newfoundland still suffers considerable loss. A Government cruiser patrols the coast around the Burin peninsula and Fortune Bay, but that considerable smuggling still goes on is known to every body, except, perhaps, to the Government officials.

Formerly, no British Consul was allowed to reside at St. Pierre but since the settlement of the famous French Shore Question, a British trade agent has been tolerated. St. Pierre has never recovered from the effects of the Bait Act passed by the Newfoundland Legislature in 1885, and its prosperity has since been waning. The population continues to decrease rapidly; and at present writing it is almost a "deserted village."

**Trade Paralyzed.**

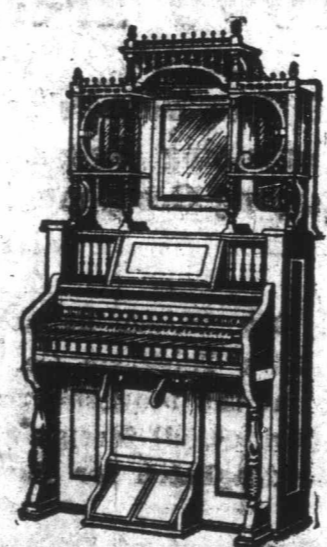
There are only two or three local banking vessels prosecuting the fishery; and owing to the withdrawal of all able-bodied men within the last year, trade has become paralyzed. The large fleet formerly outfitted

**NOTICE**

MEETINGS of the Canvassing Committee and the Sub-Committees under Ward Commanders will be held each night at the Headquarters, 7.30 to 9.30; Executive Meetings each night at Headquarters, 9.30; and General Public Meetings of Voters every Monday and Wednesday night in the T. A. Armoury at 8.30 p.m., when addresses will be given by prominent platform speakers and workers.

P. G. BUTLER,  
General Secretary,  
St. John's Prohibition Com.  
oct20,tf

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All Persons holding Receipts for Fish shipped to me on the Labrador coast must present them to my office at Catalina for payment. On no account whatever will they be paid at St. John's.

Philip Templeman.  
oct15,19,22,25,28

**OPENING ANNOUNCEMENT**

A. S. WADDEN wishes to announce to his Patrons and the General Public, that his New Store 368 Water Street West (2 doors West of old stand) is now open with a full line of Tobacco, Cigars, Cigarettes, Fruits, Confectionery, etc. All orders personally attended to. Satisfaction guaranteed.

A. S. WADDEN  
368 Water Street West

from the ports of Dieppe, Granville, and St. Malo, have almost disappeared; and steam trawlers are now engaged in prosecuting the bank fishery.

Though shorn of its former commercial importance, St. Pierre is an interesting spot. It is really a bit of old France within an Anglo-Saxon horizon. The town fronts a large roadstead sheltered on the eastern side by the Isle aux Chiens, extending rearwards to the ridge of Mt. Calverie, which forms the summit of the rocky backbone of the island. The harbor is protected by a stone breakwater, with substantial quays. The Government pier fronts on the public square, on the north side which are located the official buildings; Customs House, Ministry of Marine, Court House, and Official Residence. The streets are unpaved, and present a rather unkempt appearance, due presumably to the decadence of the town.

The people present a very picturesque appearance; men wear gaudy shirts and loose, ill-fitting trousers; the women wear bright blouses and short skirts, not unlike those seen at Douarnez or other Breton towns. The click of the sabot may be heard on the wooden trottoirs which front the numerous cafes and cheap cabarets on the main thoroughfare, where "high jinks" are in progress nightly (till the town crier makes his rounds about 10 p.m., when the populace are notified to betake themselves homeward, and the fishermen to hie to their vessels.

**The Town's "Arms."**

The town is policed by fifty gentlemen armed with swords, and "defended" by some ancient cannon placed at the approach to the harbor.

The Island of St. Pierre is encircled by beaches of smooth-worn cobbles which are used as fish-drying areas. The curing of fish is not permitted within the municipal limits. The fish industry is maintained by an elaborate system of bounties covering almost every phase of the business. The fishery is regarded by France as the "pepiniere" (nursery) of the French Navy, and even beachcombers are provided for in the bounty system.

It is quite within the bounds of possibilities that ere long France will be prepared to surrender this erstwhile valuable possession to Great Britain, in return for some compensating advantages elsewhere. This was a consummation devoutly to be wished for by Newfoundland fishermen who have to compete in foreign markets with the bounty-fed exportations of French codfish.

LONDON, Oct. 17.—A British official statement issued last night tells of the latest offensive by the British troops between La Basse and Arras. It reads as follows:

"Yesterday afternoon, after a bombardment we attacked the enemy's trenches under cover of a cloud of smoke and gas from a point about six hundred yards southwest of Hulluch to the Hohenzollern redoubt. We gained about one thousand yards of trenches just south and west of Hulluch, but were unable to maintain our positions there owing to the enemy's shell fire.

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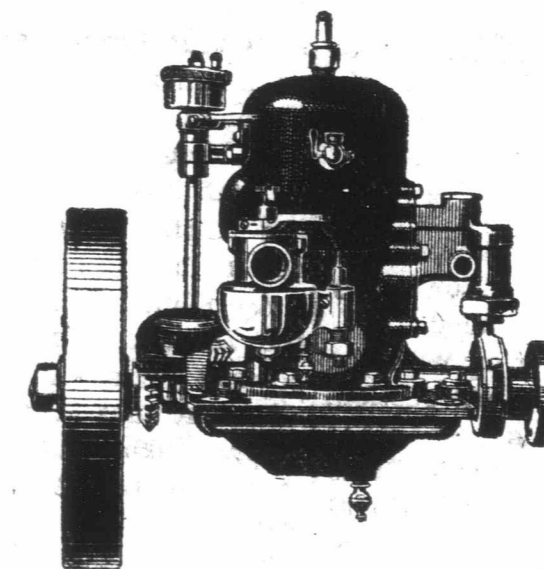
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