

same Manner as in 1698, in which Year, according to the Accounts transmitted by Sir John Norris from Newfoundland, they paid from £. 5 to £. 15 *per* Boat, which must be assigned for One of the Reasons why they quitted the Fishing Trade so soon after the Act passed, and why they have declined it ever since; nevertheless, as the said Act has directed, by a preceding Clause, that those who had detained after 1685 any Beach or other Places for curing, drying, or husbanding of Fish, which before that Time belonged to the Fishing Ships, should relinquish the same to the public Use of the Fishing Ships arriving there. It cannot be imagined that the aforesaid Proviso was intended to abridge them of so great and necessary a Privilege, much less to permit the Planters to possess more Flakes and Beach than they actually want for curing and drying their Fish, in proportion to the Number of Boats they employ, or to extend their Flakes and Huts by the Water Side, or behind those of the Fishing Ships, contrary to the ancient Custom of the Fishery.

It must be also remarked, that notwithstanding Placentia and several other Places lately possessed by the French in Newfoundland, were surrendered to Great Britain in compliance with the Treaty of Utrecht, the Fishing Ships enjoy no other Advantage thereby than by fishing at the Island of St. Peter's; the Stages, Beaches, &c. at Placentia, and in those Parts, being engrossed by some of Your Majesty's Subjects inhabiting there. For although the French, by the 14th Article of the said Treaty, were only allowed to remove with their moveable Effects, yet her late Majesty, by her Letter of the 23d of June 1713, to Colonel Nicholson, having permitted them to dispose of their Houses, Beaches, and other Immoveables, they were bought up by particular Persons in Hopes of letting them out Annually to the Fishermen, which has effectually discouraged the Fishing Trade in that Part of the Country.

To which may be added, That the Importation of Wine, and all other Necessaries (except Salt) for the Fishery by the Ships which proceed to Newfoundland from Portugal, Spain, and other Foreign Parts, is a Discouragement to the Adventurers in general, whose Ships are victualled, and Stores provided in this Kingdom.

Nor can we conclude without taking Notice, that we have lately received Letters from Your Majesty's Consuls, and the Merchants residing in Spain, Portugal, and Italy, that the Fish brought to those Markets from Newfoundland, for some Years past, has been for the most Part so very ill cured, that the Consumption thereof is greatly abated, and that the Trade is in Danger of being thereby lost.

Upon the Whole, therefore, we most humbly crave Leave to offer it as our Opinion to Your Majesty,

That this important Fishery at Newfoundland can never be revived or restored to its former flourishing State and Condition until it be again wholly carried on by Fishing Ships, according to its ancient Custom, and regulated by Laws agreeable thereunto.

And that the most effectual Method to remove all the afore-mentioned Obstructions, and to restrain the Irregularities and Disorders of the Fishermen, as well as to encourage the Adventurers to return to their Employment, would be to remove the Inhabitants or Planters to Nova Scotia, or to some other of Your Majesty's Plantations in America.