

NEWFOUND-
LAND.

and numbers to be applied to the sails and hulls of the British fishing vessels, to distinguish them from foreigners.

This proposal was brought before the Houses of Assembly of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, but, after passing that of the former, it was thrown out by the Council, though I could not learn on what grounds.

It was notorious in the autumn of 1852 that many unscrupulous persons were endeavouring to procure British registers for American vessels, to enable them to fish near the shores, and to evade the Convention of 1818; and the Lieutenant-Governor, with my entire concurrence, directed the Comptroller of Customs at Halifax to order his subordinates at the outports to exercise due vigilance, and to take steps to ascertain that the transfers were made in good faith, and that the vessels gave up their foreign registers. The Commissioners of Customs have disapproved of this precaution, as it is not prescribed by the Act of Parliament for the Amendment of the Navigation Laws; but a double nationality is so contrary to the spirit of the law, that I trust the Lords of Her Majesty's Treasury will see fit to recommend its modification. I feel assured that if this is not done, and the views of the Commissioners of the Customs be made public, it will become much more difficult to carry out the Convention of 1818 in the manner directed by Her Majesty's Government.

The Commissioners of Customs, in a report to the Lords of the Treasury, dated the 31st October, 1853, have, to my great regret, censured the Comptroller of Customs at Halifax for his compliance with the suggestion made by the Lieutenant-Governor and myself, while they have applauded the Comptroller at Prince Edward Island, who manifestly neglected some of the provisions of the law, as appears by the same letter, because he only required the simple declaration to issue a British register.

Much, therefore, as I concur in Commander Purvis's suggestions, with regard to Newfoundland and the Magdalen Islands, I cannot expect that they can be carried out, except with the aid of the officers of the Customs in the different colonies, with the approbation of the Lords of the Treasury, who have expressed their concurrence in the view taken by the Commissioners—"that the present law sanctions no such inquiry," an alteration of which I hope may be considered worthy of attention.

I beg to add that I have had continual reason to observe the irregularities which prevail in the registers and clearances of the vessels belonging to the North American provinces.

The Secretary of the Admiralty,

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. F. SEYMOUR.