

With regard to this demand, Mr. Oswald, the British negotiator, remarked, that as to the fishing on the Great Bank, or on any other bank, he did not think it material to ask any questions, as he supposed the privilege would not be denied to the United States, or if denied, doubted whether their exclusion could be maintained but in continuing in a state of perpetual quarrel with the people of the New England Governments. An explanation, he observed, was still the less necessary, as a question on the same subject would come under consideration in the negotiations with France, in the determination of which it would perhaps be no loss to Great Britain if the Americans were (with respect to the fisheries) admitted to an equal privilege with the French.

The American Commissioners at first demanded the right of drying fish on the Island of Newfoundland, and the following is a copy of the the IIIrd Article of the proposed preliminary Treaty of Peace, which was accepted by the British Commissioner, Mr. Oswald, to be referred for the approval of his Government :—

“That the subjects of His Britannic Majesty and people of the said United States shall continue to enjoy unmolested the right to take fish of every kind on the banks of Newfoundland and other places where the inhabitants of both countries used formerly, viz., before the last war between France and Britain, to fish ; and also to dry and cure the same at the accustomed places, whether belonging to His said Majesty or to the United States. And His Britannic Majesty and the said United States will extend equal privileges and hospitality to each other’s fishermen as to their own.”

The proposed Article not meeting with the approval of the British Government, after considerable negotiation, it was agreed to omit that portion of the Article relating to the drying of fish on the coast of Newfoundland, on condition that the Americans should be allowed to dry upon any of the unsettled parts of the coasts of Nova Scotia, when they happen to be so far from home that their fish might run some risk of being spoilt before they reached their own shores.

Dr. Franklin also urged that the Gulf of