

# The Newfoundland Fisheries

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Your Excellency, Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen:

The Prime Minister, Sir Edward Morris, when he was in London, asked the Colonial Office to obtain from the Scotch Fisheries Board the services of one of their inspectors to report to the Newfoundland Government on the fisheries generally; what kind of fish are to be found; the methods of fishing in use, and whether they can be improved; on the adoption in Newfoundland of the Scotch cure of herring, and on the possible development of a trade in fresh fish and the best means for its collection and delivery.

I have been in the service of the Fishery Board for Scotland for 32 years for 23 of which I have had charge of three of the largest fishing centres on the east coast of Scotland, and at present I am in charge of the District of Peterhead. I was therefore selected by the Board to make the investigation required.

On my arrival in St. John's on the 24th of July the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, Mr. Piccott, placed at my disposal the services of Mr. A. Morgan, a practical fisherman employed by that department to go round the Island with me and assist me in obtaining what information I might require. Unfortunately I was too late for the caplin season which had come to an end a week before my arrival. Moreover this year the Squid came in unusually late so I was able to see exemplified in a striking way the paralyzing effect caused by the absence of bait. Every harbour we went into during the month of August contained schooners from Nova Scotia and the

United States as well as from Newfoundland, waiting a supply of squid to enable them to proceed to the fishing ground on the Grand Banks.

## THE BAIT PROBLEM.

I was greatly struck with the difficulty of securing bait at the period of the year when most required, when the weather conditions, in July and August, are the most favourable for fishing.

In Placentia Bay during the last two weeks of August it was pitiable indeed to observe a number of schooners, each with a crew of 20 to 25 men, waiting anxiously the arrival of the squid and making ineffectual attempts to secure small quantities of lance or herring. Not only the crews of these schooners but the shore fishermen were held up for the same reason. By the end of August the patience of many of them became exhausted, and I was informed that several of the schooner Captains discharged their crews rather than keep them doing nothing any longer. Now, why should this be the case? Why should fishermen be lying idle for weeks for the want of squid when other bait can be easily secured at a time when cod are in abundance almost at their very door. As a proof of this I may mention that one or two fishermen when I was at Mortier Bay obtained a small quantity, half a barrel or so, of Lance, and caught with it no less than 40 quintals of cod. Herring is every whit as good as lance, AND I AM CONVINCED THAT IF FISHERMEN WERE POSSESSED OF A FEW DRIFT NETS A SUFFICIENT SUP-