

Newfoundland, provisions ran so short that the ship's company were on the point of eating one another when the arrival of a French fishing vessel saved their lives.

Although the French fishing smacks had been voyaging yearly to the Banks since the beginning of the century, the sovereigns of France had been too much occupied in Italy to take part in western discovery. But about the end of the first quarter of the century there came a change. The expedition of Magellan having made clear the extent of the new land, the ambition of Francis the First was aroused. In the year when the Spaniard Stephen Gomez followed the coast from Gaspé to Cape May, Giovanni da Verrazano, a Florentine in the service of Francis the First, coasted northward from the Carolinas to Cape Breton. He was nearing the mouth of the St. Lawrence when his provisions ran short, and he was obliged to sail for home. Francis was then too fully occupied in his struggle with the Emperor Charles the Fifth to turn his attention to the western continent, and the battle of Pavia in the following year 1525 put an end for some time to any hope of further French activity. Nothing was done for a period of nine years. But in 1534 Francis was again enabled by cessation of hostilities and by the funds left him by his mother to despatch a fresh expedition in search of a north-west passage. None indeed was discovered, but Jacques Cartier, in the name of the King his master, took possession of the valley of the St. Lawrence. Except for the brief space of three years, from 1629 to 1632, this possession was henceforth undisputed until 1759.

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