

Coast to Cape Bonavista on the Eastern Coast; this right restricted to Cape St. John, instead of Cape Bonavista on the Eastern Coast, and extended to Cape Ray on the West, was continued to them by the Treaty of Versailles; with the additional advantage conferred by the declaration of His Britannic Majesty, that means should be taken to prevent injury to the French Fishery by the exercise of their concurrent right by British subjects. Proclamations from time to time issued in Newfoundland in conformity with this declaration, and under the authority of the 28th Geo. 3rd, cap. 15th, and the practice of the French, permitted by the British Government, of forcibly preventing British subjects from fishing at the French stations within the above limits, practically converted the concurrent fishery into one exclusively French, and the colony was thus, by the act of the Parent State, deprived of the fairest portion of its fishery grounds. The consequences of this act, however, were not immediately felt. The operation of the Treaty being suspended by the wars which shortly followed, the British Fisheries prospered, and in the year 1815 not fewer than four hundred sail of British ships, of which a very large portion were fitted out from St. John's and the adjacent ports, fished upon the Banks, and not fewer than one hundred thousand quintals of fish were exported by British subjects to France alone. After the Peace of 1815, the French resorted to the Banks, and to the coast of Newfoundland in great numbers, and being supported by enormous bounties, the quantity of British caught fish rapidly lessened, and its prices in Foreign and Colonial markets fell. The British and Colonial Bank fishery consequently declined, and in 1845, became extinct, and the fishery on our eastern shore, once so productive, was so much injured by the French Bank fishery, that the greater part of those engaged in it have of late years been obliged to fish at Labrador or on the south coast of the Island. At present, therefore, excluded by force from the fishery between Cape Ray and Cape John, and driven from the Banks by French bounties, we have but two Cod Fisheries that are of any importance to us,—that carried on on our South coast from Cape Race Westward, and known as the Western Fishery, and that carried on at the Labrador, between Blanc Sablon and Cape Harrison, and it is these that the terms of the present Convention will principally affect.

The first article of the Convention that materially alters our existing rights, is the third, which gives to the French a concurrent right of fishery with British subjects on the Labrador Shore, between Blanc Sablon and Cape Charles, with the right also of occupying Belle Isle North for fishery purposes, and of fishing in its neighborhood.