

*28th January, 1858.*

HIS EXCELLENCY SIR ALEXANDER BANNERMAN, KNIGHT, *Governor.*

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one of 1854, namely the “Reciprocity Treaty,” and, the latter, with the full assent of the Legislature of Newfoundland.

On my assumption of the Government, it was natural that I should be desirous to acquire information on the important subject of the Fisheries ; and, I have had an opportunity of perusing many interesting documents regarding them ; and, among others, the official despatches and “confidential” communications which appear in the Journals of last Session, and copies of which were ordered by you to be printed.

I am not called upon to express an opinion upon any proposition made by either Government, or the construction which they may place on the Treaties alluded to ; but, I would earnestly recommend to you, in as far as is possible, to encourage the hardy, resident fishermen of Newfoundland, by protecting the fish with which the ocean teems along its shores, and on the catch of which these fishermen depend for their daily bread. There is no law in the Colonial Statute Book to prevent the indiscriminate capture of all sorts of fish, nor does any attention seem to be paid to their breeding season, nor to the preservation and curing of bait, which is carefully attended to in the United States. Enormous seines, I am informed, are used for the destruction of Cod-fish of all sizes ; and, I understand that the mouths of brooks and rivers are effectually “barred up,” which prevents the ingress and egress of Salmon, and which will eventually lead to the final extirpation of that valuable fish. This subject is one well worthy the attention of the Legislature, and perhaps you will think it necessary to appoint a Commission to enquire into, and report whether it would be considered desirable to introduce any code of laws for the regulation of the Fisheries, and the protection of the various species of fish which frequent the coast of Newfoundland.

This subject is of great importance, for Her Majesty’s Law Advisers, in October 1855, express the very decided opinion that “Foreign fishermen pursuing their avocation within British territory, would be bound to observe the local laws and regulations in like manner