

October 16 and 23, 1813: "Not forgetting . . . the total exclusion of American shipping from the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the coast of Labrador."

THE COMMITTEES OF TRADE AT MONTREAL AND QUEBEC, on goals to be pursued when negotiating with the US.

Our Mackerel-Crowded Past

The sea came first, then the land, forming the shores, bays and shallows of New England, the Maritimes, Quebec and Newfoundland.

The bays and shallows sheltered and fed the fish, and the Grand Banks and Georges Bank became the greatest fishing grounds in the world —millions and millions of cod, flounder, halibut and mackerel in a dark, cold sea.

Then the fishermen came — French, Irish, Scottish, English and Portuguese.

When the Thirteen Colonies revolted successfully, a delicate question arose — could the fishermen from New England still fish in the bays of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland? Benjamin Franklin said that the fact that fish swarmed into the bays in April was "an advantage which God and nature had put into our hands." The fish, of course, were indifferent (they came into the bays to get warm not to pledge allegiance) and Great Britain was too.

Nova Scotians were not. "The world market is open to American fish directly or indirectly," the Nova Scotia General Assembly noted later. "Also they ruin the fishing grounds by throwing fish debris and other garbage from their boats into the sea."

The Convention of 1818 barred

Americans from fishing in Nova Scotia's coastal waters, but since the sea was broad and foggy, the New Englanders did not always stay away.

In 1854, a Treaty of Reciprocity between Britain and the US opened Nova Scotia's waters once more, but it lasted only ten years. In 1867, the United States doubled the duty on Canadian fish. Canada first increased the license fee for Americans and then tried to bar them altogether. When the New Englanders kept on fishing, Canada sent out six cruisers which seized four hundred ships. President Grant shook his beard and said, "this semi-independent but irresponsible agent has exercised its delegated power in an unfriendly way."

In 1871, Sir John A. Macdonald tried his hand. In return for US fishing privileges, his Conservative Party wanted a return to reciprocity and compensation for the damage done by the Fenians. He lost the fisheries and got nothing in return.

The Liberal Toronto Globe was outraged. "The surrender is complete; the terms are abominable. What has the Prime Minister to say in reply?"

He said nothing until the next spring when Parliament convened. He then



Eric Mill's conception of the Newfoundland cod fishery, published 1712-1714

announced that as an inducement to grant the US the privileges, Great Britain had promised to guarantee a loan for Canada to build a transcontinental railway. The Globe remained furious, but Sir John A. prevailed.

These provisions expired in 1885, and by 1900, fishermen in both Nova Scotia and New England were becoming as indifferent as the fish. The inshore waters were no longer teeming. Newfoundland (then a separate colony) tried to bar the American fishermen from her waters, but both sides agreed to turn the matter over to the Hague Permanent Court of Arbitration.

Today, the fisheries are once more of concern. Modern distant-water factory fleets from far lands fish with such concentrated fury that they can deplete a fishing ground in a single season. At the United Nations Law of the Sea Conference, Canada is seeking jurisdiction for coastal states to manage and conserve the marine living resources within a two-hundred-mile zone. Each coastal nation would have a preferential right of exploitation. Canada has also proposed that all interested nations agree on international regulations to preserve wide-ranging species, such as tuna and whales.

Calendar grid for October 1976. Days of the week: S, M, T, W, T, F, S. Dates: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24/31, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30.