

“ That the Planters in Newfoundland be continued in Possession of their Houses and Stages according to the Usage of the last Years, until further Orders.”

The said Inhabitants being flushed with this Success, the old Schemes for establishing the Colony and settling a Governor were again revived, and the Necessity thereof strenuously asserted by some, and opposed by others.

The Right honourable the Lords of the Committee hereupon directed the Commissioners of the Customs to consider those Proposals, and to report their Observations and Opinion relating to the Settlement of the Trade and Fishery at Newfoundland.

Accordingly the said Commissioners, on the 26th March 1680, after they had fairly stated the whole Matter, offered to their Lordships, as their Opinion,

That the Settlement of a Governor and a Colony in Newfoundland, under such Rules and Methods as were proposed, and that to entrust the regulating of the Fishery in a Governor, will tend greatly to the Prejudice of the Newfoundland Fishery; that by discouraging the English Fisherman the French will be greatly encouraged; that what little of this Trade shall remain in the Hands of the English will by Degrees fall wholly into the Hands of the Planters and New Englanders, and that by consequence His Majesty's Customs both Outwards and Inwards will be greatly prejudiced.

But if His Majesty should think fit to fortify the Harbour of St. John's, and to make a Governor of the Fort, and to arm the Governor with a Military Power to command the People of that Country (on Occasion) for their Defence, and with Civil Power for punishing Vice and keeping good Order, without having a Power over the Fishery, or infringing the Charter, they thought the same might be of good Use; and no Prejudice to the Trade or His Majesty's Customs.

Nevertheless these Arguments had not their due Effect; and on the 18th of April 1680 it was further ordered, that His Majesty's Intentions to settle a Governor and erect a Fort in Newfoundland for the Preservation of His Sovereignty, and good of the Fishery, should be signified unto the Magistrates of such Towns in the West of England as were chiefly concerned in that Trade, that they might transmit their Opinions in what Manner and under what Regulations such a Governor might be settled.

In Obedience to His Majesty's said Order the Western Corporations respectively represented the Hardships and Difficulties they had formerly struggled with under a Governor in Newfoundland, and that they apprehended the Fishing Trade would be greatly discouraged and prejudiced if a Governor was settled there, and therefore they pray that His Majesty's Sovereignty may be maintained by Ships of War to be sent Annually thither, and that the Charter granted by His Majesty in the 27th Year of His Reign, for the Encouragement of the Fishery, may be enforced and put in Execution, as the best and only Methods to preserve and secure the Trade.

These Representations had so much Weight that the aforesaid Proposals relating to a Governor were laid aside; but the Regulations and Laws of the Charter being enervated by these Disputes, the Fishing Trade very sensibly