

BRITISH NORTH AMERICAN FISHERIES.¹—The principal fisheries coming under this head are for cod, herring, and mackerel, including the long-famous cod fishery of Newfoundland. The fisheries of the Dominion of Canada are chiefly carried on with open boats, and consequently are to a great extent, though subject to some variation, what may be called shore fisheries. The proportion, as given by Professor Hind, of the shore fisheries to the deep-sea fisheries, in which decked vessels are employed, is 4 to 1, so that "by far the largest proportion of the fishing industry of the Dominion is pursued in coastal waters, and much of it rarely extends beyond the limit of three marine miles from the coast line." The following table shows the number of boats and vessels, with the aggregate number of men employed in each, in 1876 :—

	Boats	Men.	Vessels.	Men.
Nova Scotia	9,585	18,093	653	6,049
New Brunswick	3,850	7,322	463	1,794
Quebec	5,815	10,777	256	1,219
Prince Edward Island ..	991	3,831	7	35
Total	20,241	40,023	1,397	9,097

In the Newfoundland fisheries boats and vessels are also used, but the deep-sea fishery is scarcely distinct from that pursued in coastal waters, or within the three-mile limit from the shore. The total number of boats employed at Newfoundland in 1874 was 18,611, and the number of persons engaged in catching and curing fish 45,854, while the number of vessels was 1197, with an aggregate of 61,551 tons, and manned by 8394 fishermen sailors. These vessels, however, include the large number used for sealing. The number of "fishing rooms" or portions of the shore set apart for the curing and storing of fish was 8902 in the same year. The numbers of fishing craft, men, and fishing rooms in 1874 showed a considerable increase over those for 1869. Professor Hind, in speaking of the large proportion of inshore fishing, says :—"The changeable character of the weather on the British American coast, the sudden and unexpected occurrence of fogs, the variations of currents produced by tides, the long experience of the dangers attending fishing in open boats some distance from the land, the pecuniary resources of the fishermen, conjointly with the abundant fish resources of the coastal waters, have combined to limit the industry of the British American fishermen in a great measure to the immediate vicinity of the shore line, and within easy reach of harbours. This is particularly the case with Newfoundland." This inshore fishery, however, depends for its success on the supply of bait fishes, especially the capelan and herring; and, as in every kind of fishery, there are years when migratory fish, those which more or less change their quarters at particular seasons, vary in abundance in certain localities, and sometimes forsake one part of a coast and go to another, so the important fisheries dependent on these movements are subject to fluctuations. The cod, in fact, there follow the bait-fishes precisely as, on the English coast, the cod and coalfish become most numerous near the land when the shoals of herrings come closest in. On the coasts of British North America the fishing interest is almost entirely concerned with species whose natural habitat is in cold waters; and as an immense area of fishing water is there influenced by the Labrador current, it is not surprising that cod, halibut, herring, mackerel, and others should be found in abundance on these coasts. The mackerel has also an extensive range

south along the coast of the United States; but the Labrador current is little felt south of Cape Cod, its influence being there almost destroyed by the Gulf Stream. The really cold-water species are therefore mainly found in the Dominion seas; and the fact that American fishermen so systematically work there for them is the ground on which the Dominion claim for compensation from the United States Government was based. The sum recently awarded to the colony by the arbitrators is much less, however, than the amount of the claim.

The methods of fishing in use in the Dominion and Newfoundland waters are of the same kind as in the British Islands, with the exception of beam-trawling, which seems to be practically unknown on the American coasts. Herrings are taken by drift-nets, anchored nets, and seines; mackerel by seines and hook and line; capelan by seines; and cod and its allies by long lines or butlers—there, strange to say, known as "trawls."

Professor Hind states (at p. 58 of pt. 1 of his report) that the aggregate number of barrels of herrings caught in Dominion and Newfoundland waters in 1874 may be put down at—

Dominion waters	534,307 barrels
Newfoundland waters	271,382 "

Total 805,689 barrels

This number does not include the quantities used for manure or bait; and he adds :—"A million barrels of herring each year, and gradually increasing, will fairly represent the quantity of this fish taken from British American seas." In the same year 164,879 barrels of mackerel were taken in Dominion waters, of which 80 per cent. were caught on the coast of Nova Scotia. The mackerel fishery at Newfoundland appears to have been very small for some years; and the fishermen do not now seem to be well provided with the means of catching them; but there is reason to believe that this fishery might be largely increased in the Dominion waters if more attention were given to it. There is a very great demand for mackerel in the American market. The Newfoundland and Dominion cod fisheries are, as we have mentioned, almost entirely inshore fisheries, and the abundance or scarcity of capelan or other fishes there used as bait materially affects the success of the fishery, for if the bait fishes do not come inshore, there is no attraction for the cod. In the deep-sea fishery on the banks, the case is different; but they are almost neglected by the Dominion and Newfoundland fishermen, for reasons previously stated. The produce of the inshore cod fisheries, although fluctuating, shows no signs of being exhausted. The following table, it is believed, represents with tolerable accuracy the catch of cod and allied fishes on the Dominion coasts in the years stated :—

Year.	Quintals.	Year.	Quintals.
1869	730,928	1873	1,405,804
1870	801,553	1874	1,278,499
1871	964,131	1875	1,193,579
1872	1,372,207		

The export of dried cod in quintals from Newfoundland in the years 1869-1876 was :—

Year.	Quintals.	Year.	Quintals.
1869	1,204,086	1873	1,369,205
1870	1,213,737	1874	1,609,724
1871	1,328,726	1875	1,186,235
1872	1,221,156	1876	1,364,068

The British American fishery for lobsters is of some importance, and cod roes and livers are among the valuable articles of export.

¹ An elaborate and in many respects valuable Report, by Professor Henry Youle Hind, M.A., of the Fishery Commission, Halifax, published so recently as 1877, has largely supplied us with materials for our notice of the fisheries of British North America.