

American competition; but it would expose us to competition from the French, who would, unless a high duty were placed on their soft-cured and cheaper fish, import so largely and sell so low as to drive us out of the market altogether. The export market would, probably, remain with us as at present; our hard-cured fish being that which is best adapted for the warm climates to which the Americans send it.

11. On the other hand, it is equally questionable whether opening our harbours to the Americans would injure us either in our revenue or in our fisheries. The Americans have at present the right of fishing on the west coast of Newfoundland, and on the south shore as far east as the Rameau Islands; yet they make but little use of this privilege, preferring, apparently, the more productive, although more distant, fisheries of the Banks and the Labrador. If they do not at present frequent our southern and western shores, it is not likely that they would come to fish on our eastern coast, where the population is so much more numerous—where the proportion of fishermen to fish is so much greater—and where the cost of establishments for curing fish, from the higher value of land there, is also so much greater. It is, moreover, the opinion of many persons of great experience and intelligence, that we can catch and cure fish so much more cheaply than the Americans, on our shores, that, other things being equal, we could afford to undersell them in their own markets. As regards the revenue, although, if the Americans were to settle in or frequent our bays and harbours, illicit trade would doubtless spring up between them and the inhabitants, yet the advantages we should derive from the necessary employment of our people by the Americans, from the hire of fishing rooms, &c., would greatly counterbalance this latter evil, in a fiscal point of view at least.

12. The mercantile community of St. John's are in some degree opposed to free trade, from the fear lest the settlement of strangers in the outports should, as it probably would to some extent, divert trade from St. John's; but, assuming this fear to be well-grounded, it cannot be contended that the prosperity of the capital is of more importance than that of all the rest of the island.

13. For these reasons, I am of opinion, upon the whole, that no well-founded objection can be urged to Her Majesty's Government entertaining and acting upon the desire expressed by the Assembly for the establishment of free trade on the basis agreed upon; and it does not seem to me seriously to militate against this conclusion, that the general feeling in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick seems to be opposed to any further concession of their fishery rights. The different character of our respective fisheries may, I think, well account for this difference of opinion between us.

14. The mackerel fishery in the bays of these provinces and in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, is that branch of industry in which they principally fear American competition. Mackerel are pickled on board ship, as soon as they are taken; the extension of their fishing grounds, therefore, is all the Americans require, to be enabled to extend in an equal degree their mackerel fishery. Cod fish, although sometimes salted on board ship, are cured on shore by a tedious and sometimes uncertain process, dependent very much upon the state of the weather. In the cod fishery, therefore, if the Americans were to cover the banks with their vessels, unless they had facilities for curing on shore, their fleets would be useless: it is in these facilities that we do, and I think always would, excel them, even after the proposed concession to them of further rights of fishery.

15. We have at present no mackerel fisheries; the mackerel having altogether deserted our shores for many years past.

I have, &c.

(Signed) KER B. HAMILTON.

His Grace the Duke of Newcastle,
&c. &c. &c.

P.S. Since writing the above, I have been requested to transmit the accompanying Address to your Grace, on the subject of free trade with the United States, adopted at a public meeting of the inhabitants of this town.