

of their own country. It was proper to avoid all harsh discussions with America, and to lay the foundations of an affection and unity, which would terminate in a grand commercial intercourse, and in a communication of mutual greatness and felicity, which might endure for ages to come. The retention of the forts in the back country would be attended with an enormous expense to no purpose, and would infallibly lay the foundation of new quarrels with America. It was alleged, that the whole province of Quebec was no object for the continuation of any war, much less such a one as we had been engaged in: the value of the goods imported from it was only about £50,000 a-year, while the government of it in six years had cost almost six millions. But the trade of the province was not given away: it was only divided in a manner advantageous to Britain. Rivalship would advance the spirit of commerce, which monopoly never can do*: and it must be remembered, that the fur of the beaver is vastly more valuable in the northern, than in the southern, parts of the country. It was alleged, that the exclusion of the Americans from the Newfoundland fishery must be an endless source of animosity and contention, and was in fact impossible to be accomplished. There are two seasons for the Newfoundland fishery. The first in February, which is less important, must be abandoned to the Americans; for no ships from Europe can be there so early †. And as to the second, and more important, fishery in May and June, it could not be refused to the Americans, who had formerly enjoyed it, without indicating the most rooted hostility to them; and for a liberty of so little importance to Great Britain, it would be most absurd to sacrifice all our hopes of the benefits to be derived from the friendship of America ‡. As to the independence of America, which some had denied the power of parliament to alienate, it was observed, that nothing was given to the Americans by the treaty, but what they had already enjoyed for several years.

The cession of West Florida, already in the possession of Spain, and the resignation of East Florida, were justified by the necessity of affairs, and the apprehension of contests with America upon their account, if we retained them: and it was asserted, that they were fully compensated by the restoration of the Bahama islands.

* But the monopoly of one nation against another, if such may be called a monopoly, is very different from the monopoly of individuals or exclusive companies against a whole nation, of which they constitute but a minute part.

† But, granting that ships from Europe cannot be there in time, are not the people of Nova Scotia still nearer than those of the United States?

‡ Does not the same argument hold good for granting them every other privilege which they formerly enjoyed as British subjects? It is curious

to observe, how very oppositely the value of our foreign possessions and fisheries has been estimated according to the circumstances of the times. The great earl of Chatham had a very different opinion of the Newfoundland fishery, when he asserted, that the exclusive right to it was an object worthy of being contended by the extremities of war.—And the now-slighted province of Quebec was trumpeted forth as of the greatest value and importance in the preceding war.