

NOTES

ON THE

NORTHERN LABRADOR FISHING GROUNDS.

THE Fishing Grounds on the Atlantic Coast of the Labrador, as far North as Sandwich Bay, have been occupied to a greater or less extent, for one hundred and twenty years. Those extending from Sandwich Bay to Cape Harrison or Webeck, have also been visited by Fishing Craft for a generation or more ; but north of Aillik, about 40 miles from Cape Harrison, the Coast has only been frequented by Newfoundland cod-fishing craft, during the last fifteen years. A Quebec and a London House have possessed detached Salmon Fishing Stations as far north as Ukkasiksalik or Freestone Point, (Lat. 56. Long. 61.) for about 30 years, but these have all passed into the hands of the Hudson Bay Company. Until the recent publication of Commander Maxwell's Surveys, our knowledge of the Labrador Coast has been chiefly derived from the Moravian Missionaries, and the surveys of certain harbours far removed from one another, by the officers of Her Majesty's vessels.

A glance at Commander Maxwell's Charts, when compared with any document published previous to 1876, shows how little is known respecting the Geographical outlines of this extended coast line, which, from its amazing fish wealth, promises to become a very important commercial adjunct to Newfoundland.

The leading characteristics of the coast north-west of Aillik are as follows :—

1st. The shore line is deeply serrated by a constant succession of profound and narrow fiords stretching from 30 to 50 miles into the interior.

2nd. It is fringed with a vast multitude of Islands, forming a continuous archipelago from Cape Aillik to Cape Mugford, averaging twenty miles in depth, from the mouth of the fiords seawards.

3rd. Outside of the Islands and about 15 miles seawards from them, are numerous banks and shoals, which form the great autumnal summer and spring feeding grounds of the cod, while outside of the shoals, there appears to be a second range of banks, which are probably their winter feeding-grounds.