

portion as the products of our fisheries are augmented, the fishermen being the largest consumers, as a class, of manufactured goods, as well as of foreign produce, from their increased ability to purchase, manufacturers will receive increased orders, and commerce in general will be largely benefited by this state of things, while the Treasury will profit also by the increased amount of Customs duties derived from importation.

"But these are not the only reasons which, at this time, prompt me more than ever, to insist on the necessity of aiding one of our most important industries which furnishes articles for exportation to an amount of more than six million (6,000,000) dollars, and which brings also to our domestic trade and consumption, produce of great value, of which, unfortunately, in this country, there is not generally a correct apprehension.

"Now, this industry is threatened, although not entirely in its very existence, yet to such an extent that if the present state of matters is not changed, instead of being prosperous as in bygone years, until lately, it will become languishing, and eventually fail in furnishing subsistence to those engaged in its prosecution—a class, as shown by vital statistics, increase with a most remarkable rapidity—and the inevitable consequence will be, that our fishermen will have largely to abandon their native shores, and emigrate to foreign countries.

"And whence this threat? From the competition of Norwegian fish—especially codfish—in the foreign markets in which Gaspé fish, until within a few years past, held first place, and had sold with facility and profit.

"The abundance of Norwegian fish for the last few years in these markets, in which, besides, it arrives at an earlier date than Canadian fish,—has caused there an important lowering of prices, so that our codfishery, carried on under the like conditions as heretofore, is not sufficiently productive to yield profits to our fishermen and merchants, at the reduced prices.

"I take the liberty of submitting to you the following extracts from a letter which I received from Mr. Henry N. DeVeulle, agent of the fishing establishment of the firm of Charles Robbins & Co., on the coast of Gaspesia—the following being what he wrote me under date of 6th January, 1881:—

"Next summer we are going to retrench and to try to economise still more than the past season.

"Appertaining to the Percé establishment, we are going to close North Beach and Anse-au-Beaufils.

"When I went to Percé, in 1878, we had 124 boats fishing. Next summer I do not intend having more than sixty or sixty-five; besides this, we will close Anse-au-Basque at Caraqueet. At Caraqueet we will keep only two or three boats, but we will increase slightly at Shippegan and North Shore. As for advances to draftmen, we are doing as usual, but we are reducing dealers a little; as you may well suppose, we will leave off those that remain in debt and keep those that pay.

"Should this coming season's transactions not be an improvement on the past, there is not much doubt that a further reduction will become imperative.

"Did I not tell you in Percé, in 1878, that the Canadian fish merchants were experiencing a competition that would become serious?

"It seems to me that the facts above stated by Mr. De Veulle do not require comment.

"For, on one hand, the codfishery in Norway, aided and encouraged as it has been by all possible means—telegraphs, breakwaters, towboats, &c., &c.—yields products of an extraordinary abundance. And, on the other hand, the fish merchants of that country, enlightened as they have been by those of their counsils who reside in fishing countries, have had for the last few years, their codfish intended for exportation to warm countries cured after the Gaspé method, instead of making it into 'stock-fish' as formerly, and it is that kind of codfish taken in such large quantities, and consequently sold at low prices, which competes so disastrously with the codfish of Canada and Newfoundland in the markets of Brazil, Spain, Portugal and Italy.

"I cannot speak extensively in this letter of the codfisheries of Norway and their immense production, but permit me to say a word of those which are best known—I mean the fisheries of the Lofoten Islands.

"The fishery of the Lofoten Islands—a group on the coast of Norway, 150 miles in extent, lying between 67° and 69° 30' N. latitude—viz.: 1,372 (thirteen hundred and seventy-two) geographical miles further north than Quebec, and 1,200 (twelve hundred) miles further north than the central part of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, yielded 26,500,000 (twenty-six and a half millions) codfish, during the fishing season of 1879, employing 26,556 men. Vessels and fishing-boats employed, 5,222.

"In 1878, for the requirements of that fishery and the fish trade, 41,709 telegraphic dispatches were sent and received at these Lofoten Islands. In 1879, these figures must have been still greater.

"Now, we must acknowledge with regret, that the productions of our fisheries have not augmented for some years past, and in certain parts they have decreased.

"But it would be necessary for our fishermen, in order to compete successfully with the fisheries of other countries, that they should augment the production. But can they do so?

"Yes!

"And how?

"By obtaining more facilities, more encouragement for the different operations, all of them difficult and laborious, which constitute the art of sea fishing.

"And what do they principally require?

"Shelter for their boats.

Mr. FORBES.

"Every one knows that on the coast of Gaspesia there is not a single port, with the exception of Gaspé Basin, which, however, is too far inland to be useful as a fishing harbor.

"Without harbors, without shelter, these fishermen lose one-third of their time.

"At each high wind or tempest, blowing on shore, they are obliged, after having discharged ballast, to haul their boats on shore.

"And when fine weather has returned, they are obliged to launch them.

"And how many boats are either injured or destroyed under these operations, which have often to be performed during one night, when the surf, rolled in by the fury of the gale, threatens destruction alike to the fishermen and their boats? At times, the wind springs up suddenly, and the sea, in consequence, rises with so much rapidity that before the fishermen can come to the rescue, their boats are smashed with the sails and outfits lost.

"In the roadstead of Percé alone, I believe, that within the last ten years, one hundred boats have been lost. Value—\$10,000.

"And when the boats are thus hauled ashore, how many fishing days are lost? For the fishermen have to wait until the return of fine weather, and further until the surf has gone down sufficiently to permit the launching of their boats.

"Often, when they are on the fishing grounds and the catch most abundant, they are seen suddenly to raise anchor and scud for the shore, and by so doing, probably, lose their best day's fishing.

"The reason of this movement is because the weather has become threatening and they fear the approach of a gale from seaward.

"In this case it is imperative that they reach land and have beached their boats before the sea has risen and breakers have formed on the shore; for, if too late in making the land, the attempt to beach is certain death to the men and future misery to their widows and orphans."

Now, Sir, I have given a statement regarding our fishing industry, and the circumstances surrounding it, as I have seen them for the last thirty-two years. My remarks have been, perhaps, too long, but I thought it better to make my statement complete, so that the House, and the Government, and the country, might know what course to take. A deputation visited the Government on this subject a few days ago. We were kindly received by the hon. Minister of Finance. What we recommend is that the Government be authorized, by this House, as the Government of Brazil has by the Parliament of Brazil, to make, during the Recess, any arrangement which they may think in the interest of the country, to extend our trade with Brazil and the West Indies. We pay over \$2,000,000 a year of duty on sugar and molasses, which are articles of food and should not pay duty. But I do not recommend that it should be abolished without getting an equivalent from other countries. Let us do in this case, as independent countries, as England, France, and other countries do. We cannot make treaties, but we can make arrangements; and those countries what do they do? In order to foster their commerce, in order to enrich their merchants, they get their best men to study the question, and the Government, by its diplomacy, does its best, to the extent sometimes to the use of retaliatory threats. What we can do is to offer to reduce, or even abolish the duties on the molasses or sugar of any country which will diminish or abolish the duties on the goods we send it. In doing that, the results would be twofold. We would increase the trade of this country, and we would procure to our people, especially the laborers, and the seafaring classes, an article of food which is not only excellent and savory, but necessary in this cold climate. I thank this House for the *bienveillance* with which they have received my remarks, and apologize for any imperfections of expression, as I would like to have used my own language, but out of deference to the majority of the hon. members of this House, and in order that my remarks might be understood by all, I have spoken in the English language.

Mr. BURNS. The thanks of this House, I think, are due to the hon. member for the vast amount of statistical information he has so intelligently explained to the House. More especially are the thanks of the people of the Lower Provinces due to the hon. member, because they are, perhaps, more than the people of the other Provinces interested in opening out and developing our trade with the countries to