

CHAPTER III.

The former policy being opposed to colonization accounts for the ease with which France acquired Treaty rights.

It seems quite clear from the positive discouragement shown to permanent settlers, the tardy organization of courts of justice, and the long delay before the appointment of a governor, that up to the time of the signing of the Treaty of Utrecht (1713) the policy of British statesmen was adverse to settlement in Newfoundland; to such an extent had the influence of the West Country merchants prevailed that the Island was regarded as a fishing station, and fit for nothing more. This attitude accounts for the ease with which the French secured certain fishing rights at the time of the Treaty. Not even strong representations from those who had hitherto so easily moulded the Government's policy towards Newfoundland, could secure the freedom of the coast from foreign competition. It was a natural result of the attitude they had laboured to produce, that statesmen readily granted fishery privileges to France. As the country was always to be a mere fishing station hav-