

excitement in England which quickly spread to the Continent, for fish in those days commanded higher prices than meat. The records show that a few English fishing vessels accompanied Cabot on his second voyage in 1498 and that the English fished in Newfoundland waters continuously from that date. They were soon joined by the Portuguese, whose famous navigator Corte Real explored the Island's coast in 1501, by the French from Normandy and Brittany, and, about the middle of the 16th century, by the Spanish Basques.

**Early Colonization and Settlement Policy.**—In the summer of 1583 St. John's was visited by an expedition of four ships commanded by Sir Humphrey Gilbert, who carried a commission from Queen Elizabeth to sail the seas and take lands under her banner. The expedition called at St. John's because it was known that provisions could be obtained there. Shortly after his arrival Gilbert set up his tent on a hill overlooking St. John's harbour, and caused the masters and chief officers of the ships of all nations there to attend while he solemnly read aloud his commission and formally took possession of the Island in the name of the Queen. Newfoundland thus became England's first possession in North America and her oldest colony, although England's title was disputed from time to time until the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713.

Although it is believed that some fishing crews wintered on the Island as early as twenty years before Gilbert took possession, no formal attempt at colonization was made until early in the 17th century. Sir Francis Bacon and his associates formed the Newfoundland Colonization Company and in 1610 sent John Guy to found a colony in Newfoundland. Guy carried with him a Charter from James I containing explicit instructions regarding the purchase of fish and cod oil, the cutting of timber for export, the raising of sheep and other matters. He settled with his 41 colonists at Cupids (then Cuper's Cove) in Conception Bay. Houses, stores and wharves were built and a fort erected. Further inland a farm and a mill were established. In 1613 the first white child was born in Newfoundland.

Guy seems to have established the first contact with the native Indians of Newfoundland, the Beothucks (Beothics) who are believed to have been a distinct tribe and not part of any of the larger tribes on the mainland. Little is known of them, for their relations with the white men, friendly at first, soon degenerated into mutual distrust and persecution, which became so bad that in the middle of the 18th century the early governors of Newfoundland issued proclamations threatening to punish anyone known to kill a Beothuck. The last Beothuck seen was a woman called Shanawdithit who was found starving in a wigwam and taken to St. John's. According to her there were only 13 Beothucks left in 1823, and after her death in 1829 no further trace of them was seen.

From the first the colonists had to contend with the hostility of the West-of-England fishing merchants, who did not welcome the competition of permanent settlers. When the merchants' petitions to the King failed, they resorted to violence and persecution destroy-