

REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE APPOINTED TO ENQUIRE INTO THE RELATIVE RIGHTS OF HOOK-AND-LINE AND COD-SEINE FISHERMEN.

The Select Committee on the disputes as to the respective rights of the Hook-and-Line and Cod-Seine Fishermen beg leave to Report, that they have given the matter considerable attention, and taken valuable evidence thereon, which they respectfully submit to the House.

Your Committee have confined themselves to the taking of Evidence where the disputes arose between the parties, say at Bay-Bulls; and although they are of opinion that Fishermen in hauling their Cod-Seines may injure the Hook-and-Line Fishermen, at particular times, yet from the conflicting statements given by the parties examined by Your Committee, (as will be seen by the annexed Evidence,) they do not feel themselves warranted in recommending to the House to pass any Act to define the limits where Cod-Seines are to be hauled, as your Committee think it would be injurious to interfere with the supposed rights of any parties carrying on the Fishery in the manner they think best for their interests to pursue, and being assured that no Act could be passed to meet the exigencies of all the cases that would be required for the Island generally.

Your Committee would further Report that the only regulation which they think can be made to do justice to all the fishing population of the Island, is by the inhabitants of the several Bays themselves settling their differences by making their own arrangements in a fair spirit of mutual concession.

Your Honorable House will see the difficulty your Committee labour under in recommending any law to be passed from the evidence of the different parties examined, particularly as to "fishing ledges";—those of one party contend that they were injured by the Cod-Seine hauling on the fishing ledges, while those of the other party say they never hauled on fishing ledges at all:—so that if a law was passed to prevent the hauling of Cod-Seines on fishing ledges, a question would afterwards arise "*what is a fishing ledge?*"

Your Committee would further Report that they think some regulation necessary to fix the size of the mesh of the Cod-Seines; and they would recommend that in the bunt of the Cod-Seine the mesh should not be less than $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches; as your Committee are of opinion that a Cod-Seine of less than $3\frac{1}{2}$ inch mesh in the bunt would be injurious to the fisheries by uselessly destroying large quantities of fish.

THOMAS GLEN, Chairman.

JOHN KENT.

RICHARD BARNES.

Select Committee.

Committee Room,, }
March 13, 1846. }

COMMITTEE ROOM, }
Feb. 7, 1846. }

The Select Committee appointed by the House on the 26th of January, to inquire into the recent disputes between the Fishermen using the Hook-and-Line, and those prosecuting the Cod Fishery by means of the Cod-Seine, met this day.

PRESENT:

Mr. GLEN, in the Chair.

The Hon. Mr. KENT.

Mr. BARNES.

MR. MARTIN WILLIAMS, of Bay Bulls, called, who stated as follows:

On the 23d of June last I first commenced Cod-seining, and continued the prosecution of the Fishery with the Cod-seine for eight or ten days; at the same time the fishermen using the hook and line were doing very little; during this time I received no interruption from the hook-and-line fishermen while shooting my seine as near or nearer to the fishing-boats as when they were catching fish. About the 18th July last the fish came upon the ground rather abundantly, and I commenced hauling fish with my seine; at that time those fishing with the hook and line were not doing much: they then (i. e. the hook-and-line fishermen) began to become dissatisfied, and threatened to haul up my seine, which they eventually did, and allowed the fish contained therein to escape. On Thursday the 17th of July they