

of tonnage at the present time is between 60,000 and 70,000, whilst the total value of the product, exclusive of the bounty she pays on each ton, may be estimated at between \$3,000,000 and \$4,000,000. Slight as is the hold France now retains on the northern half of this continent, she values it highly and clings to it with tenacity, because it gives her a *point d'appui*, or base, for the prosecution of the fisheries, which she has followed for so many centuries with such valuable results to her material wealth and her naval strength. She may colonize the islets of St. Pierre and Miquelon, but she cannot build fortifications or keep an armed force, except a few *gens d'armes* for police purposes. Under the Treaty of Utrecht it was also allowed the subjects of France "to catch fish, and to dry them on the land, in that part only, and in no other besides, of the said island of Newfoundland, which stretches from the place called Bona Vista to the northern part of the said island, and from thence running down by the western side, reaches as far as the place called Point Riche." By a subsequent treaty it was agreed that the French rights should extend from Cape St. John to Cape Ray. The French have more than once asserted an exclusive right to the fisheries on that coast, but it is now understood that they only enjoy a "concurrent right" with British subjects. The existence of these rights has long caused considerable irritation to the people of Newfoundland, and no doubt in the course of time, when the island forms a part of the Dominion, and the French coast is required for purposes of trade and settlement, some understanding will be arrived at with the French Government on the subject of these claims.

The people who have most coveted the British American fisheries are the inhabitants of the Atlantic States, who have long fished in our waters and drawn from them a considerable portion of their wealth. The importance and value of these fisheries can be

immediately seen from the disputes and difficulties that have, for half a century, arisen between England and the United States on account of the determination of the latter country to have access to these fishing grounds at all hazards. The British Government has, however, never acknowledged the validity of these claims, but has excluded the Americans from the Bays of Chaleurs and Fundy and the Strait of Canso, and from fishing anywhere within three miles of the shores, harbours, and bays of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Cape Breton and Prince Edward Island. The fisheries most valued by the Americans are those of the Mackerel, which are only now to be prosecuted with profit in Canadian waters—off Cape Breton, Prince Edward Island, and in the Bay of Chaleurs especially. They have also, during the times they have been given access to our grounds, availed themselves largely of the cod and herring fisheries within the three-mile limits of the shores of the Maritime Provinces, but it is the mackerel they chiefly covet, and for which they have always been prepared to make certain commercial concessions. Now that they are again to enjoy the rights they possessed under the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854-65, it is important to consider the value of the fisheries we concede to them, and the value of the privileges we receive in exchange. I shall, therefore, attempt to present certain facts and figures which will best illustrate a subject of considerable interest at the present juncture, when a commission must shortly sit at Halifax to consider the question whether any pecuniary compensation is due to us over and above the right which we are to enjoy—of taking our fish free into the American market.

It is very difficult to get full and accurate statements of the tonnage and value of the fish actually caught by the Americans in our waters. According to a return lately issued by the Secretary of State, Washington, the following represents the tonnage employed