

NEWFOUNDLAND.

NEWFOUND-
LAND.

— No. 1. —

(No. 38.)

COPY of a DESPATCH from Governor *Prescott* to Lord *John Russell*.Government-house, St. John's, Newfoundland,
27 April 1841.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship a memorial from the Chamber of Commerce of St. John's, with a copy of the letter to me by which it was accompanied.

This memorial appears to me worthy of much attention, inasmuch as the advantages of the proposed modifications and alterations seem to be less, and the disadvantages to be greater, for the commerce of this island than for other parts of Her Majesty's dominions.

I beg leave, therefore, to recommend it to your Lordship's favourable consideration.

I have, &c.

(signed) *H. Prescott.*

No. 1.
Governor Prescott
to Lord J. Russell,
27 April 1841.

Appendix,
Nos. 1 and 2.

Enclosure in No. 1.

To the Right Honourable Lord *John Russell*, Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State
for the Colonial Department.

Encl. in No. 1.

The Memorial of the Chamber of Commerce of St. John's in the Island of Newfoundland,

Humbly sheweth,

THAT your memorialists have seen with the greatest alarm a report in the public newspapers that measures are before Parliament to permit the importation of foreign-caught fish into Her Majesty's West India colonies, and to burthen with a duty on importation provisions and other necessaries for the use of the fishery,—measures which, if carried into operation, will be attended with immediate and extensive embarrassment to the mercantile interests of this island.

Your memorialists respectfully beg leave to remind your Lordship, that upon the return of peace in 1815 the most valuable part of this island was ceded by treaty to France, and that afterwards, by a convention with the government of the United States of America, the citizens of those states were admitted to enlarged privileges of fishery on the coasts of Newfoundland and Labrador, which concessions, made doubtless for the general benefit of the empire, were not denied by His Majesty's Government to have given this colony a just claim to their especial protection, and your memorialists, confiding in that protection, have struggled through difficulties not easily appreciated by those not interested, but the effect of which may be observed in the declining, or at best but stationary condition of the British fisheries, whilst those of their competitors, supplied at much less expense, and supported by numerous advantages, have proved thriving nurseries for foreign seamen, and have caused the almost entire extinction of the British Bank fishery, which has been thereby reduced to five small vessels.

Your memorialists further beg leave to represent to your Lordship that Her Majesty's dominions afford no other market for our staple article than the West India colonies, from whence hitherto foreign competition has been carefully excluded, and that the proposed duty of 2s. 6d. per quintal on foreign-caught fish, would afford no protection whatever to the fisheries of this island; that the French fisheries are supported by bounties equal to 9s. 6d. sterling per quintal, and those of the United States of America protected by a duty which with them, who are not extensive consumers, is found, as it was intended, to be prohibitory, amounting to one dollar per 100 lbs., and further supported by a bounty of four dollars per ton to every vessel employed in the fishery, which, presuming the catch of each vessel to be 10 quintals to the ton measurement, would amount to 2s. currency per quintal, the duty and bounty together thus amounting to 7s. 7d. currency per quintal,