

believe, that if the salt fish destined for our markets were inspected before leaving the Bay of Chaleurs or the coast of Gaspé, or even after, dealers in fish from Montreal and Upper Canada, observing the improvement produced by such inspection, and being sure of always getting an article of good quality to buy, would return to our fish markets, and give a higher price to our fishermen for their goods, and make business brisk there once more. There is no doubt that for the reasons which I have enumerated, our markets for salt fish has a very bad name and it is to be hoped that a change may be effected, and that as soon as possible.

In order to understand this well, notice must be taken of the difference between our salt fish and those of the United States; their mackerel for instance, which when salted is as white as snow, and their autumn codfish put up in pretty, neat boxes, containing from fifty-six to one hundred and twelve pounds, about the quantity required by a family. This cod has been exposed to but one day's sun, or perhaps two, and is, therefore, not too hard, and just what is wanted for the table. It is with this fish that they supply the Upper Canada markets. Why have we not been beforehand with them there? Who prevented us? Is not the cod we take in the waters of the Gulf of as good a quality as that taken on the coast of the United States? It is not that; no, but the reason I think is this, that unfortunately we do not like innovations in these matters, and in the curing of fish we continue always to follow the same process; that followed in drying codfish is very good for the markets of hot countries, but as it does not answer so well for our own markets, why should we not adopt this new method of curing? For a great proportion of the autumn codfish which is sold at low prices in Quebec and Montreal markets, would have brought good prices if prepared in the manner I have mentioned. Even salmon is not salted or packed with sufficient care. I know there are exceptions to this, and that we often see well-cured salmon in our markets, but unfortunately the contrary case is of frequent occurrences.

Besides the fish I have just mentioned, there is another which has made its appearance of late years in our markets, and which is considered as affording one of our choicest articles of food, I mean the *Finnan Haddie* or smoked haddock, which comes to us from the United States, and which certainly could also be prepared by our fishermen, for it is well known that this fish comes on our coasts every year with the codfish. It cannot cost much to cure it, and it seems to me that we might find a profit in doing so, as well as our neighbours.

ARTIFICIAL OYSTER BEDS.

It has been a question for some years, whether artificial oyster beds could not be formed in the River St. Lawrence and in the Bay of Chaleurs. In order to decide this question, the Government has caused oysters to be brought from Caraquette and planted in different places—at the Magdalen Islands, in Gaspé Basin, at New Richmond, and, last year, at Bic.

For some reason or other, although the oysters were planted with all possible care, and according to the latest and most generally adopted European method, those plantations have, unfortunately, not succeeded.

There is something strange about the fate of some of these oysters. In 1859, Commander Fortin planted a certain number of barrels of oysters, from Caraquette, in Gaspé Basin; in 1862, the bed was examined, and oysters were found, full of life, and having all the well-known qualities of Caraquette oysters. It was generally thought, therefore, that the experiment had been successful. This year, however the bed was again examined by the aid of a rake, made expressly for the purpose, and oyster-shells filled with mud and covered with black mussels (*Mytilus aedulis*) were brought up, but not a single live oyster was found. The branches which had been laid over the oysters, in 1859, were brought to the surface also covered with these black mussels, but without any oysters attached to them.

But, then, how does it happen that, in 1862, three years after those oysters were planted, several were dredged up near Mr. Le Boutillier's property, and on being tasted by connoisseurs were declared to be excellent, and that none are now living? Is it that the waters and the bed of Gaspé Basin do not agree with them? But, in that case, how is it that they lived for three years there and then died all of a sudden?