

The capital advanced by the French Government (at the commencement of the competition with the English bank fishermen) at once lowered the market price of fish to almost the cost attendant upon the sailing of the English vessel, which the French bounty alone was, and is still, equal to defray.

A French vessel of 300 tons has a crew of at least 40 men (worse fed and paid than Englishmen), and is found with from seven to nine heavy anchors, and upwards of 800 fathoms of hemp cables. She would also have from four to five large boats capable of standing heavy weather, and numerous nets and fishing-tackle made in France, one-third the expense our colonists can procure theirs.

The boats above mentioned are capable of laying out from 5,000 to 6,000 fathoms of line, to which hooks and weights are attached at certain distances, and secured by anchors.

These are termed *buttows*, and are generally shot on each bow and quarter. They are enabled, with the number of hands belonging to each vessel, to lift these lines and take the fish off frequently, both during the day and night; while the smaller English vessels manned by a weaker crew (consequent upon the greater expense), and only possessing common anchors and cables, are under the necessity of using the ordinary hot line.

Not only are the fish attracted away from them by the miles of bait spread over the bottom by their rivals, but when heavy weather occurs they are obliged to weigh; while the French remain securely at anchor with 200 fathoms of cable on end, and ready to resume their employment immediately the weather will permit them.

While we yield to the French the advantages of independent ports and unmolested fisheries, we are, on the other hand, hampered by circumstances unfelt by them; for example, their fishermen arrive from the parent state, ours belong to a thinly-peopled and dependent colony; they have their drying grounds close to the fisheries, as we have on the shores of this very colony, deriving every advantage from it, and untrammelled by any expenses or local taxes to which our people have to contribute, in addition to the aforesaid disadvantages.

The distance from France is of no moment; instead of adding to, it is the means of diminishing the expense attendant on the conveyance of the fish to Europe, for a great portion of the season's catch not sent to the West Indies is carried away by the large fleets of vessels upon their return home for the winter; while our fish merchants have to collect the produce of the season from numerous stations distributed over a great range of coast, and then again to tranship it into large vessels to cross the Atlantic.

It may also be said that our people are working for existence; the French are sent forth by capitalists, and supported by large bounties paid by their Government; hence (as I have endeavoured to show) the great reason of their success over our colonists in their more expensive mode of fishing on the Banks.

It is not surprising, then, that they have been thrown back upon the coast of the island, and have abandoned their vessels for small boats only adapted to fish close to the shore, and in the creeks and harbours.

Fortunately, the cod, the staple wealth of these seas, seems inexhaustible, so that a large revenue is still made; but the nursery for seamen has ceased to exist; while our rivals number 16,000 well-trained men belonging to the bankers, exclusive of 12,000 others attached to their fishing stations on the coasts granted to them by treaty.

Burgeo Islands.

June 24th.—The fishing is carried on throughout the year. It was good during the past winter, but indifferent in the spring; on the whole, they have had a fair catch, 6,000 quintals since October.

The fish are not so plentiful as they were five years ago. There are about 700 inhabitants residing on three islands; they are increasing in numbers; 14 years since there were only two families.

The French do not interfere with their fishing, or appear on their coasts. The caplin had not been at all plentiful, but were beginning to strike into the harbours in great abundance, and would, they expected, remain on the coast for several weeks.

They trade principally with Spain and Portugal, sending their largest fish to Cadiz, and generally commanding the early markets of both those countries,