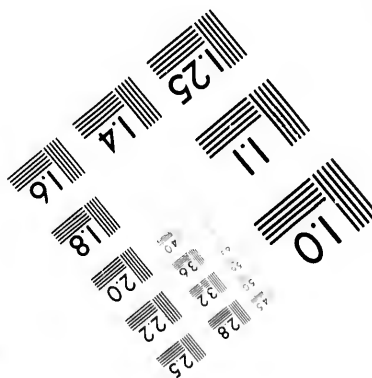
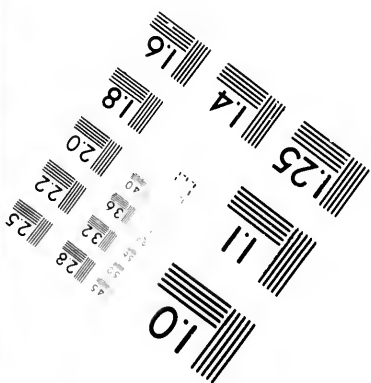
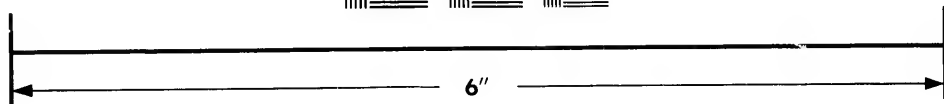
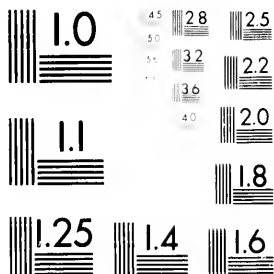


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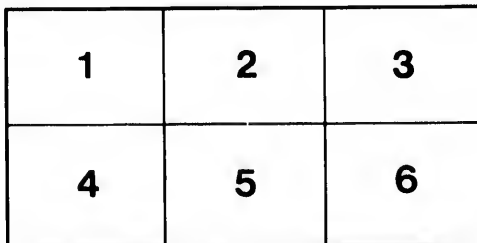
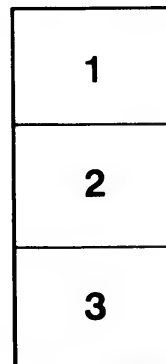
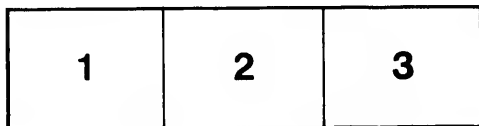
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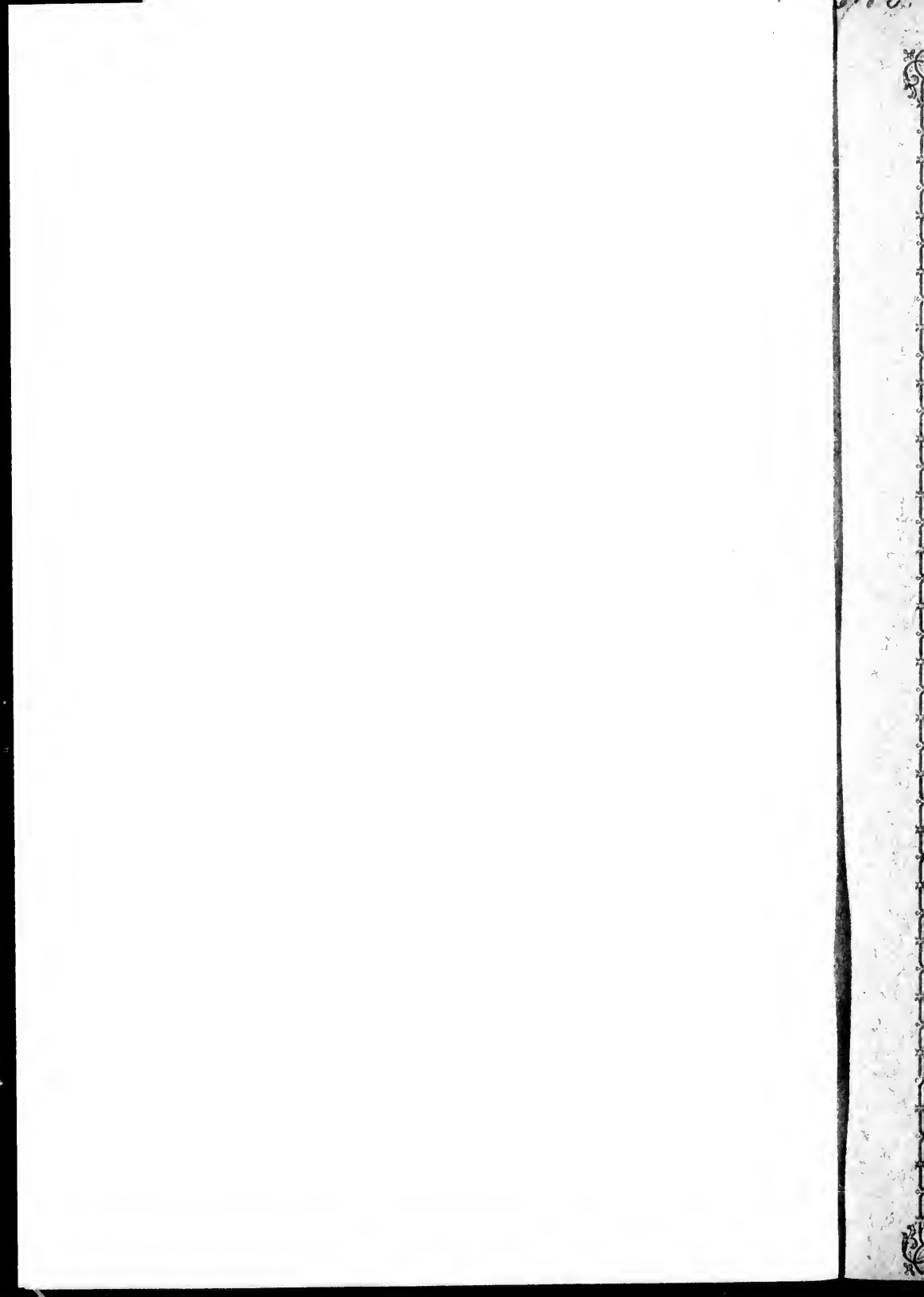
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# ANTICOSTI.

## ITS SHIPWRECKS.

What has been done since Confederation to prevent Marine Disasters.

NOTES OF A LECTURE DELIVERED

— BY —

J. U. GREGORY, Esq.,

AGENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF MARINE AND FISHERIES,

BEFORE THE

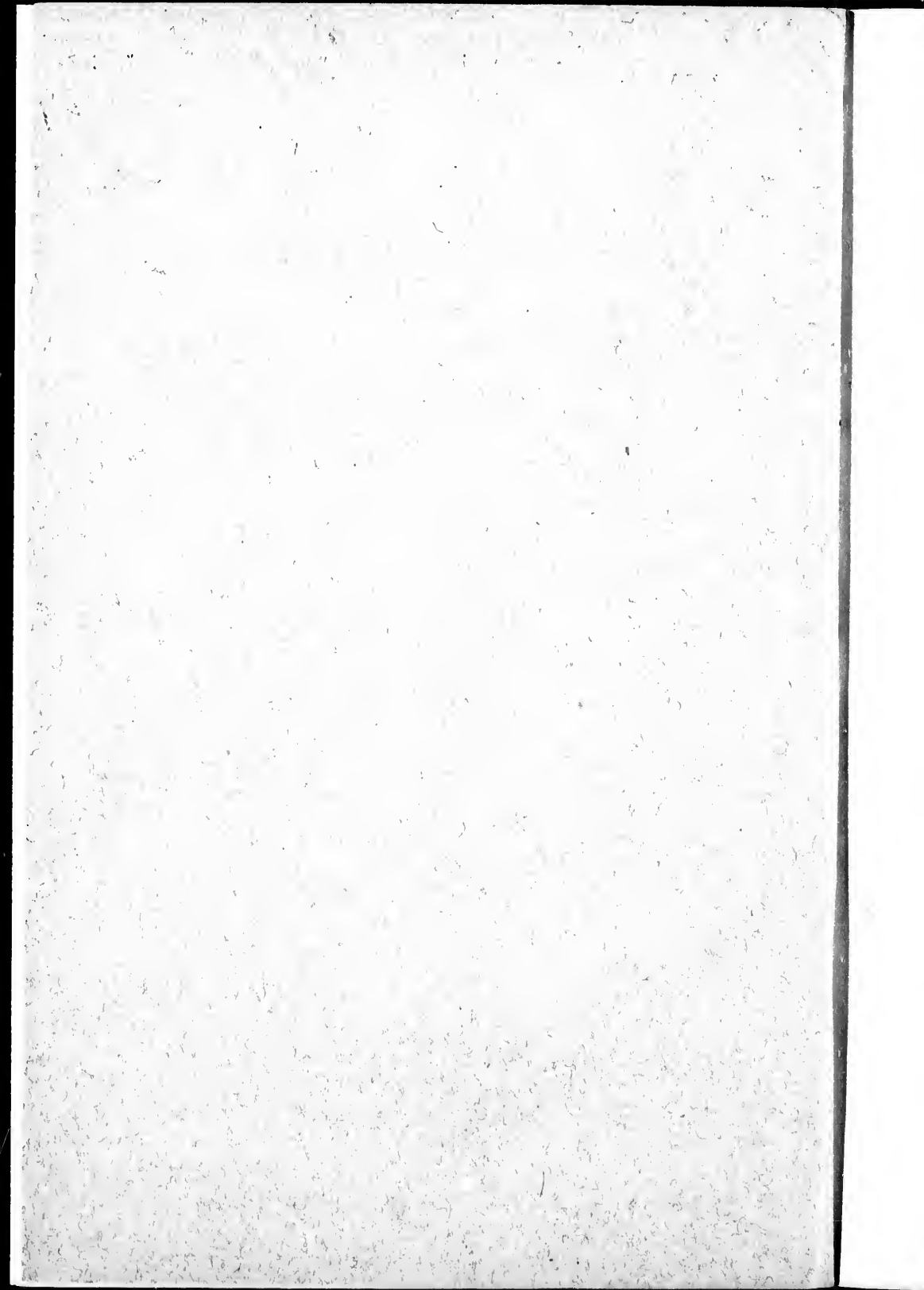
*Literary and Historical Society of Quebec,*

*On Saturday Evening, 19th March, 1881.*

QUEBEC:

PRINTED AT THE "MORNING CHRONICLE" OFFICE.

1881.



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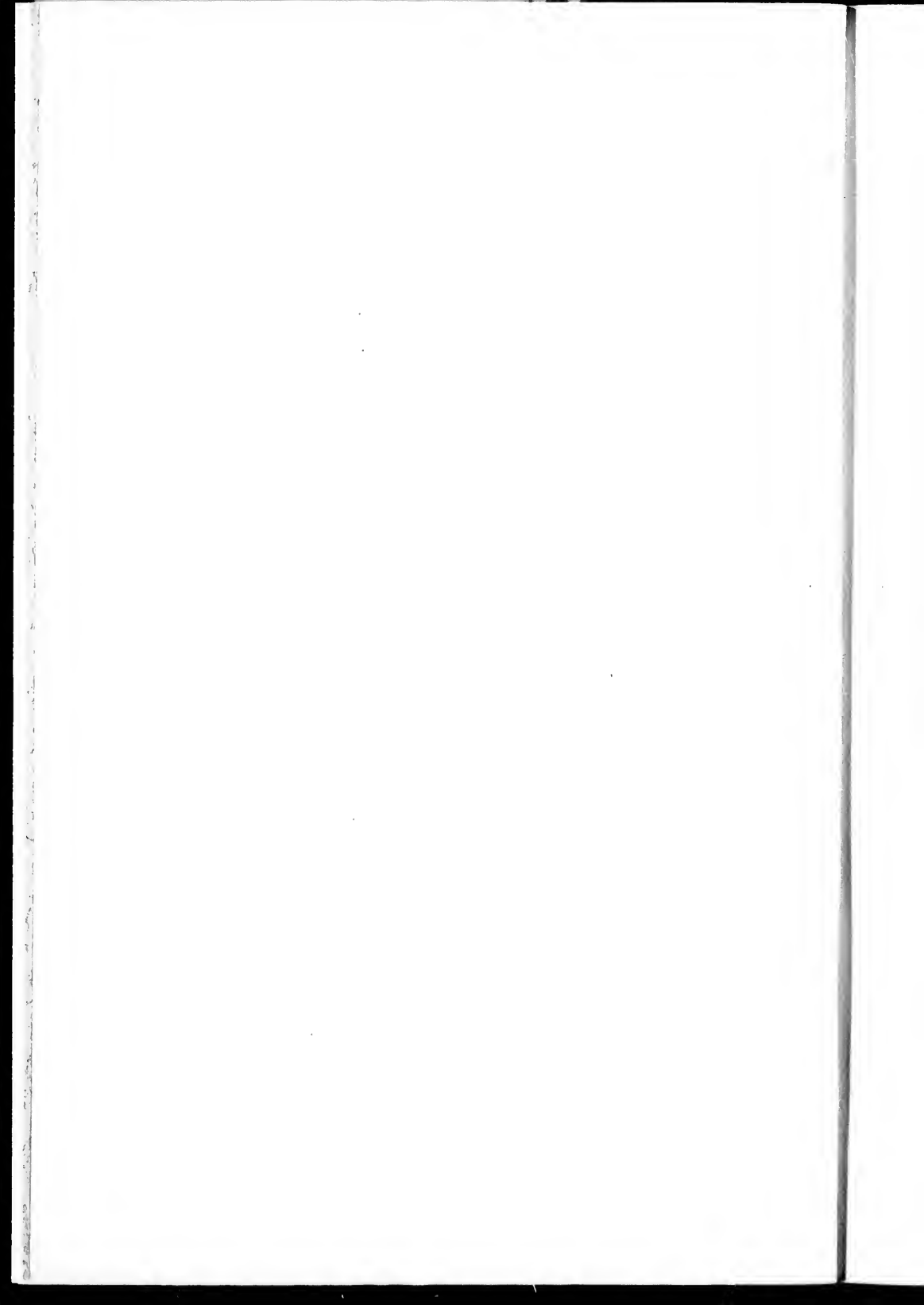
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# ANTICOSTI,--ITS SHIPWRECKS.

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What has been done since Confederation to prevent Marine Disasters.

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NOTES OF A LECTURE DELIVERED BY J. U. GREGORY, Esq.,  
BEFORE THE LITERARY AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
OF QUEBEC, ON SATURDAY EVENING,  
19th MARCH, 1881.

§

*Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

In accepting an invitation to explain to you some of the efforts made to lessen the dangers the navigator has so long encountered in visiting our shores, I have done so with a full sense of my inability to do justice to the subjects I may touch upon. In abler hands there is a fund of useful and important matter which could be worked up into a very interesting lecture. However, I shall do my best to relate, in an unvarnished manner, such facts as I have gathered, and feel sure you will kindly overlook any shortcomings in this, my first attempt at anything of the kind. I was about alluding to my recent illness—hoping to shoulder upon that circumstance, some of my weak points—but my physical appearance is so much against my gaining any pity on that score, that I pass it by, and shall trust to your indulgence.

As I proceed, I will explain to you a map of Anticosti, got up at my request in 1878, by one of our most intelligent and ingenious lighthouse-keepers, Mr. David Têtu, while he was in charge of the station at the South Point of that Island. Mr. Têtu, as you will easily see, is a man of con-

siderable ability and fond of adventure ; he has become well acquainted with all the points of interest in the Gulf, and is in possession of valuable information upon fishing, mining and navigation, which he readily places at the disposal of those whom it can in any way benefit. Having for many years past reported upon the casualties occurring in my District, it struck me that such a map would be an excellent means of illustrating the number and position of the wrecks in some given locality, and this map speaks very plainly for that dreaded Island—Anticosti. Mr. Tétu's love of adventure having induced him to become a resident of the South Point for several years, I availed myself of his kind offer to make the map.

Before Confederation we had in the Quebec District—as far as Belle-Isle --18 light-houses, 1 light-ship, 5 fog cannons and 6 provision depots. At present the district is very much larger, it includes Montreal to Quebec, the Magdalen Islands and Bay des Chaleurs, and numbers 143 light-houses, 8 light-ships, 7 powerful steam fog whistles and horns, 9 fog guns, 8 provision depots—making it probably one of the best protected coasts in the world. The mariner, once he enters the Gulf, is but a few hours deprived of the guidance of these means to steer his course. Some of the light-houses have cost this young and ambitious country enormous sums of money. The establishment at Belle-Isle cost over \$90,000.00 ; Forteau, \$90,000.00 ; Cape Rosier, \$75,000.00 ; S. W. Point Anticosti, \$34,000.00 ; and several others not far off the same price. The lantern alone at Belle-Isle, a first order Dioptric, cost £4,000 stg. or nearly \$20,000.00. That at Cape Rosier as much. They are made of solid glass over three inches thick, cut into deep prisms, and are made only in two countries in the world : France and England. (Those I mention were made in Paris, France, by Messrs. Sautter, Lemmonnier & Co.) They are in blocks ten feet high, about three feet broad, and put together in solid brass frames, forming a

round lantern, six feet in diameter. They are as clear as crystal, and made of the purest white glass. Many pieces being destroyed or laid aside from flaws before a perfect lantern can be put together; months are consumed in their manufacture. These lights are very powerful, and in keeping with any in the world, excepting the electric light only, and many navigators say they are seen as far off, and are very much less expensive. So long as a few lights were called for, the country could stand such expense, but, as our great shipping resources became developed, and wrecks more numerous, a demand was made for increased protection. Petroleum afforded a powerful medium for illuminating purposes, and a very much cheaper lighting apparatus was found reliable in the Catoptric Light, and easily managed; they are built in Canada, at Montreal, by Mr. E. Chanteloupe, whose exhibit at the last Paris Exhibition entitled him to first prizes and the decoration of the Legion of Honor. So much for home manufacture. And now our coast is dotted with fixed and revolving lights, both on its South and North Shores.

Many of the most important of these lights, seen as far off as the one on Belle-Isle, have only cost from \$3,000.00 to \$10,000.00, and ten to fifteen light-houses are now put up at the cost of one formerly. Next in importance, and in fact in thick weather of the greatest importance, is the system of fog signals, on shore, and on board of light-ships. These instruments are heard from three to ten miles off, according to state of the wind and atmosphere, and the confiding mariner, sure that he is in the right course, is often wakened to a sense of his danger by the blast of the fog horn, sound of the whistle, or boom of the cannon, when all haste is made to change the course, which was leading him on to destruction. Many a ship captain has related to me how he was saved by such timely warning, and expressed his gratitude for the fostering care of the Government in placing such admirable signals for his protection.

Since the Manicouagan and Red Island light-ships have been placed on those dangerous shoals, with their powerful double lights at night, and penetrating steam whistles in thick weather, these dreaded localities, which had formerly doomed many a noble crew to a watery grave, and engulfed many a fine ship, have become almost entirely shorn of their records of disaster.

To these means of protection for the mariner, has been added the International Code of Signals, in connection with the system of telegraphing, for which we are indebted to the energy and perseverance of the Honorable Dr. Fortin, who received from the Minister of Public Works, the Honorable Mr. Langevin, his powerful support, and now the system, in many directions, is in perfect working order, and is an invaluable boon to the great shipping interest of Canada. That you may better understand the working of the signalling by flags, I have prepared a couple of staffs in this hall. To the right, we will suppose, the staff represents the main-mast of a ship; to the left, the flag-staff of one of our light-houses, which is also a telegraphic station, with the wires in the house, and the keeper, or one of his family or assistants, an operator.

We will now suppose that a ship has left some British port, bound for Quebec, say loaded with 500 tons of steam coal, which is sure to find a ready sale upon arriving. The owner of the ship sees her off, and writes to his Agent at Quebec, that his good ship, say the "Peerless," of Liverpool, 887 tons; official number, 61,964; distinguishing signal, J. V. T. G., left with a fair wind and prospects on such a day. By the first mail steamer, the Quebec Agent gets this letter, and particulars of her cargo, with instructions to sell it, and secure a return cargo with all possible despatch. Time is very valuable in navigation, and the owner would like his ship to make one or two more voyages to and from Quebec before the treacherous latter days of November overtakes her here. Weeks roll

by, no news of the "Peerless" is heard. The Agent begins to feel anxious. Where can she be? Have winds been unfavorable? Other ships which left about the same time have arrived. Can anything have happened to the "Peerless"? He scans the maritime column of the *Morning Chronicle*, and the evening reports of the *Mercury* and *Telegraph*. At last he finds tidings; amongst telegraph reports, he learns that the ship "Peerless," official No. 61,964, passed Bird Rocks inwards. S. E. breeze. He claps his hands in contentment: the "Peerless" is all right so far; but she has yet a long and perilous journey before her—beset by shoals, reefs, treacherous currents, fogs and storms. Many days may elapse before he hears of her again, and new anxieties spring up; but the ship is wafted on her way, warned on this side by the fog alarms, led on in that direction by the lights? and beating and tacking east to west and north to south, she is many days working her way up. Again a telegraphic message is flashed up from—say Fame Point, Cape Chatte, or Matane. The ship "Peerless," official No. 61,964, passed inwards at one P.M. this day; fair weather; stiff north-easterly breeze. The Agent then feels she is comparatively safe. He sends out his clerk, who sells the cargo of coal; he secures a return cargo of timber, and while this vessel is yet 200 or 300 miles from port, her business is settled, and no time lost. I shall now endeavor to explain to you how all such news has reached here while the vessel has not been nearer probably than 2 to 5 miles from land.

#### EXHIBIT SIGNALS, &c.

The International Code of Signals, consisting of eighteen flags, has been adopted by the Maritime Powers of the World.

It was prepared by a Committee appointed by the British Board of Trade in 1855 and published in 1857. It is very simple and only requires practice to work by any one who can read the questions and answers in the books.

With 18 flags over 78,000 distinct signals can be made, and the name and number of over 50,000 vessels be given.

The flags represent only the consonants of the alphabet, and it is by a combination of two, three or four of these flags in a hoist, that arbitrary signs are made which represent words and sentences of the same signification in all languages. No Distinguishing or Divisional Flag or Pennant is used to give the same series of signals or combination of signs a different meaning. Each signal has throughout the code but one signification.

The code is composed of

- 1 Burgee,
- 4 Pennants and
- 13 Square Flags,

and, in addition, one "Code Signal" or "Answering Flag," a Red and White barred Pennant.

#### SHOW THE CODE, READ IT OUT.

The nature of the signal is indicated by the number of flags hoisted, whether two, three or four together, thus :

Signals of *two flags* with

The *Burgee* uppermost are *Attention* Signals.

A *Pennant* " " *Compass* "

A *Square Flag* " " *Urgent, Danger or Distressed*  
Signals.

Signals of *three flags*

Relate to subjects of inquiry or communication, including *Latitude, Longitude* and *Time* Signals.

Signals of *four flags* with

The *Burgee* uppermost are *Geographical* Signals.

The *Pennant C, D or F* uppermost, are *Spelling* and  
*Vocabulary* Signals.

The *Pennant G* uppermost are names of *Men-of-War*.

A *Square Flag* uppermost are names of *Merchant Ships*.

The flags to be hoisted *at one time, never exceed four*.

## A FEW SIGNAL EXAMPLES.

(These flags are run up as soon as ship is seen and flags can be made out.)

Shore Station. *Question.* B P W (3 flags) ..... Do you wish to be reported ?

Ship..... *Answer*..... C (1 flag) ..... Yes.

Shore..... B J (2 flags)..... Show your distinguishing signals.

Ship..... *Answer*..... J V T G (4 flags).... Ship "Peerless," of Liverpool, official No. 61,964, 887 tons register.

Shore..... *Question*.... B N W (3 flags) ... Where are you from ?

Ship..... *Answer*..... B D W L (4 flags).. Cardiff, Wales.

In the event of wishing to communicate from shore :

Shore.... *Question*.... B N D (3 flags).... Close in, I wish to communicate with you

B S K (3 flags) ... I have letters or parcel for you.

J B T (3 flags).... Send a boat ashore.

Ship..... *Answer*..... J C N (3 flags).... Will send a boat.

## DISTRESS SIGNALS.

In case of sickness or accident :

Ship..... *Question*... D H M (3 flags).... Captain is ill.

F B W (3 flags).... Want a Doctor or Surgeon.

Shore.... *Answer* .... F C H (3 flags).... No Doctor here.

R M F (3 flags).... Apply at.

C D P J (4 flags).. M. A. } Matane. Spelt  
C F N J (4 flags).. T. A. } by 3 hoists of  
C D R V (4 flags).. N. E. } 4 flags each.

Ship..... *Answer*..... R S J (3 flags)..... Thanks.

Shore ... *Question*..... D T J (3 flags).... Is he seriously ill ?

Ship..... *Answer*..... C M K F (4 flags).. Broken } The Captain  
C J R F (4 flags)... Arm. } has broken  
his arm.





I have lately enquired more carefully into the subject, and have called to my aid experienced navigators, and the weather records of our Department; add to these the excellent explanations made by Mr. Sewell, backed by others, I have considerably changed my mind, and have joined the rank and file of the advocates of winter navigation as far up as Quebec.

I find that the first safe winter harbour after leaving Bic would be Tadousac, about forty miles up. The next would be Murray Bay, about forty miles further up. Both places have proved safe on more than one occasion all the winter through. There is a ship, the "Mangerton," now at Murray Bay, and two of our light ships snug and safe at Les Eboulements, since winter set in.

As soon as inward bound vessels would reach Murray Bay, 80 miles up from Bic, (and I believe this perfectly practicable at all seasons), they would then have the choice of two channels to come up the last 70 miles to reach Quebec. By the system of telegraphic communication on the south and north shores, assisted by the code of signals, the vessel will learn which channel is the clearer of ice—and take the more advantageous. Should they decide upon the south channel, a long pier or block in the Traverse with range lights which serve as Beacons by day, would afford a guide to get through the most difficult part of the river. Should they continue up the north channel the traverse at the foot of the Island of Orleans is already provided with necessary range lights and beacons. It must be remembered that when one channel is full of ice, which is generally caused by the action of the wind blowing it in that direction, the other is almost free of it. From Murray Bay to Quebec is about 70 miles, and a good steamer should run up in a few hours; but if this stretch is considered too long without a harbour of refuge, would not an Ice-breaker about midway overcome this difficulty, should any really exist. There is little danger from

fogs in winter—and some winters, like the past one have had few if any blinding snow storms. We often see the Ocean Mail Steamers detained hours by fogs, in the summer season, while all through the winter, the atmosphere is comparatively clear, and now that harbours of refuge with safe anchorage are found distributed at reasonable distances, the objection I saw to the practicability of winter navigation have been greatly lessened if not entirely removed. Of course, you will please understand that I do not mean winter navigation for sailing vessels, but for good powerful steamers constructed with a view of showing a bold front to the ice.

We have had considerable Canadian produce finding its way this winter through the channel from even 50 miles above Quebec. I am informed that as far down as Murray Bay, Tadousac, Metis and even Matane, barrels of flour, boxes of cheese and barrels of apples have come ashore, having been thrown overboard from the unfortunate steamship "Ottawa," wrecked at Cap à la Roche; and I trust the day is not far distant when a safer means of winter transport will be found to convey productions of the country over the same water to foreign countries all the year round. The subject is still in its infancy, but is worthy of serious consideration.

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The Department has recently issued this circular, which will be of great advantage to early shipping :

Notice to Ship Masters sailing for Ports in Gulf and River St. Lawrence.

**No. 2 of 1881.**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that arrangements have been made by the Government of Canada, by which, with the co-operation of the French Authorities at St. Pierre, Miquelon, signals will be shown daily during the month of April, from the Semaphore established at the Light-house Station

on Point Galantry, St. Pierre, Miquelon, by which Masters of Vessels bound for Ports in the Gulf and River St. Lawrence will be advised as to the condition of the ice in the Gulf, the winds, the temperature and weather indications.

Daily despatches are received at St. Pierre, *via* Sydney, from the Telegraph and Signal Stations established by the Government of Canada last season, at South-West Point, Anticosti, Cape Rosier, Gaspé, Cape Magdalen, Gaspé, and Grosse Isle and House Harbor, Magdalen Islands, and Ship Masters desiring information as to the state of the ice and weather in the Gulf, can obtain it by lying to, off Point Galantry, St. Pierre, and signalling for information, which will be supplied free of cost.

WM. SMITH,

*Deputy of the Minister of Marine and Fisheries.*

DEPARTMENT OF MARINE AND FISHERIES, }  
OTTAWA, 15TH MARCH, 1881. }

N. B.—These signals will continue to be shown during the month of April in subsequent years until further notice.

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### ANTICOSTI.

I shall now describe to you the nautical map of Anticosti, alluded to in my opening remarks :

#### EXHIBIT THE MAP.

This map shows the place where every wreck has occurred since 1870 or the past 10 years. You will notice clusters of them in some places. Light Houses and Fog Alarms have been erected on these dangerous points to try and prevent such disasters. You will see that the vessels on the map indicate whether they are Steamships, Sailing Ships, Brigs or Schooners. The French war frigate "La

Renommée," wrecked in 1736, is also shewn, as I will allude to it in my remarks. In 10 years the Wrecks and Casualties on Anticosti number :---

- 7 Steamships,
- 67 Sailing Ships and Barques,
- 14 Brigs and Brigantines,
- 18 Schooners,

106 Vessels of about 120,000 gross tonnage, and manned by over 2,000 men exclusive of any passengers. Probably 3,000 souls have been cast upon its shores by shipwrecks in 10 years. The value of vessels and cargoes, 6 to 8 millions of dollars, or over half a million lost per annum. I shall not tire you with figures nor official statistics, but proceed simply to describe the Island as I saw it on different occasions.

The Island of Anticosti may be called the heart of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, it is surrounded by fishing of all descriptions, from the monstrous whale to the tiny caplin, and its Rivers abound with salmon and trout. Hundreds of Canadian and United States fishermen visit its waters in schooners and barges every season to earn a precarious living. It is about 135 miles long and over 30 miles broad, narrowing at each end, with an area of nearly two millions and a half acres. A considerable portion of the southern part is a peat bed about 12 to 15 feet above the level of the sea, partly covered by a thick and impenetrable forest of dwarf spruce trees about 12 feet high, their branches so twisted and matted together, that it is said a man can walk upon their tops. Swamps and small lakes are met with in every direction—the home and breeding ground of innumerable water-fowl—such as geese, ducks, loons, &c., &c. Such is the nature of the Island until a more northerly portion is reached, when it gradually rises to about 400 feet and is nowhere over 700 feet above high water mark. Here may be found extensive forests of pine, spruce, juniper,

ash and white birch—but none of a larger size than will make a mast for a 60 ton schooner. No other animal than the black bear, martin, otter, red, silver and black fox is found upon the Island—not even the hare and partridge, so common elsewhere. The different fur bearing animals are trapped in winter, and are a source of considerable profit to some of the settlers. Silver and black fox skins, in proper season, often selling at from \$30 to \$100 each. Horned cattle do not get on well on the greater part of the Island from some cause not yet properly understood, they seldom live over 18 months after arrival. It is supposed there is some sort of weed that effects them. However, there is one point: Ellis Bay, where they thrive, and I saw there some very fine cattle raised by Captain Setter. Here the land has been under cultivation for a long period, and probably the noxious weed does not exist,—but everywhere horses thrive and so do pigs. We renew the stock of cows for our Light-house Keepers every two years. The hides of their predecessors are sent to Quebec tanners, and go back by next season's steamer, to be made into shoes for the use of the family.

The southern coast is everywhere rock belonging to one great lime-stone formation, and often containing curious and interesting fossils. There are but three bays called harbours: Fox Bay, Ellis Bay and English Bay; but these are only safe in certain conditions of the wind—and then for vessels of light draught. The reefs of shelving lime-stone extend from one to two miles from the shore. No anchorage is to be found. The frequent fogs, treacherous currents, and want of harbours, have always made it the dread of the Mariner, and wrecks have frequently taken place in the most incomprehensible manner.

In an investigation held by me last fall into the cause of the loss of the S.S. "Cybele," it was shown that a few hours before the disaster, this vessel had taken her proper bearings and course to avoid the Island—had distinctly

seen the land several miles off, and was thought by all on board to be in a perfectly safe road. The weather thickened, a cloud was seen in the distance, hanging over what was supposed to be the back of the Island, yet this vessel struck  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles from the shore. This could only be accounted for by the fact that a mist from the swamps had arisen and so covered the low peat-bed as to cause it to appear like the water, also mist covered, and it was only when the boat was lowered and rowed towards the Island that they knew they were so near. Treacherous currents had gradually drawn this vessel out of its safe course; the day's reckonings were thereby deranged—and the ship at full speed struck the rocks. When the question was put to the witnesses one after the other: "Why the sounding had not been regularly taken," the answer from them was, that they believed they were 4 to 5 miles from land and in 40 fathoms of water. This vessel became a total wreck.

In former times, the poor shipwrecked mariners and passengers found themselves upon an Island affording no means of sustenance, and the sufferings of the crew of the French frigate "La Renommée," who realized a Winter of horrors, starvation and deaths, so graphically related by our esteemed President, in his Chronicles of the St. Lawrence, will afford you some idea of the awful fate which awaited the unfortunate castaway, upon that dreaded Island. But much of this is now changed. Government cannot remove the dangerous reefs nor change the treacherous currents; but by placing light-houses, fog guns and powerful steam-whistles on the most exposed points, on the approach of thick weather, their bright light or penetrating sound warns the passing vessel to change its course and seek a safe path. When an ill-fated vessel strikes, and the crew, half-drowned, and often half clad, reach the shore, they have but to follow the beach in any direction, when they will soon come to a sign-board fastened to a tree, which will buoy them up with hope—for in several directions

will be found these boards, with a hand painted upon them, the finger pointing to the road, and the words, "so many miles to the provision depot and house of refuge." Here will be found a kind keeper, provided with 15 brls. flour, 7 brls. pork, 5 brls. peas, some preserved meats, clothing, blankets, and a well-filled medicine chest, and a warm house, till their fate is made known and they are taken off the Island and brought to the mainland, whence they are sent to their homes. The British Board of Trade paying liberally all the expenses for British Registered Vessels' crews; foreign Consuls for those of the nations they represent, and the Dominion Government for crews of Dominion Vessels.

In November last, the British Barque "Bristolian," Capt. McLimont, with a crew of 15 men, and the Canadian Brigantine "Pamlico," 9 men, were wrecked on Anticosti; the former near Becksie River, the latter at Strawberry Bay. I am told that the few fishermen at Strawberry Bay went up to their arms in the ice and the water to help to take the nearly frozen, dripping wet crew off the "Pamlico;" they built fires on the shore, warmed them, and took them to their homes as soon as they could move—all were saved.

But the poor fellows of the "Bristolian" fared far worse; the high billows of the ice-cold sea rolled over the ship, carried away one of the crew, unable to keep his hold on account of ice, and wetting the other poor exhausted sailors to the skin, two of whom dropped upon the deck and lay there frozen corpses with probably 12 feet of ice over them. Two more of the crew died shortly after reaching shore, from exposure. The others, probably possessed of warm clothing, yet frost-bitten and wet, were taken into the small hut of the only fisherman in the locality, where they met with the most christian kindness, but must have been a heavy addition to a family already scantily supplied with the necessaries of life.



A man was despatched 42 miles to the S.W. Point telegraph station, the only one yet in operation, and, a few hours after the disaster, the fate of these unfortunate people was flashed over the cable and made known, and my Department took the matter in hand. As soon as a vessel could be secured from the nearest point, it was sent over with provisions, medicine and a Doctor to assist these poor people. She reached the Island two days after, and the crews received all possible care. Capt. McLimont was found in a delirious state from his sufferings. The men managed to walk some 14 miles to Ellis Bay, and the Captain, wrapped in blankets and tied down on a dog-sleigh, called a Commetic, was dragged over the ice-bound coast to the same place. On the road, the sleigh broke through the ice, and the poor suffering Captain was immersed in water up to his neck, and it was feared would disappear under the ice. Fortunately, the men, though cold and shivering, dragged him out; owing to the number of blankets over him he was not wet through, but when he arrived at Ellis Bay he was completely enveloped in ice. A few days later, a small schooner, caught in the ice at Ellis Bay, was enabled to get out. The Captain and crew of the "Bristolian" and "Pamlico," with Messrs. Lloyd and McDonald, two gentlemen from Montreal on a prospecting tour, overtaken by the sudden cold weather, were hurried on board and sail was set for Gaspé, where, next day, they arrived safely, the sails one stiff sheet of ice, and perfectly immovable. The crews, as soon as clothed and properly furnished with moccasins and plenty warm socks to cover their tender frost-bitten feet, were sent on a six days land journey to Campbelton, whence they were forwarded to their homes, by rail, and steamship from Halifax. Poor Captain McLimont was left behind at Gaspé, suffering from his frozen limbs; and recently part of his feet and hands were amputated. One of the crew of the "Pamlico" also remained at Gaspé under

medical treatment, but is now, as well as the Captain, recovering. Dr. Shea, sent over to attend the sick, by some means did not reach the schooner "Wasp" in time, and yet remains separated from his family, and actually a prisoner on the Island, he went over to help to bring others off. There also remains three of the "Bristolian's" men who were too ill to be removed. The disasters to shipping last fall, awakened much sympathy in the hearts of the people ashore and caused our Department great anxiety. But, while the public remembering the horrors they had read and heard of, which the poor castaway might expect on Anticosti, were on the *qui-vive* for news, we published all the messages received, and, as often as possible, the answers I sent; and I may here state that in 4 days I received and answered from above and below Quebec, 93 telegraphic messages, nearly all connected with disasters, and the plans to adopt to prevent others.

As to the means of supporting life on Anticosti, I am happy to say that Government, with a view to helping the inhabitants and shipwrecked people, generously placed at my disposal sufficient funds to carry out a plan which has been attended with the happiest results.

In 1874, owing to the number of fishermen from Newfoundland, who by the glowing promises of an Anticosti Company, managed by a venturesome foreigner who thought he could found a colony and thereby make a fortune, whole families were induced to leave their homes and settle on this land of great promise. They were provided with means to build houses, and some supplies for which they were expected to pay in fish,—but it was not long before the company came to grief, and at the approach of winter—no more provisions could be got from them. Our light-house keepers wrote most doleful accounts of the state of affairs; and as our Depots would be emptied by these poor people to prevent them from starving, if any shipwrecks should take place, the crews would be without

succor,—to prevent this the Steamer “Napoleon” was sent down with 100 barrels of flour, which was given to the people. The next fall the same danger being apprehended and Government finding these people becoming a burden, I was commissioned to go to Gaspé—there await the Steamer “Lady Head,” sent from Halifax for the purpose—and my instructions were to take the people off the Island and send them where they came from or where they might choose to go. But finding that they had no longer homes in Newfoundland, and if brought to Quebec would be helpless paupers, in the face of a severe winter—I telegraphed these facts to Ottawa, and having learned that potatoes grew in abundance wherever planted, I recommended that a certain sum be allowed me to buy 200 or 300 barrels of potatoes in Gaspé, which with other supplies the people be helped through another winter, and by furnishing seed potatoes upon condition that they would cultivate them, that in a short time they would be better off and be able to help care for shipwrecked people, for which they would be liberally paid. My request was granted, and I visited all the settlements upon the Island. I called the inhabitants together—four or five families in some places, a few more in others. I enquired into their condition, number, age and resources; finding them well disposed and having no desire to leave. I distributed carefully the supplies and got them to appoint one of their number to receive one barrel of seed potatoes for each family, and all were to aid in safely stowing them out of danger from frost, and gave besides to each family 3 barrels to eat. For every barrel of potatoes sown about 40 barrels are harvested. Each family cleared a small patch of land next spring, and about two years after, potatoes were so plentiful that a schooner load was sent up to Quebec for sale; and since then they are grown in abundance. The soil is good and when exhausted, at their very doors they have tons of one of the best of fertilizers in the sea weed. When the wrecks took

place, last fall, we knew well that it was easy to pick up 500 bushels of potatoes ; There was some flour, pork and peas in our depots : several head of fine cattle at Ellis Bay ; several fat pigs at English Bay, descendants from Col. Rhodes' stock ; lodgings for all ; fuel and fresh water at hand ; and that Anticosti so long the dreaded Island where starvation stared the shipwrecked people, was now able to furnish better food, shelter and warmth, than hundreds of poor people at this moment enjoy in the large cities of Quebec and Montreal,—and I did feel happy in the knowledge that the fostering care of the Department I serve had made me the instrument to bring about some of these happy results.

The climate at Anticosti is not more severe than that of any of the Maritime Provinces. The soil is good, and it can produce the same cereals, vegetables, and probably fruits most of the lower Provinces do. Although it has no natural harbours for large vessels, some of its bays, by throwing out break-waters, could easily be made harbours of refuge. There is plenty of timber and stone at hand if wanted for that purpose. The Island has been neglected. In 1680, it was granted by the French to Louis Joliette, in reward for his discoveries of Illinois and further services rendered the French Government, and after the conquest, it fell into the hands of some wealthy families living in England, and a portion of it is also owned by parties in Canada. It is only within a very short time that anything good is said of Anticosti, and I suppose it will take ages before it will become anything of an agricultural place, owing to its isolation and the class of people devoted only to fishing, who make it their home. There is a charm about a fisherman's life, and he seldom leaves it for any other calling.

Notwithstanding all that has been done to protect the inward and outward ships visiting our ports, wrecks still occur, but not so often in the same places as formerly ; they are generally some few miles away from where the

light-houses and fog alarms have been put. Formerly from Trinity Bay to Red Island many wrecks occurred, and the loss of life was very great indeed. Since the establishment of Seven Islands, Egg Island, Portneuf Light-houses, Manicouagan Shoals, and Red Island Reef Light-ships and fog alarms, for years past, but few wrecks have taken place on the North Shore.

It was on Egg Island that eight heavily laden British transports, on the night of the 22nd August, 1711, were stranded and over two thousand corpses strewed the beach of the Island and the mainland shore, when the vessel sent down there by the French to save property arrived. The neighbourhood is known as La Pointe aux Anglais. Mr. Lemoine gives notes from Sir Hoverton Walker's Journal of this ill-fated expedition in his very interesting book, *The Chronicles of the St. Lawrence*. When I visited Egg Island last summer with His Excellency the Governor-General, we were shown an old cannon, taken out of the sand from this place, belonging to some of the unfortunate vessels, it was perfectly honey-combed; on a bright, clear day, they are often seen lying at the bottom of the sea, and I expect one up next season which I shall present to this Society's Museum.

The Department of Marine is about erecting other lights and fog alarms on the coast, to further complete its system.

I cannot close my remarks without speaking of another branch of service which has also called for the prompt and generous action of the Provincial as well as the Federal Governments. The poor fisherman, living far away from the civilized world, often suffers severely from the vicissitudes his precarious calling exposes him to, and I cannot better illustrate this than to relate to you some facts connected with a mission I was entrusted in 1868.

In the early part of the fall of that year, the then Governor General, Lord Monk, received a letter from the Captain of H. M. S. "Spinix," who had just returned from a cruise to

the Labrador Coast, calling his attention to the deplorable condition of the fishermen, and cited one case in particular, that of a family at Bradore Bay, named Js. As this portion of the coast was within the limits of the Province of Quebec, it became a matter for the Provincial Government to look after; but the Department of Marine offered the services of the S. S. "Napoleon," which was soon visiting the light-houses in that direction, to render any assistance required. Sir Narcisse Belleau was then the Lt.-Governor, and the Hon. Mr. Chauveau, Premier of the Province. They requested my Department to allow me to go down and enquire into the facts and assist the sufferers—I was commissioned by the Provincial Government to represent them, and generously supplied with \$2,000 and carteblanche to use it as I thought best for the purpose of alleviating their wants, and also to bring away any of the people desirous of leaving.

On the 22nd September, after placing on board the "Napoleon" over 300 brls. flour, meal and other provisions; powder and shot for those who might have guns and could kill game, I left Quebec. I need not relate to you any of my adventures during the first three weeks of my trip, but will endeavour to describe to you the condition of the one family the Js', as an example of many others similarly situated. We reached Blanc Sablon, the extreme point of Canadian Labrador. A small river here separates Canadian from Newfoundland territory. I visited over 30 fishing settlements. The people in summer living on Islands where they carry on fishing (the whole coast of Labrador is dotted with Islands.) In winter they move off to the mainland, where they have warmer houses, and are near to fuel, which they haul upon commetics from miles away where it is found in the ravines. Each family owns five or six dogs for this purpose. Many of these families were in the greatest want, with a Labrador winter of over eight months duration—before them. They were all liberally as-

sisted. On the morning of the 13th of October, I went ashore at Blanc Sablon, where I found a few fishermen connected with a large trading establishment, who collected fish and loaded vessels for a Jersey firm. This point being a depot, where all the surrounding fishermen brought their catch and traded it off for provisions, clothing and other wants. My first enquiry was for the family of J——. I was informed that they lived at Bradore Bay, eight or nine miles off, and that owing to the heavy sea, I could not reach the bay in a boat, but could do so by land, with the assistance of a guide who would show me the road over the mountains.

Mr. Duhamel, late keeper of East Pt. Anticosti lighthouse, then on his way to Quebec with us, volunteered to accompany me on my journey. Dressing warmly but as light as possible, shod with light Esquimault seal-skin boots, and our pockets filled with biscuits, we started on our tramp, our guide, a fisherman, formerly from St. Malo, France, leading the way. Owing to the yielding moss-covering to the rocks and the pleasantly cold weather we travelled fast; our talkative guide pointed out to me many interesting places, and helped to while away the time. When about five miles on our way we saw coming towards us a tall, dark complexioned man, about 40 years old, dressed in canvas, a tarpauline hat, and his feet covered with raw seal-skin slippers. Our guide hailed him by name, and I thereby learned that it was poor J—— himself, who was on his way to the Bay, to try and get something to save his family from starvation. His haggard shivering appearance denoted suffering and want. I approached and gave him my hand which he politely shook and answered my commonplace questions with intelligence and courtesy. I requested him to turn back, as I wished to visit his establishment, not letting him nor the guide know the nature of my mission. He answered that it was a sad place to visit, as his fishing had failed for so many years that he was reduced

to poverty—and he supposed I knew enough of Labrador to understand that fishing was his only means of earning a living. At one time his family were in a position to entertain gentlemen, and that the late Mr. Noel Bowen, of Quebec, had spent his holidays there when on a visit to his parents, and that Dr. Fortin, when in charge of “La Canadienne,” had dined there with other gentlemen,—the family being able to entertain them sumptuously, but all this was terribly changed. I gradually led him on to speak of his future prospects, which certainly appeared very discouraging. I asked whether he would not like to leave the coast with his family, and remove to some place where the earning of a living was more to be depended upon. He answered that he was born on the coast, had never left it, and would not do so now, he was unfit for any other life, and that he owned the best sealing station in the neighborhood. In former times his father had been considered a wealthy man, often clearing \$6,000 to \$8,000 per season with his seal fishing, but he had spent all in law suits and failure of seal fishing had reduced them to their present condition. From a prevalence of westwardly winds, the bay at the time seals should strike in became so blocked up with ice, that they could not set their nets. Every season for some years past being equally unfavorable, his father and mother went away, leaving the fisheries to himself and brothers, but they soon got discouraged and left him also. His parents died somewhere near Quebec. He being the last to remain would never forsake the old spot. I told him that I could arrange it in such a way that it would cost him nothing to do so, if he would consent to leave, but this he decidedly objected to. He loves the old place, and buoys himself up with the hope of soon meeting better success. He related an instance of another fisherman similarly situated, who had caught no seals for some time, but by a sudden change of wind his bay was cleared of ice; nets immediately set, and in two



or three hours over 500 seals were captured, each seal being worth about \$4. The wind soon after shifted around blocked up the Bay again with ice and he caught no more seal that season. Poor J—— hoped for some such good luck. We now came in sight of his house: a large wooden building in a very delapidated condition; all the material used in its construction had been brought down in schooners from Quebec. J—— remarked that this was their summer house; they have another smaller one in the interior nearer wood. When we reached the building, I perceived that many panes of window glass were broken, and their house appeared very bleak indeed. After he had gone forward and tied up a half-starved wolfish looking dog, which he said was vicious to strangers, we followed him in by the back door, through what had once been the kitchen. The flooring in places had been pulled up. Seeing that I noticed this, J—— stopped and explained the reason why it was so:— He said that last Spring, during cold weather, having removed to this house to be ready to begin his fishing operations, he was so weak for want of nourishment, that he had not sufficient strength to go for wood, and was obliged to burn some of the flooring to prevent his family from perishing from cold. Looking around, I found the partition had been grained in imitation of oak. We passed on till we came to the front hall, on each side of which I could see rooms through the open doors. The floors were painted in different coloured squares, and on the walls of the parlour and principal rooms, hung the remains of costly French paper-hanging, representing hunting scenes, nearly half life-size; but there was no furniture left in any of these rooms, but in another room was found a stove, a three-legged stool, pine table and a large bundle of nets. We were asked into this room and entered it. I asked J——s to allow me to see his wife and children. He answered that they were hardly sufficiently clad to show themselves, but that he would go up stairs and try to induce them to

come down. After some delay, I heard some one descending the stairs, apparently labouring under a distressing cough, it was his poor wife, followed by five of his daughters, ranging in age from three to twelve years. Mrs. J—— had on a very thin faded cotton jacket and a skirt made of an old boat's sail, but perfectly clean. I do not think that she had on any flannel or other warm clothing. She had neither shoes or stockings. In entering the room she made a very lady-like bow, and stood opposite to me near the stove, until I insisted she should occupy the only seat in the room. Mr. Duhamel and myself seating ourselves on the bundle of nets. Oh! what a sad face this woman had, want and suffering were plainly marked upon it, as well as her emaciated figure; she had evidently been very handsome, fair and rosy in younger and happier days. She was about 35 years of age and told me she was Scotch, and born in Glasgow. She came out to Halifax to visit a sister who had been governess in a merchant's family with whom the J——s did business. Some time after her arrival, J—— brother, who was then considered rich and prosperous, married that sister and she came over to Labrador on a visit to them. Here she met and married her brother-in-law, and, for many years, had every comfort and was happy. But what a change has since taken place; starvation frequently stares her in the face, and in consequence, she had become very sickly.

They had nine children, the eldest a girl of sixteen; next a boy of about 14. Both were away with a gun and their last charge of powder, trying to shoot the largest bird they could find, to furnish a scanty meal for the family. They had been living for many days on small trout caught by the children in a stream close by. They had neither pork nor grease of any kind to cook their fish in, nor had they any other food whatever; in fact these small fish and water had kept them alive. The poor children were very thin

and nearly naked; none had worn shoes or stockings for a long time, winter or summer.

I asked J——s whether he could not make some sort of covering for their feet with sealskins. He answered yes, but they needed food first and sealskins were traded for flour to prevent them from starving.

Mrs. J——s remarked in sad tone, "all will soon be over, for we cannot live through another such Winter as the last, and the one now near at hand, finds us even worse provided." I told her that on the way to their house, I had spoken to her husband about leaving that miserable place, and asked her to try and persuade him to accept my offer and leave at once. She turned her large, sad consumptive eyes kindly upon him and answered that whatever he considered best to do, she would consent to. Looking around upon the poor hungry children, I remembered that we had our over-coat pockets loaded with biscuits, for our own and guide's lunch. Mr. Duhamel and I rose from off our seats, and distributed these amongst them by handful. I shall never forget the manner in which those biscuits were devoured. Turning to J——s I said: come, get ready; I will wait for you, and provide for you and your family, and land you at some place where you can find work for yourself and son, and where you can bring up your family to a new life, educate them, and every one can become useful, and where, in trouble, you will find kind neighbours willing to help you. This is no place to settle down on, with such a fine family, especially so many girls. What prospects have they in life? Do you wish to see them married to men as poor as yourself? and, again, going over the suffering life you are now passing through. God forbid, he answered, I would do anything to improve their condition, but I am unfit for any other life than that of a fisherman and will not yet forsake this old spot where I was born. I learned that last season, not being able to obtain on credit the necessary outfit to carry on fishing alone, he agreed with

some parties, if they did so, he would give them the privilege of using his Bay ; himself and son to help for one-third of the catch, for their pay. His share was only fifteen seals, value about \$60, and did not cover his indebtedness to his partners. Seal carcasses he salted down for food for his dogs for the winter, but they were forced to eat most of them themselves. Such meat he said is tough and rancid and most difficult to digest and made them sick. One little girl, however, managed to eat it. She would cut off a slice, freshen it in water, warm it upon the stove and eat it. This child he called hard times.

He showed his last bill at the traders, to whom he was yet in debt ; there were no other items but those of flour, sea biscuits, a few nails, twine and thread. No pork, tea, sugar, molasses nor tobacco ; these being too great luxuries for them. They charged fifteen dollars per barrel for flour, nine dollars per cwt. for common sailor biscuits, fifteen cents per pound for nails—to be exchanged for fish at a low price. In justice to the traders, I must remark that if their prices appear very high, they frequently loose considerable ; for when a fisherman wont pay or can't pay, they must loose. There is nothing to be got, for they own neither land or other property. This unfortunate family had traded of all their furniture, little by little, and even sold their feather beds to trading schooners. J—s asked me to step outside and he would show me his Bay and describe the mode of catching seals. In doing so, we passed a small lot which had once been handsomely enclosed, and was the burying-ground of the family, in which were three or four handsome marble tombstones, marking the last resting place of some of the family, who had died in their better days. I greatly feared, said J—s, speaking of them, that several more graves would have been added to the number last Winter, or may before next Spring, but there will be no marble tombstones to mark them. From an elevation, he pointed out to me the Bay, horse-shoe

shaped, in which, in former times, so many seals were caught. He told me that often, from the spot we were then upon, last Spring, while his family was starving, he had seen thousands of seals on the ice, but they were too far off to venture after them, as a change of wind or the ice breaking away might carry him off to sea.

From what I could learn, seals when in their best condition to yield oil, seek such bays, when they are free of ice, and delight in getting near the shore, and congregate in immense numbers, in such quiet sheltered harbours. To catch them, the fishermen attach one end of their long nets made of cord about as thick as a lead pencil, to a capstan ashore at one side of the bay. Loading one or two boats with the net, which is very long, they then row straight out as far as the net will allow, and then cross over to the other side, encircling the seals. This end is also attached to another capstan on the other side of the bay, and wound in by the men on shore. As soon as the seals find themselves prisoners, they dive and endeavour to make for deeper water, and in doing so run their heads into the meshes of the nets, push forward with all their strength, and never draw back; most of them are thus strangled, and those remaining alive are drawn by the net near the shore and killed by the men with clubs.

Js. had serviceable nets and a couple of boats, and was fitted out to catch seals, should the next season prove favorable. As it was now getting late, and we had a long walk before us, and wishing to call on some other families on our way back, we entered the house to bid good-bye to Mrs. Js. and the children. I told Mrs. Js. that it was quite evident to me that her husband would not leave the bay, and supposed he thought his reasons for not doing so, were very good; but I hoped their condition would soon change for the better and the next time I visited them to find them surrounded with comfort and happiness.

"Thank you, Sir, she answered, for your good wishes and encouraging words. I hope that they may soon be realized."

I had not as yet said a word about my leaving them any provisions; but the words which were to convey this happy information were trying hard to force themselves from my lips, and I had difficulty in repressing them. But what secret joy I experienced in the knowledge that I would soon change their dreadful fears into happiness. I then told her that I must return to Blanc Sablon, and that if her husband would come with me I would leave with him sufficient food and anything else I could obtain to keep them through the long winter so near at hand—to take courage, and heaven would reward her for her patience and sufferings.

Tears of joy streamed down her cheeks; the gratitude she expressed was without bounds, and blessings were showered upon those who had come to their rescue, and were about saving them from utter despair and starvation. It was now my happy moment—and I told her how generously Government had acted in commissioning me to enquire into their condition, and relieve their distress.

I can never forget that poor woman's astonished look and grateful expressions.

A silent shake of the hands, for no one could speak; beckoning Js. to follow, we left that house of suffering and want filled with sudden new-born hopes, and hastened on our journey back. Js. on the road become quite gay, and said so many things in an absent-minded way, that he asked me to excuse his manners; for the past hour had so changed his prospects for the Winter, that he was quite besides himself and hardly knew what he was saying. On our road back, I visited two other families, also very badly off for provisions, but fairly supplied with clothing. At about 7 o'clock in the evening, we reached Blanc Sablon Bay. Js. said he would wait at a fisherman's house, until I should send the articles I intended giving him ashore.

A signal brought the steamer's boat to the shore for my companion and self, and we were soon on the deck, tired and hungry as may be expected, after our eighteen or twenty miles tramp without food.

We had hardly got safely on board before the wind freshened, and soon increased to a fearful gale, and it was impossible to launch a boat with the supplies I had promised to send Js., and the poor fellow passed an anxious night. Dreading that we might depart without doing so, at an early hour next morning the steward of the "Napoleon" knocked at my room, and announced that a man had come off from shore and was on deck waiting for me. I at once got up and dressed. On reaching the deck I found poor Js., who had borrowed a boat and rowed out to us. When our captain and engineer saw him, tears started from their manly eyes, for I had, during the preceding evening, related to them the condition I had found his family in; and his haggard, half-clad, shivering appearance corroborated all I had said. The late Captain John Smith, Light-house Inspector, who was on board with his daughter, were very kind indeed, and liberally gave some of their own clothing. Mr. Duhamel, also, from his trunks in which he was taking up to Quebec a quantity of his family's clothing, also contributed a good share of useful articles of female wearing apparel. I spread out upon the floor of the cabin a large camping blanket and called upon the officers and crew of the steamer to give or sell me any useful article of clothing they could spare. I soon collected boots, socks, coats, flannel shirts, pants, mits and caps which made a large bundle. I also added a quantity of powder and shot, gun caps, tobacco, pipes, matches and some tea and sugar for poor Mrs. Js. These were all tied up in the blanket and carried on deck. I then followed it, and found that Js., as I had ordered, had been taken below to the officer's mess-room, and was seated before a good warm breakfast of ham and eggs, smoking hot potatoes and a cup of good coffee.

I told him to try and eat a good meal. "I find the food excellent," he answered, "but when I think they have nothing at home for breakfast, I cannot enjoy it myself; my appetite leaves me. I said all I could do to induce him to make a hearty meal, but he soon left the table, evidently anxious to get home, with something for his wife and children. I therefore ordered the long-boat to be manned by a crew of hardy sailors. Several barrels of flour, meal, peas and pork were put in it, sufficient to carry them through the long winter—the bundle of clothing crowned the lot—and Js., seated near his treasure, was rowed ashore. The thanks and blessings of that happy man still ring in my ears. What joy must have been in his house when he returned loaded with comforts they were so long strangers to. Cariboo and the white partridge or ptarmigan, are to be found not far off, and with powder and shot he no doubt added game, during the winter, to his other supplies.

In conclusion, I am happy to state that the next year brought better luck to poor J. He was fortunate enough to make a good season's fishing, and I understand has lived comparatively well ever since; but his poor wife did not live long to share his good luck. She soon after died of consumption.

There has been no period in my official career which I look back to with as much happiness as I do upon this mission, when I was the instrument of relieving so much suffering by the generosity of a paternal government.



