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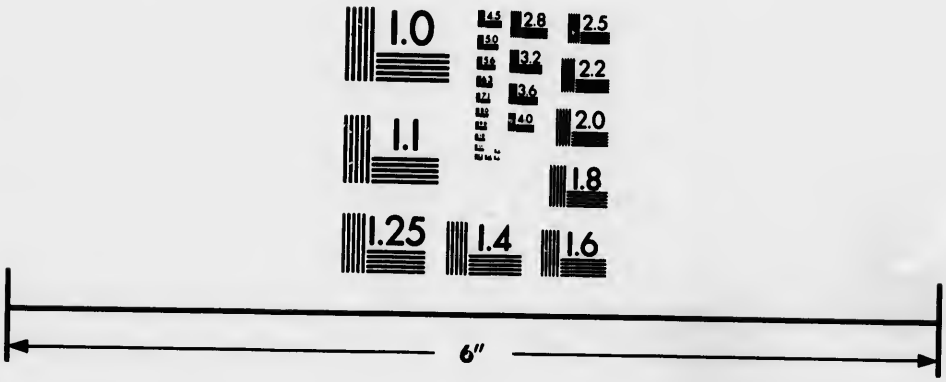

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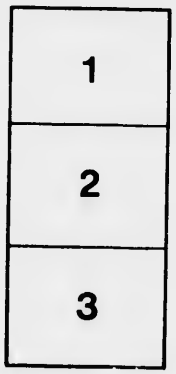

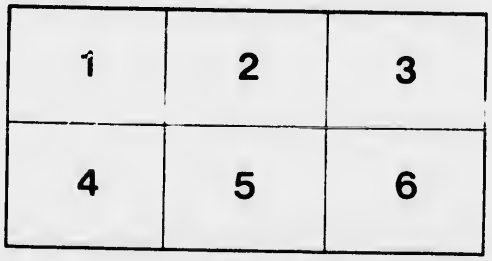

No. 113

Halifax, N.S. December 31, 1817.

THE HALIFAX COMMITTEE OF TRADE, having requested the attendance of the MERCHANTS, TRADERS, and other persons interested in *Trade* and *Commerce*, at the New Court-House, for the purpose of considering the situation of the FISHERIES of the Province;—a Memoir on those subjects, prepared by the Committee, was read; and the following Resolutions were unanimously agreed to:—

RESOLVED—That a Committee be appointed to draw up a representation to His Excellency the *Lieutenant Governor*, stating the decayed situation of the COD-FISHERIES of this Province, and suggesting such means to be adopted, as may by them be thought necessary to promote its interests, and praying that His Lordship will be pleased to lay the same before the two other branches of the Legislature, at its ensuing meeting, together with his Excellency's recommendation;—the means suggested by the Committee of Trade being in the opinion of the persons now present, those which are absolutely necessary to prevent the entire Ruin of the Commerce of the Colony.

RESOLVED—That the following Gentlemen, be a Committee to draw up the said Address to His Excellency, and that the same be submitted to the consideration of a future meeting:

THE CHAIRMAN,

MR. JOSEPH ALLISON,

and

MR. LEWIS E. PIERS.

MEMOIR

On the COD and SMALL FISHERIES of Nova-Scotia.

THE Halifax Committee of Trade having deliberated on the present situation of the Fisheries and Commerce of this Province, are of opinion that the former are susceptible of very considerable improvements. The harbours round the whole of the coasts of the peninsula of Nova-Scotia, being more advantageously situated for the purpose of the Cod and Small Fisheries, than any other portion of the American continent, the Committee deem it necessary to exert every means in their power to place them in that state, which it was the original intention of His Majesty's Royal Grandfather, that they should stand.

The original object in settling this Province, was in rivalship to the French Nation, then in possession of Canada and Cape-Breton; at the latter of which colonies, a very extensive Cod Fishery was conducted. In order that it may the better be understood how it has happened that His late Majesty's intentions, have not produced all the expected effect in this colony, it will be necessary briefly to trace a few of those occurrences which have taken place since the first settlement of Halifax.

The colonization of Halifax harbour, and the Germans subsequently detached to Lunenburg, were the only essential establishments of Nova-Scotia, undertaken by government; the former took place in the spring of 1749; at which time, such were the powerful means adopted, that the shores of Halifax Harbour, to the southward of the Town and in the North-West-Arm, were covered with fish flakes; and, during a few years, the business promised very fair; but the Small-Pox in 1755, having broke out among the people, at a time when no medical preventive, as at present, was in general practice, the settlement became very much deranged. The French war, which commenced in the following year, induced the chief part of those poor settlers, which the Small-Pox had left, to enter into His Majesty's ships, and on board Privateers; and the Cod Fishery, within the harbour of Halifax, has been since chiefly confined to the supplies of salt and tackle from the merchants to the fishermen of other places, and to the purchase of their fish, in repayment of those advances at the end of

the season. The war which began in 1756, commonly called the seven-years war, ended in 1763, during which time, the British Nation having deprived the French of their possessions in North-America, and having, after that event, no fears of rivalship in this quarter, the Province of Nova-Scotia became neglected by Government, but the merchants had not, as yet, acquired that capital which was sufficient for the increase of the fisheries. During the following peace until the commencement of the American revolutionary war in 1774, a period of eleven years, the New-England colonists engrossed almost the whole of the fisheries, both great and small; and Nova-Scotia became no further an object of attention, than as the harbour of Halifax furnished the best station for ships of war. The trade therefore, extended very little beyond those supplies which the garrison and the few ships retained on the station, in time of peace required. The revolutionary war, which ended at the close of the year 1783, a period of nine years, greatly increased the trade of the Province, because it excluded the New-Englanders from the Fisheries and the West-India markets, and likewise increased the expenditure of the army and navy. The Cod and Small Fisheries flourished during this period; but still few persons of large capitals embarked their property in it. The fish continued to be chiefly taken by the poor people, who, in a manner by anticipation, mortgaged their *catch*, in the spring of the year to those merchants and shopkeepers in Halifax, who advanced supplies to them for that purpose. This proved a more profitable trade, and less precarious to the Halifax traders, than it would have been, had they embarked personally in the venture. Halifax, at that time, was almost the only port of trade in these Atlantic Provinces, for the country traders also received their goods, liquors and salt from the capital, and retailed them to those fishermen who did not leave their own harbours in the autumn and spring; but still the fish taken, centred in Halifax.—By passing, however, through one other channel, it became somewhat enhanced in price; yet the trade to the West-Indies and the Fisheries continued to increase.

At the close of the Revolutionary war, the Americans, in that respect, affecting to forget the new character they had assumed, began to resort to the West-Indies in great numbers, and were much more protected there, than, consistently with the fundamental colonial laws, they ought to have been. These Northern Colonies owe it to the exertions and perseverance of Captain Horatio Nelson, then on command in the West-Indies, that, for a while, the American vessels were excluded from the British Islands. At length, after he quited the West-India station, the Americans, with their accustomed perseverance, renewed their efforts; and, in a great measure, succeeded in supplanting these colonies in those markets.

These colonies, however, by his intervention, were enable to con-

tinue to increase their fisheries uninteruptedly, until the year 1788; when the troubles in France commenced, and the whole civilized world being afterwards in commotion, and the British navigation system becoming much relaxed and deranged, the Americans availed themselves of the circumstances of the times, and, pushing their commerce into every quarter of the globe, and into the West-Indies in particular, so far supplanted the colonial trade, that, in the course of the war, and until the year 1804, the fish taken in these colonies found every little vent, except in the United States; where, strange as it may appear, it was sold for the purpose of *reshipment to the British West India Islands*; for the colonial merchants, except under circumstances by no means of a general nature, could not, unprotected as they were, stand a competition with the Americans; who, exclusive of other advantages, navigated their vessels, as Neutrals, under charges greatly below the British shippers of these colonies; who, independent of extravagant outfits, labored under the pressure of quadruple insurance;—high wages;—impressments;—delays;—demurrage;—numerous uncertainties;—loss of convoys;—and, in that event, the almost certainty of capture. Under this state of depression, the colonial trade, even of their own produce, passed, in a great measure, into the hands of the Americans; and these colonies endured the double mortification, of being deprived of their birth right, and of being reproached, on every struggle for redress, with their inability to furnish the West-Indies with the necessary supplies, and even with fish and lumber, with which they do, actually, so pre-eminently abound.

This state of affairs continued until 1804, at which time the colonial trade had dwindled to the lowest state of depression. The merchants of Halifax then ventured to lay their distresses before His Majesty's Ministers; and, finding their complaints were listened to by them, they established the Committee System, which has continued ever since to urge their rights, and to furnish information on every subject within their reach, connected with their interests.

In consequence of the reiterated representations of the Halifax Committee, and the enquiries which His Majesty's Ministers sat on foot, the Americans were greatly restrained during the two following years, but in the short administration which took place in 1806, they regained their ascendancy to that degree, that the Trade of these Colonies was reduced as low as formerly. In little more than a year, another administration took place in England, the Committee of Trade renewed its former efforts; and, shortly after, the Americans, were more rigidly excluded from the West-India ports than ever.—The regulations then established being, however, often, evaded, under one pretext or other, the Halifax Committee soon discovered that their single exertions were insufficient to withstand the weight of pre-

Judices and interests favorable to the Americans, both in England and the West-Indies; and the most absurd and false assertions continued to be received and frequently acted upon as truths. The Halifax Committee, therefore persuaded the other Northern Colonies to unite with them by similar Committees, corresponding with a Committee chosen in London, from amongst the Merchants trading to these Northern Colonies. The result of this union was such, that His Majesty's Ministers began to compare and to act upon the information, by them received, in earnest; and the consequences, concurring with other pressure upon their trade, induced the American Government to adopt their Embargo system, which gradually became increasingly more binding; until finding the inefficacy of it to force Great Britain into their measures, and that she and her colonies prospered in proportion to the absence of the Americans from the trade of the world, their Government, in a fit of spleen, declared war against England, in June 1812.

During the whole of the period commencing with the Embargo system in January 1808, until the close of the war with the United States in 1815, the fisheries of Nova-Scotia continued to increase, more and more, every year; and the West-India Islands, notwithstanding the exclusion of the American vessels, were generally abundantly supplied, in a principal degree, from the colonies; but, in some measure, from England.

So soon as hostilities ceased, the Americans renewed their shipments to the West-Indies; and, with their ancient spirit of attempting every project that possessed but the shadow of hope, boldly entered the ports of the Islands with their vessels; but they met such decided instructions from Government, that they soon relinquished that mode of proceeding.—They now resort to the foreign Islands of St. Eustatia, St. Croix, St. Martins, or St. Thomas, where they dispose of their cargoes, consisting of an infinite variety of foreign and domestic articles; and the vessels and boats from the British islands go to those places, and receive in exchange of Island Produce, but often for specie, those goods, fish, lumber, &c. &c. which the American vessels have brought for that purpose.

The struggle which has taken place between these Colonies and the American States, for the supply of the West-Indies, together with the other events which have recently occurred, has brought the subject so completely before the public, that the West-India Legislatures begin, of themselves, to perceive the good policy of being furnished with the necessary supplies, independently of those from America; which have, hitherto, been so much the subject of caprice, that no firm reliance could be placed upon them. In some instances, the Island Legislatures have even gone the extent of laying duties on foreign importations, a measure recommended by His Majesty's Minis-

ters, who apparently are now become so much of opinion that British subjects, as long as they can effect it, ought to enjoy an unparticipated possession of the supply; that the most express orders have been given on the subject of foreign exclusion. But the popular sentiment on the subject of a supply indepedently of the United States, is more decidedly evinced by the present increasing practice in the West-Indies, especially in Jamaica, of appropriating a portion of land towards raising stock and vegetables, for the use of the working people on the plantations, parts of which have thus become farms.

The individual traders of America, having thus attempted every expedient in their power, their Legislature has finally entered the lists in their favor; and, during the last Sessions of Congress, passed laws imposing excessive port duties on all foreign vessels arriving in the United States, from ports to which American vessels are not admitted. This is an indirect method, as they suppose, of taxing the British Colonial Trade; for they imagine that these Colonies cannot furnish those supplies which are necessary for the consumption of the Islands, unless they receive them from the United States. To meet this measure, the British Parliament has made Bermuda a free port for certain articles, and the experiment is now fairly upon trial.

The above is a brief history of the Cod and Small Fisheries of Nova-Scotia. It is now necessary to point out some impediments to their success; the investigation of which, will pave the way for their removal.

In consequence of the long duration of the American Revolutionary war, and, in addition to that event, the exertions of Captain Nelson, as before stated, which impeded the American spirit of enterprize for several years, the race of the old Fishermen in New-England became nearly extinct, and many of those habits and customs essential to the success of the Fishery, were lost or disused; and required, as that of Nova-Scotia does now, to be revived. To attain this object, the State Legislatures of New-England, granted adequate bounties, which were continued a sufficient number of years in succession, to effect a purpose that was to be reached by no other means. With such encouragament before them, people of large capital, enterprise and information, entered personally into the fishery; and this is a leading feature, which in the history of the Nova-Scotia Fishery, will be found to have kept that branch of business in a feeble state; those who were actively engaged in it were poor; they caught fish it is true, but as they depended on others for their supplies, which they received on credit, and usually paid for in fish,—and were besides generally habituated, as they are at present, to an erroneous practice in taking them, their expenses became so disproportioned to those of their New-England neighbours, that the advantage they derived from nature, of being nearest to the fishing banks, was lost

in the face of other essential advantages, enjoyed by their rivals. The case at this time is very much altered. There are now people of extensive capital in the Province, who were born in it, and are consequently attached to the soil; and not like those poor emigrants who were, many of them, originally overpersuaded to come to a new country, and then left it on the occurrence of the first obstacles with which disease or war afflicted them. It is erroneous to suppose that any extensive establishment will thrive without the superintending care of opulent people, and where that deficiency exists, some means must be adopted to induce them to partake in the adventure; when once engaged, they naturally disregard small obstacles, and that which would prove fatal to a poor man's efforts, whether in bad seasons or other misfortunes, becomes an inducement to a rich one to redouble his exertions. For the attainment of this end, the Americans, as before said, established bounties, and by enacting them unalterably during a series of years, a confidence in the continuance of that encouragement accomplished the object in view. How far it may become necessary for the Legislature to hold forth such an inducement in this Province, is for them to determine, upon the existing state of the case, and the reasoning which follows.

The great impediments to the progress of the Cod-fishery, just at present, are the low price of the article in the colonies, 11*s.* to 13*s.* the quintal; the high price of salt, 15*s.* to 20*s.* the hogshead; its irregular supply; and the very high duties imposed on fish in foreign States.

This low price of fish in the colonies is occasioned by the competition of the French, the Americans, and the British Merchants in the foreign markets of the Mediterranean, Spain, and Portugal, and of the British and American traders in our West-India and South American possessions;—and the high duties imposed by the apparently mistaken policy of foreign European States.

It became a very great misfortune to the British fishermen of Newfoundland and North America, when, in consequence of the diplomatic arrangements with France, which produced the treaty of peace with that country, not only the Islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon, but the better half of Newfoundland was given up to the French. That concession extends from Cape Ray westerly, and northerly to Cape St. Johns, where the abundance and conveniencies of the fisheries are far superior to the eastern and southern division, which Great-Britain has reserved; and this advantage necessarily produces another; which is the ability the French merchants thereby have, to contend with the British, in every market for fish, in the world. Of this possession they have already most abundantly availed themselves, by bestowing from their present depressed finances (as stated in the examinations before a Committee of the House of Commons in the

Spring Sessions of the present year (1817) the most unprecedented bounties ever given by any other government. The wisdom of this measure, is by no means a fresh piece of policy. It is renewed upon the most perfect experience, leading to the acquirement of SHIPS (that is ships of war), COLONIES, and COMMERCE. There is no axiom more trite or just, than that "money produces money, and seed a harvest"—nor any more certain, than that Bounties bestowed upon a depressed trade, and the Fisheries in particular, will man the navy; —give prosperity to the Colonies; and thereby, though circuitously, and through numberless channels, increase the revenues both of the Parent State and the Colony.

If His Majesty's Ministers and the Governors in the Islands would, cause the American goods to be really excluded from the Islands, the colonists of these northern districts, would *in either case* no longer have to complain of ruin to their Trade, their Fisheries and their Agriculture;—but so long as the American imports are admitted to the Islands and the South American British possessions (no matter by what means of subterfuge or evasion) these colonies will remain in the back ground, unless some adequate concession or equivalent can be devised to meet the difference which gives to the Americans their existing superiority.

Notwithstanding the bold denial made by the agents of the West-India Islands, the American advantages consist in the numerous articles, which the citizens of the States smuggle into the British Islands, or which is the same in effect, of late years, are brought by them to the foreign Islands, and are thence introduced into the British possessions there; they are those contained in the following list:

No. 1.

Of American Manufacture; Boots—Shoes—Cordage—Canvass—Nails (cut & wrought)—Bar-Iron—Gunpowder—Candles, (tallow & sperm.) Leather, (unmanufactured)—coarse Slops—Naval Stores—Tobacco, (raw & manufactured)—Soap—tin Ware, &c.&c.—Books, (Am. edns.) and Stationary.

Of the European Continent; Wines—Brandy—Gin—Selecias and other Linens—Silks—Silk Stockings—Dry Fruits.

Of the produce and manufacture of the East Indies and China; Teas—Muslins—Ginghams—Nankeens. Pepper—Spices—Bandana Handkerchiefs—Fine Slops, and other such goods.

Besides an infinite variety of other articles, which all tend to lessen the importations from the mother country.

The advocates for American intercourse in the West-Indies, have always dwelt on the necessities of the Islands, which they say are not to be satisfied from these colonies; but before they can establish their claim to that intercourse, they must add that such necessary articles deficient in these colonies, are not to be procured from the United Kingdoms,—But it will never be asserted that such is the case of any one of the foregoing list. The following being a list of articles

produced in these Northern British Colonies, it may be asked what others the people of the British Settlements in the Islands, and on the Southern Main stand in need of from them?

No. 2.

FISH—Viz.		fr.	to
W Dry Cod, . . .	qtl.	11s.	12s.
W Scale fish (pollock & haddock)	qtl.	8s.	
W Salmon, (smoked)	ea.	2s6	
W Do. (pickled)	bbl.	22s9	
W Herrings, (smkd) bo.	keg	5s6	
W Do. (pick'd)	bbl.	12s	
W Mackarel, „	bbl. fall	30s,	spr'g. 20s
W Shad, „ „		30s	
W Alewives or Gasperaus	bl.	22s6	
W Tongues & sounds,	„	40s	
WOODS—Viz.			
W Boards, (pine) . .	M.	75s	80s
W Do. (spruce)	„	70s	
W Timber, (sq. soft)	ton	20s	25s
W Do. (hard)	„	20s	
W Staves, (ash chiefly)	M.	80s	
W Do. (oak Canada)	„	90s	
R Spars, (spruce)	20 in.	£15	
	9 in.	15s	
R House Frames.			
W Hand-spikes, (ash)	doz.	12s	
W Oars, (ash)	ft.	6d. rough	2½d
W Laths, ...	M.	8s	
W Hoops, ...	„	80s	
W Clapboards, ...	„	£6	
W Shingles, (pine)	„	12s6	
MISCELLANIES—Viz.			
W Lamp Oil, . . .	ton	£22	
W Grind-stones, . . .	„	102s.	
W Gypsum, ...	„	15s	20s
W Freestone, (best)	cube	3s6 su. ft.	
	flags	1s6 su. ft.	
R Coal.	ch.	35s	45s
R Granite Mill stones, 4½ ft.		£10	
W Lime, white	hhd.	32s6	37s6
W Lime, brown	hhd.	25s	27s6
W Essence of Spruce,	box		
W Infusion of Raspberry Rum and Brandy,	25 pr cent on R. or B.		
C Tallow, (N.S) . .	lb.	8d	9d
W Suet, (in kegs) . .	„	8d	

W Bricks, . . .	long M.	65s	
W Soap, (N.S.)	lb.	6d.	7d.
W Candles, (N.S.)	lb.	1s	1s2
AGRICULTURE—Viz.			
W Bread, (biscoit)	cwt.	33s	
W Crackers, . . .	kegs	3s6	
W Canada flour,	bbl.	45s	
W Cheese, (N.S.)	lb.	9d	
R Butter, tub & keg	„	1s2	1s3
W Oats, ...	bush.	2s6	3s6
W Beans, ...	„	11s	
W Peas, ...	„	10s	
„ Potatoes, (20 bushls)	„	2s	2s6
R Onions, ...	lb.	4d	6d
R Apples, ...	bbl.	15s	20s
R Cyder, ...	„	25s	30s
R Eggs, ...	doz.	1s6	2s
W Lard, ...	lb.	10d	1s
W Beef, ...	bbl.	70s	80s
W Pork, ...	„	90s	100s
R Hams, (N.S.) . .	lb.	10d	
W Tongues, (in kegs)	ea.	2s6	
W Tripe, „	lb.	6d	
R Neats feet Oil,	qt.	2s6	
R Horses, fine	ea.	£35	£40
R Horses, common	ea.	£15	£25
R Mules, do do	„	£25	£35
C Neat Cattle, (stand'g)	lb.	5d	
R Hogs, ...	ea.	35s	50s
W Sheep, ...	„	25s	27s6
POULTRY—Viz.			
R Turkies, ...	ea.	5s	7s
„ Ducks, ...	pr.	3s6	4s
„ Geese, ...	ea.	2s	3s6
„ Fowls, ...	pr.	3s	3s6
HIDES—Viz.			
C Calf, ...	ea.	5s	
„ Sheep, ...	„	1s6	
„ Neat, ox	ea	20s	25s
„ Neat, cow	ea	15s	17s6

MARKS.

C. Contractor's Prices.
R. Retail do.
W. Wholesale do.
} Nov. 1817.

The British Northern Colonists are not so unreasonable as to claim from their fellow subjects in the West-Indies, higher prices in time of peace for those articles which they think they have a preferable right to furnish, than the Americans would demand were they actually placed in similar circumstances with them. But so long as an American can make his profit, as is in fact the case, out of the above enumera-

ted list of illicit articles No. 1, foreign and domestic, the articles contained in the legitimate list No. 2, the produce of these Colonies, never can yield a profit; for the American, thus assisted, can afford to make a very small freight upon fish and lumber, for instance, and even run the risk, at times, of losing by them; relying principally for his profits, upon those which these northern Colonists have neither the means nor the inclination to meddle with.

If the British Northern Colonists can furnish the Islands with the List No. 2, (and they *can* do so to a profit if they meet with due encouragement). The West-India Planters have acknowledged they ought to be permitted to do it, unmolested. But the prices at this time, contained in table No. 2, will never permit them to effect it at the present sale prices, and more especially so, when the prices of Island produce are taken into the account. But when it is considered that the fisherman's sale price, properly speaking, is a quintal of dry cod-fish for a hogshead of salt, that the price of salt during the last summer and the present autumn in Halifax, has been 15/ to 20/ a hogshead—and fish in this season from 10/ to 11/ the quintal of 112 lbs.—that this has been the general price, though within a few weeks, in consequence of a casual demand, fish has risen to 13/ per quintal, it must be confessed that under these circumstances, the poor man's case is very deplorable.

The proximity of these Atlantic Provinces and Islands to the Fishing Banks, immediately southward of the shores, and the unbounded resort of Salmon and Small Fish, to most of the harbours, are a boon offered by nature to the industry of the inhabitants; and if people of capital can be induced to take a personal risk in the catching of fish, as is the case in New-England, there can be no doubt the article will be furnished as low in price, by these colonies, as by France or the United States. The Provincial Legislatures, need only show their good will towards them, by a steady encouragement during a few years, and then the resident individuals of the colonies, will exert themselves to effect objects in aid of public means, that have hitherto lain dormant for want of those incitements. It now remains briefly to explain this part of the subject.

There are two means by which the price of Fish may be reduced: First, by taking and curing a larger quantity of them with the same labour and expence of outfit, as is bestowed on that lesser quantity taken and cured at present. And, Second, by furnishing to the fishermen a regular supply of Salt, at a reasonable price. We have already stated that a quintal of fish ought to bear an exchange for a hogshead of Salt, and so long as this takes place the fisherman generally speaking, is content; but, at any, rate with this equivalent, be the price higher or lower, he can always support his family; yet, by this rule the higher the price, the greater his profits. But that is not

the case with the Merchant; the higher the article the less he has it in his power to contend with his rivals at other markets. His rule is this,—The price of Fish must absolutely be no higher than that taken by the French and the Americans.

The mode of Fishing for Cod from the United States is peculiar to themselves,—neither the Dutch, the Flemings, the French, nor the inhabitants of Jersey and Guernsey, though the latter are the oldest fishermen on these coasts, are practiced in it. In New-England the crew consists in general of twelve persons in a vessel of from 70 to 80 tons. 1st, The Skipper or Master, who is also the *Splitter*; —2*d*, The *Salter*;—3*d*, The *Header*;—4*th*, The *Throater*. The rest of the crew are common hands, and are usually admitted by the influence of the Skipper, who takes from each one fish in a certain number; —all the officers of the crew give him usually one in sixty-four.— They all fish together or in turn, and every man and boy has his binn, and puts in as fast as he catches. When the Skipper sees fit, he calls out "STRIKE" and every one quits fishing,—the fish in each person's binn are counted; and, as they come to the number agreed on with the Skipper, one is put into *his* binn.—The Skipper's binn is counted last of all; each person has credit in the Skipper's TALLY for what he catches, not counting the allowance to the Skipper, who has credit for all Fish found in his own binn. The Officers then go to work to *Split*, to *Head*, to *Throat*, and to *Salt*; the rest of the crew to prepare the next meal, and to do other necessary work. The ardor of the crews, under a good Skipper, is often such, that they only take time to eat and sleep, and some or other of them are always at work except on the Sabbath. The whole are bound by fixed rules customary in the port from whence they sail, on principles of the strictest economy and sobriety. The act of drying the Fish on shore is performed also on Shares, agreed on between those who catch and those who dry. As soon as the vessel is loaded on the Banks with green Fish—the crew hoist a flag at the mast-head, as a signal to other vessels in company, who send their boats on board with letters or messages to their respective families, then seldom wait more than an hour, up anchor and proceed into harbour, the flag flying. The Fish are then counted out to the owner of the vessel, who gives a receipt for the share belonging to the crew, retaining his own proportion for the vessel, and outfits as previously agreed on. More Salt, Provisions, &c. &c. are immediately put on board, and the vessel sails again for the Banks, perhaps the next morning.

The owner on shore (who probably sails a dozen such vessels in one season) then begins to dry the fish, the people under him being also employed on shares. At the end of the season about the 30th of November, the most convenient and suitable vessels are fitted out for the West-Indies, with the inferior fish, making part of an assorted cargo; and

other vessels are sent to other markets with the picked fish, or to England with the oil, and return in time for the ensuing season about the 20th of March. In this manner, every person from the boy to the Skipper is stimulated to exertion; and, at the end of the season, he knows accurately what he is to receive. The owner in the mean time makes advances to each person's family as previously directed, and the whole is conducted in the most perfect harmony and regularity, upon principles and ancient habits that are known to every one, and cannot admit of wrangling or cavil.

Some vessels make only one trip to the Banks between the 20th of March and the 20th of May; and then go to the Labrador, returning from thence about the 20th of September; and then one other voyage to the Banks before the end of November, which always closes the fishing season.--At the Labrador, the crews fish on the same, or nearly the same principle of shares, but with this difference, that when the fish are cured on the spot, which is not always the case, a portion of the crew is employed on shore to dry the fish. Perhaps, as was before stated, the Merchant owns ten or twelve of these vessels, all of which he sends to the Labrador in company with a ship or brig, and a supracargo on board, who delivers out the stores and superintends the whole of the fleet; the ship also fishing with the rest, having a proportioned crew. At the end of the season the whole *Catch* is culled;—The Supercargo dispatches the small vessels with the green and refuse fish to their home, having settled all accounts with every crew. The ship or brig is loaded with the best of the fish, and with the supracargo proceeds to the Mediterranean, Spain, Portugal, Madeira or the Azores, where he disposes of his cargo, and thence returns home with a cargo, or a freight of fruits and wines in time, by the 20th of May, to proceed again in the same round, as he had done the year before.

Under such a scene of activity, annually pursued by a set of people, the steady inhabitants of the same harbour, and who by intermarriages are generally related, can it be wondered at that, they are thriving and harmonious?--and yet, it may, with confidence be asked, is there any thing in all this practice, but may be accurately imitated by these Colonies, provided they possess the same inclination, the same perseverance, and the same legislative encouragement?

The Nova-Scotia Shore fishery for Cod, is carried on in boats which seldom go out of sight of land, and are usually at home every night. The people are seldom much above poverty, for none but those will engage in an employment of such fatigue as it is. Judging comparatively with the fish brought to market, it occupies a great deal too many people. But the quality of the fish is esteemed superior in general to those taken and salted on the banks. The same person is usually both a Fisherman and Farmer, and thereby spoils

both employments. —Every little Cove contains a few families—those who live within reach of the harbour of Halifax, and other towns, resort to their markets with fresh fish at times;—but the general and greater number of those who are engaged in the shore fishery, are much secluded; and, on that account, even though the practice would admit of improvement, it would be almost impossible to introduce any,—but, in fact, it is of a nature not susceptible of any improvement whatever.—Many attempts have been made to extend some encouragemt to these people, but the abuses have been such that in whatever way given, they have never been steadily pursued; which is of itself an obstacle, in all cases, sufficient to prevent any good effects, even though the object itself were otherwise attainable. The best means of extending encouragement to the shore fishery, is by a steady supply of salt, at a reasonable price. Bounties have been sometimes given upon the quintal;—but the effects are felt no longer than the bounty lasts. A bounty so bestowed, though it should exhaust the Treasury, would never *improve the Fishery*.

The subject of Bounties has long engaged the attention of the Legislature of the Province; and, owing to the various means through which they can be extended, and on which they can be applied—no steady experiment has ever been pursued on any one object. The foregoing facts therefore have been stated, and the reasoning made use of has been applied to those facts, principally with the design of fixing upon some means through which the drooping commerce of this Province may be encouraged and directed into new channels, or the old ones revived and improved.

There have often been invidious distinctions made between the commercial and agricultural interests of this Province. To refute effectually a position so unauthorised, a reference need only be made to the Table No. 2, and then let such persons as have suffered themselves to be warped by so strange a theory, be asked, whether or not a full supply of those articles of Agriculture; the Fisheries; Miscellanies, and from the Woods, would furnish employment to the residents of Nova-Scotia; and if the answer proves to be in the affirmative, let such persons then point out the means by which those articles are to be conveyed to market. The Committee know of none—unless it be through the medium of commercial men. There are very few articles contained in the list in question No. 2, but what are carried to the West-Indies, by the States Americans; and if the people of these Provinces expect to exclude the American vessels from thence, they will find it to be necessary that every branch of employment furnishing the articles contained in the list No. 2, should meet suitable encouragement, in order that they may be carried there, and bring back those returns, without which, there can arise no revenue. Those who supply timber will soon discover that no vessels will arrive

to carry off that article, if a freight outward cannot be secured; unless indeed, they will consent that the whole burthen of the voyage shall be charged with the other expenses, upon the commodity home to Europe;—there is no other article, but salt,—unless it be store goods, in a very limited degree, that will furnish that outward freight. If timber and salt should fail, and consequently the fisheries, from what source is the Treasury to be filled? In truth, they all depend for success upon each other, and, reasonably supported, they will all do well.

It is now a considerable number of years since the successive Halifax Committees began to solicit the Legislature to grant eventual bounties on salt, as the surest relief in their opinions, which the Fisheries could receive, and they have always requested that the same should be enacted for a series of years, in order that the merchants at home may feel assured of support;—for if such a bounty is granted during one year only—it expires nearly before the English merchants can send cargoes out in season—and their experience has proved to them that hitherto there has been no dependence upon a like bounty in a second year.

The Committee is well aware that the revenues of the Province have their limits; and that the effects of the peace have greatly curtailed even those resources, which proved very ample during the last years of the war;—but they yet hope that adequate means will, notwithstanding, be found to grant some stimulant to the Agriculture of the Province at large; as every well-wisher to its commerce, feeling a desire to increase the exports to the West-Indies and Newfoundland, must be convinced that the produce of the country will ever furnish a most important proportion of the supplies to those places.

The Labrador fishery for Cod, Salmon, and Small Fish, is one of very great interest, and has often, during many years, occupied the sedulous attention of the Halifax Committees;—for there was a period when the States American vessels, resorted to those shores in such excessive numbers, and the crews conducted themselves with such gross improprieties towards His Majesty's Subjects, under claim of right, founded on the third article of the treaty of 1783, that the British Fishermen could no longer contend with them. It has been ordered by His Majesty's Ministers, that this third article, as far as it relates to the resort of vessels belonging to the United States, should be considered as null and void, from the period at which the late war with that nation commenced, and instructions have been given to this effect to the several superintending officers upon these northern stations. But the Halifax Committee has been lately informed that there was a considerable resort of States American fishing vessels upon the Labrador shores during the late season—The Committee, being of opinion that this fishery, if kept clear of intruders, will prove highly beneficial, have it in contemplation to address

your Lordship on this subject,—for the Committee well know, and His Majesty's Ministers, by this time, are well aware, that the Americans, from the first dawn of their government, have practiced upon the principle, "to assume all they can acquire, and never yield any thing."—The Committee, therefore, flatter themselves that a people whom it is so difficult to fix, will be dealt with under that reserve which dire experience has rendered so necessary.

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