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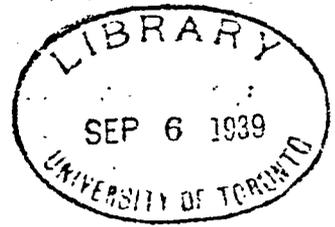
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Memorandum of information relative to the
French Fisheries at Newfoundland.

THERE are at Newfoundland three distinct fisheries for cod, prosecuted by the fishermen of France, under various Treaties and Agreements with England.

The first of these is the fishery upon the Grand Bank of Newfoundland, and upon the lesser banks near St. Pierre and Miguelon, which is carried on in the open sea, at some distance from land, in vessels of large size, and may properly be designated the "sea-fishery."

The second is the fishery in harbours upon the east coast of Newfoundland, between Cape St. John and Cape Norman. The cod are always found in these harbours during the season, and from the fixed character of the fishing, it is called by the French the "sedentary fishery."

peche de l'Est

The third is the fishing in the bays and along the west coast of Newfoundland, from Cape Ray to Cape Norman, as also in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. From the incessant movements and migrations of the cod in the gulf, it is necessary to pursue them to their various feeding and spawning grounds. Hence the taking of cod on the west coast, and within the gulf, is designated by the French a "nomade fishery," and the mode of fishing is styled "en-défilant le Golfe."

peche nomade

Each of these fisheries is fostered and sustained by the following bounties, established and made payable by a Law of France, passed 22nd July, 1851; which will continue in force until the 30th June, 1861.

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1. For each man employed in the cod-fishery (with drying), whether on the coast of Newfoundland, at St. Pierre and Miguelon, or upon the Grand Bank, 50 francs.

2. For each man employed in the cod-fishery on the Grand Bank, without drying, 30 francs.

3. For dried cod, of French catch, exported directly from the place where the same is caught, or from the warehouse in France to French Colonies in America or India, or to the French establishments on the west coast of Africa, or to trans-Atlantic countries, provided the same are landed at a port where there is a French Consul, per quintal métrique (equal to $220\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. avoidupois) the sum of 20 francs.

4. For dried cod, of French catch, exported either direct from the place where caught, or from ports in France, to European countries or foreign States within the Mediterranean, except Sardinia and Algeria, per quintal métrique 16 francs.

5. For dried cod, of French catch, exported either to French Colonies in America or India, or to trans-Atlantic countries, from ports in France, without being warehoused, per quintal métrique 16 francs.

6. For dried cod, of French catch, exported direct from the place where caught, or from the ports of France, to Sardinia or Algeria, per quintal métrique 12 francs.

7. For cod-livers which French fishing-vessels may bring into France as the product of their fishery, per quintal métrique 20 francs.

The Bank, or Sea-Fishery.

The sea-fishery upon the banks of Newfoundland is prosecuted either with or without drying the cod. When the fishery is without drying, the cod are salted on board the fishing-vessels, and each vessel sails for France as soon as its cargo is completed. The produce of this fishery is entirely consumed in France, and it is there called "la morue verte." This mode of fishing employs fewer men than the fishery with drying; but yet its returns are far more abundant.

When the sea-fishery is with drying, the cod are taken on shore, either at St. Pierre and Miguélon, or upon some part of the coast of Newfoundland where drying privileges are reserved, and are there cured in the ordinary manner.

The vessels engaged in the bank-fishery (thence called "bankers") are from 150 to 500 tons burthen, and upwards. They are not permitted to sail from France before the 1st day of March in each season; and they first proceed to the Island of St. Pierre, where they procure a sufficient supply of salted herrings and capelin for bait. They then proceed to the banks, where they lie at anchor, in about forty fathoms water. Long lines, with several thousand hooks attached (called, by the English, "bultows," and by the French, "harouelles"), are sent out in every direction. Of all kinds of fishing, this is the rudest and most exposed. The boats are sent out every day, in the heaviest seas, to set, and again to take up, these long lines. It is alleged by the French that this fishery is the very best school for sailors, and that the men trained in it constitute the *élite* of the French navy.

By an official Return, published in France in 1851, it appears that, during the preceding five years, the number of vessels engaged on the Grand Bank in the fishery, without drying, was 95, of the burthen of 13,703 tons, and employing 1,560 men. During the same period the average number of "bankers" engaged in the fishery with drying, was 43, of the burthen of 5,846 tons, employing 1,703 men. It is believed that, more recently, the number of vessels engaged in the bank fishery, with drying, has considerably increased; the latest Return the writer has been able to procure showing 51 vessels, of the burthen of 7,066 tons, employing 2,150 men. In the fishery without drying, the number is said to have increased even more largely.

The Coast Fisheries.

The French fisheries on the east and west coasts of Newfoundland are regulated by a Decree dated the 2nd of March, 1852, of which an abstract is hereunto annexed, marked No. 1. To this abstract

special reference is made, as it describes with precision the various modes of conducting the fisheries, both "nomade et sédentaire."

Under the provisions of this Decree, a meeting took place at St. Servan on the 5th, 6th, and 7th of January, 1857, of the "armateurs" of vessels engaged in the Newfoundland fisheries, which was presided over by M. de Bon, Commissaire de Marine de première classe, and M. Mazères, Capitaine de Vaisseau, commandant la division navale de Terre Neuve. At the close of this meeting, during which many interesting discussions took place, there was the "tirage-général" for fishing-stations on the east and west coasts of Newfoundland; such stations or places to be held for the next five years, or until 1862.

The number of vessels, of all classes, entered for the "tirage-général," in 1857, was 117 only; whereas at the drawing of 1852, the number was 164; thus classed in each case:—

	January 1852.	January 1857.
Vessels of 1st series ..	91	82
„ „ 2nd series ..	48	26
„ „ 3rd series ..	25	9
Total ..	164	117

It must be remembered that, besides the fishing vessels thus attached to the fixed stations, there are many others that obtain license to fish in the bays and places where the fishery is common to all.

The East Coast.

By the annexed Return, marked No. 2, it will be seen that on the east coast of Newfoundland, from Cape St. John to Cape Norman, the number of fishing stations offered at the drawing of January last, was 170; but that only 88 of these were actually occupied during the season of 1857. At each of these stations there was, this year, one vessel, chiefly brigs from 100 to 300 tons burden, employing in the aggregate 783 boats, 158 seines, and 5,205 men.

From the best information the writer could

obtain, it is believed that the French catch of cod on this coast during the present season, did not exceed an average of 40 quintals per man. This is stated to be below the usual average; and the deficiency is said to have arisen from the French having been effectually prevented this year from taking cod either at Belleisle North, or on the coast of Labrador.

The fishing vessels resorting to this coast cannot, by law, sail from France until the 20th of April in each year. They arrive on the coast at the end of May, bringing with them a supply of salt, and all their implements for fishing. Having moored their vessels in safety, they commence the repairs of their houses, fishing stages, and huts for the men. The large boats, which were hauled up in places of safety at the close of the preceding year's fishing, are repaired, launched, and fitted. Each vessel has from six to ten of these boats, according to the number of its crew. They are of large dimensions, being from twenty-five to thirty feet in length, with great breadth of beam, and all rigged alike, with two lug-sails. In each boat there are two men and a boy; they start early every morning for the fishing ground, where they fish with hand-lines until the boat is filled with cod. With these they return to the landing place, when the boats' crew are relieved, the shoresmen throwing the fish upon the stage, where they are split and dressed.

The fishing operations here are seldom or ever interrupted during the season by those dense fogs which prevail in the more southern parts of Newfoundland.

At several places on this coast there is good timber for small vessels, and the French build here many of the large boats used in their fishery.

Great quantities of small cod are taken early every season in seines; and this immense destruction of young fish is said to have a most injurious effect upon the cod-fishery generally in this quarter. The use, also, of the "bultows," or long lines, is alleged to have still further injured that fishery, by destroying the spawning fish; and the French fishermen are by no means agreed as to the policy of

using these long lines, to which many of them are opposed.

In 1852, the French erected at Quirpon a large manufactory for preparing manure from the offal of the cod. It consisted of stores, dwelling-houses, and four mills driven by small steam-engines, with kilns for drying; the whole costing 400,000 francs. It was a permanent establishment, wholly contrary to Treaty stipulations. Two Frenchmen, subjects of France, were left in charge during the winter; and much fish-manure was prepared at this establishment until within the last two years, when it was closed. During the past season the whole of the buildings, machinery, and plant, were removed, and carried back to France.

As the reason for breaking up this establishment, it was stated that the prepared manure did not contain sufficient ammonia to render it valuable, or its manufacture profitable. The British fishermen are of opinion, however, that the discontinuance took place in consequence of there not being a sufficient supply of offal to keep the manufactory in full operation; and that this deficiency arose from the French being driven off the prolific fishing-grounds at North Belleisle, where those having stations at the northern part of Newfoundland were previously accustomed to get half their fares.

As an instance of the wanton waste and destructiveness of the French fishermen, when suffered to poach at North Belleisle, it was mentioned to the writer that, some two or three seasons since, near the close of the fishing, the French took such immense quantities of cod, near that island, in their enormous seines, that they did not even attempt to cure them. They merely took out the livers, for their oil, and threw the fish over the stage-head at Quirpon into the sea, where they accumulated to such an extent that it became difficult for loaded boats to get up to the stage. This filling up of the harbour of Quirpon was brought under the notice of the French Government, by some of the French fishermen, as a grievance; and at the meeting of "armateurs" in January last an official letter was read, stating that the obstruction had been fully removed, and the grievance no longer existed.

The French usually depart from this coast in the beginning of October, leaving their buildings, boats, and other property in charge of British settlers, whom they encourage to remain by giving them supplies of provisions. The assumption of the privileges of building, and leaving their boats on this coast, enables the French to prosecute their fisheries much more extensively than they could do otherwise. An experienced and intelligent naval officer,* who visited all the fisheries of Newfoundland some years since, has made the following important observation:—

“I am of opinion that the very great difference between the number of boats and men employed on the eastern coast and on any other, is in consequence of the French building large boats at the different harbours on that coast, and housing them under cover during the winter. This strikes me as a breach of the Treaty. If the boats were removed at the end of the season, not one-third of the number could be brought out annually.”

The West Coast.

The document No. 3 hereunto annexed is a copy of the official list of places on the western coast of Newfoundland, from Cape Ray to Cape Norman, assigned as fishing-stations, and of bays left open to the fishery in common at the partition and general drawing for stations in January last.

The fishing on this coast being both “nomade et sédentaire,” the writer found it impossible to arrive at an exact statement of its results; but, as he visited the whole coast, its fisheries will be described in detail, commencing at Cape Ray, and proceeding thence to the northward.

The first French fishing-station on the west coast after passing Cape Ray is at Codroy Island. This island lies about two miles to the southward of Cape Anguille, close under the high land. It is a low, flat island, without wood, about two miles in circuit, crescent-shaped, with its inward curve toward the mainland, which also curves inwardly, thus forming

* Captain Milnc, R.N., now one of the Lords of the Admiralty.

a small, but safe, bar-harbour for vessels drawing less than twelve feet water.

The French occupy Codroy Island exclusively; and the fishery in its vicinity is specially reserved for the small schooners from St. Pierre and Miguélon. The buildings are extensive, and apparently in good condition; some new ones were put up this year. The number of Frenchmen employed there this season was 160, of whom 100 were fishermen, the rest shoresmen engaged in dressing and curing the fish. A French family (subjects of France) have resided constantly on this island during the last six years; they take care of the buildings, boats, and other property left there during the winter. Before this family came, a British settler on the mainland had charge of the island in winter, and acted as "gardien." At present Codroy Island belongs, practically, to France, and is as much under its control as either St. Pierre or Miguélon. The "gérant" in charge of Codroy Island informed the writer that the average catch of cod, at that station, was 3,300 quintals each season; but there are reasons for believing that this is much below the quantity actually caught, this being an excellent fishing-station.

The fishery here is sedentary. The British fishermen who reside on the mainland facing Codroy Island take cod all the year round, except during the months of February and March, when the floating ice is driven in, and closes the place up. They are not molested by the French, who get whatever wood they require from the forest on the mainland, also without molestation. It is only when the French attempt to cut away the thick woods in which the houses of the settlers are built, that they are resisted. It is mere wantonness to cut away these sheltering woods; without them the winter-houses become exposed to the piercing blasts and heavy snow drifts of this bleak coast, and are rendered quite uninhabitable.

The next station in the official list is St. George's Bay, but the French do not now take cod there. Some years ago there was good fishing all over St. George's Bay, and the French took cod there in great quantities, by every possible device, and in the

most reckless and destructive manner. They so over-fished the ground as almost to destroy the cod-fishery completely, and then they abandoned it. A considerable period having since elapsed without the fish having been much disturbed, the fishing is now beginning to revive. The French, at present, only visit St. George's Bay for the purpose of procuring herrings, which they take in moderate quantities, to serve as bait for cod elsewhere.

The next French fishing-station is at Red Island, which lies five miles north-eastward of Cape St. George, at the distance of little more than half-a-mile from the mainland. This island is about a mile and a-half in length, and of considerable height; it is surrounded by steep cliffs of bright red sandstone. The fishing-station is at its north-eastern end, where there is a narrow beach between the base of the cliffs and the sea. The buildings are at the top of the cliffs, on a sort of plateau, about half the height of the island, and are reached by a long stair from the beach.

The writer was informed that there were 220 men at Red Island the present season, and that 63 bateaux, with two men in each, were employed in the fishery. The fishing-ground is at one to two miles only from the island, and fish are often taken in fifteen fathoms water. This is one of the best stations for the sedentary fishery on the whole west coast, the cod being abundant, not very distant from the curing place, nor in very deep water, while bait is usually plentiful, and readily procured. The fishing here during the present season was said to have been very good, and to have averaged more than 50 quintals per man, some time before the season closed.

The establishment at Red Island (which the French occupy wholly and exclusively), is left, during the winter, in charge of an Acadian-French family, from Cape Breton, who reside on the mainland. One of the daughters of this family is married to a French fisherman from Granville, who, it is said, received permission to marry and settle on this coast.

A permanent title to Red Island has been granted by the Government of France to the "Compagnie

Générale Maritime de France." To this extraordinary grant of exclusive title strong objections were raised on the part of the "armateurs," at their meeting at St. Servan, in January last, as appears by the following extract from the *procès-verbal* of that meeting:—

"*Séance du Mardi, 6 Janvier.*

"M. le Menguonnit reproduit sa proposition relative à l'occupation de l'Île Rouge, à titre permanent, par la Compagnie Générale Maritime; il expose qu'un pareil privilège est contraire aux intérêts généraux des armateurs, tout comme à l'équité; il fait ressortir que dans la négociation suivie avec l'Angleterre au sujet des pêcheries de Terre Neuve, la situation faite aux concessionnaires de l'Île Rouge pourrait entraîner des difficultés que l'on n'applanirait peut-être pas sans consentir à des sacrifices onéreux pour la France; il termine en demandant que l'Assemblée appelle sur ce point l'attention et la sollicitude du Ministre de la Marine, en insistant sur le danger des concessions de l'espèce.

"Le Président.—La place de l'Île Rouge est compris parmi les havres réservés aux petites goëlettes de St. Pierre et Miguelon. Si le Gouvernement a cru devoir concéder cette place à la Compagnie Générale Maritime, c'est probablement dans le but de prévenir l'envahissement de l'Île Rouge par les populations Anglaises qui occupent déjà la Baie St. Georges, et les côtes adjacentes.

"M. Mazères.—L'établissement de l'Île Rouge est le plus beau de la côte de Terre Neuve, et il serait bien fâcheux de le supprimer."

Notwithstanding the endeavours of MM. de Bon and Mazères to prevent any movement in the matter, it was resolved that this exclusive grant to the "Compagnie Générale Maritime" should be brought under the consideration of the Minister of Marine.

The next fishing-station in the French official list is Port-à-Port, which is free and common to all French vessels fishing in the Gulf, but it did not appear to have been visited by any such vessels during the present season. Several American vessels fished on the bank off Port-à-Port early in the

season, during the migration of the cod, and succeeded very well.

Port-à-Port is a capacious bay, more than five miles wide at its entrance, and upwards of twelve miles in depth. Its upper portion is divided into two smaller bays, called, respectively, East and West Bay. The head of East Bay is separated from Bay St. George by a low isthmus of sand and gravel, but little more than a quarter of a mile in width, with a pond in the middle, into which the sea often dashes at high tides, especially during southerly gales. Fishing-boats are often hauled across from one of these bays to the other. The best fishing-ground is off Long Point, which is at the western entrance at Port-à-Port. Cod are said to be abundant on the bank there; but it is a wild, stormy, and unsafe place to fish. The French had a fishing-station formerly, just inside Long Point, but it was abandoned, four years ago, and since then they have had no fixed station in Port-à-Port.

Next in order is Petit Port, a very small harbour, a little to the westward of the Bay of Islands, with rocks from 500 to 800 feet in height on either side. It is so small that not more than six fishing vessels could lie in it at the same time. By Article 23 of the Imperial Decree, an aggregation of vessels there is absolutely forbidden; and none but vessels having the right to a fishing station within this harbour, can anchor in it. While fishing in this vicinity, the larger French vessels generally anchor in Lark Harbour, within the Bay of Islands, which is safe and commodious, and distant only four miles by land from Petit Port.

The fishing vessels from France usually arrive at Petit Port during the latter part of April, when the ice leaves, and fish there until the middle or end of June, when the cod move off to the northward in pursuit of the capelin, and the fishermen follow them. This season, there were 250 French fishermen at Petit Port; and during the two months they remained there, they took 5,000 quintals of cod, being an average of twenty quintals per man. It is alleged by the French that less than forty quintals per man will not constitute a profitable fishery; and the nomade fishermen here have relied formerly upon following

the cod in their annual migration to the Labrador coast, without which they could rarely make out a good season, or a full fare. They were greatly annoyed with the vigilance displayed and exertions used to prevent their intrusion at Labrador and Belleisle North, during the last and the present year, as thereby they were prevented from procuring full fares. The usual fishing-ground is at the distance of three to four miles from Petit Port; but this season extraordinary exertions were used to take fish, and the boats went frequently as far as twelve miles to the westward, in pursuit of them.

The fishing station of Anse-à-Bois, is at the southwest point of Harbour Island, which lies at the entrance of the River Humber, within the Bay of Islands. It is known to British fishermen as Wood Harbour, and is regarded as altogether unfit for shipping. It was not occupied this season.

The Bay of Islands and Bonne Bay are both magnificent sheets of water, with safe anchorage in each. They are surrounded by lofty barren mountains, of the most striking and picturesque forms, but stern, savage, and desolate in the highest degree. On the northern slopes of the mountains at Bonne Bay, near the summits, large masses of snow lie perpetually, and add another striking feature to the grand and extraordinary scenery.

In the early part of the season, the French fish at the entrance of each of these remarkable bays, making their rendezvous at Lark Harbour, in the Bay of Islands, and at Havre des Roches, in Bonne Bay. The fish taken near these bays, they salt on board their vessels, and at the close of the fishing in June, carry them to Old Ferolle, where there are admirable beaches for drying and curing. The French do not in general use the wooden flake or frame for drying their fish. They cure their cod on the higher part of the beaches, or the stone-covered slopes leading to the water. These they level for the purpose, removing the larger stones, and arranging the smaller ones smoothly and regularly, choosing them, as nearly as possible, of one size. If crowded with fish, and there is not sufficient prepared ground ("grève" is the term), they lay down fir branches on the natural surface, and cure the fish on these.

In the Bay of Ingarnachoix there are three fine harbours, perfectly sheltered, and easy of access. The two fishing-stations within this bay, at Keppel Island and Port Saunders, were not occupied by the French this season, being probably at too great distance from the fishing-ground.

New Port-aux-Choix is a small harbour on the northern side of Point Riche, in which there is only eleven feet water at low water in ordinary tides. This is much less water than formerly, the harbour having been filled up greatly of late years, owing to ballast having been cast into it, to the immense quantity of cod's heads and offal thrown in annually, and the dunnage laid down for vessels to ground upon. Large vessels must lie moored head-and-stern, and take the ground at every tide. The writer was detained nine days in this harbour by stress of weather, and thus had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the French mode of conducting the cod-fishery in all its details.

At New Port-aux-Choix there is the best sedentary fishery on the whole of the west coast, fully equalling, if not exceeding, that at Red Island. Of the four stations here, three only were occupied this season, and all of them were held by one wealthy "armateur" of St. Malo. This year, 120 men and boys were employed at this port, and they caught 9,000 quintals of fish, being an average of 75 quintals for each, which made a most profitable fishery. The Prud'homme, who has been fishing at this place for the last sixteen years, stated that this was the usual average. He uses chiefly the long lines, which are very successful here, the fishing being at two and three miles from the land, in seventy fathoms water, upon a bank much resorted to by large spawning-fish. The Prud'homme also uses the cod-seines occasionally in Ingarnachoix Bay, but not very often, as he does not approve of it, from its destroying great numbers of young fish, and thus injuring the fishery. British fishermen equally object to the "bultows," which they aver are most successful with the large mother-fish on the spawning-beds, and thus most destructive, diminishing the fishery greatly.

Early in September, the fishing for the season

being nearly at its close, there were two boats only attending the "harouelles," each of which laid down 300 fathoms of line, to which a hook was attached at every fathom. In favourable weather they brought in 1,600 large cod every morning, which would make 40 quintals of dried fish. The Prud'homme said, that in the early part of the season he had 30,000 fathoms of "harouelles" set at times, and when the fish were most abundant his men used the hand-lines also.

The French fishermen arrived at this port on the 28th of April last, which was immediately after the ice left the harbour. The fishing usually continues until the 10th or 15th of September, after which the weather becomes too boisterous, and the vessels generally leave at the end of the month; the fish last taken being carried away in salt, uncured. From the time of their arrival, until their departure, the labours of the fishermen and shoresmen are incessant. They pay not the slightest respect to the Sabbath; in fact, that day seemed to be one of more than usual bustle and exertion, as if devoted to bringing up all the arrears of business during the preceding week. The French fishermen said they only knew when the Sabbath came round by seeing the English fishermen cease from labour; and they ridiculed the English for abstaining from work, accusing them of laziness and losing valuable time. This desecration of the Sabbath is universal in all the French fisheries at Newfoundland.

Although the French did not commence their fishery at Port-aux-Choix this season until the 1st of May, yet, on the 1st of July, they dispatched a vessel of 120 tons to Marseilles with a cargo of dried cod, for which a large price was expected, as the first fish in market. The same vessel was dispatched in July 1856 from this port to Marseilles with an early cargo, which brought 42 francs per quintal, a rate which must have yielded an enormous profit, the whole cargo producing 90,000 francs.

The French "shoresmen," who are employed in drying and curing the fish, and other labour on land, both men and boys, are a most miserable set. It was said that many of them came from the poor-

houses, and received no wages, getting their food only. This was scanty, and of the poorest description, on which an English fisherman could scarcely exist. The "fishermen" have very low wages in addition to their rations, and some none at all—only a small share of the fish caught: they engage in France to go out to the fishing-ground, whenever it can be done, with double-reefed sails.

The Prud'homme has an allowance from the "armateur" of two francs for every quintal of fish caught after the first thousand quintals, and this causes him to drive the men to the uttermost. They require driving, however, for the moment they are left without inspection they leave off work to talk and smoke. It is said at Newfoundland that it requires three Frenchmen to do the work of one English fisherman. This saying struck the writer as having great force on all ordinary occasions; when a special service had to be performed, it appeared to require even a greater number of men in proportion.

The French dried cod are much inferior to those cured by British fishermen. The French tear off the head of the fish very clumsily, leaving the body quite ragged at top. Neither are the fish well or thoroughly split, so as to be perfectly flat; the backbone is also removed awkwardly, leaving a lump where the bone is broken off, and more bone is left than in British-cured fish. A greater quantity of salt is put upon them in pile than on British fish; they are not dried so thoroughly, and when dried, are much more soft and limp than dry fish of British cure, which are white, smooth, almost inflexible, and nearly translucent. One quintal of British-cured cod contains as many fish of equal size as a quintal and a quarter of French-dried cod. The greater weight of the French-cured cod adds considerably to the bounty they receive, which is paid on the weight of the dried fish. This inferiority of cure, however, operates against the sale of their fish in foreign markets; and although the French have endeavoured, during the last two or three years, to introduce their fish into Spain, they have not yet been successful, the Spaniards preferring the white, hard, well-dried British cod.

The subject of curing cod after the English manner was brought before the Assembly of "Armateurs," at St. Servan, last January. The President, M. de Bon, pointed out to the meeting the advantages that would flow from drying and curing cod in the same mode as the English, and rendering the commodity of equal quality. He insisted upon the necessity of improving, in this manner, the value of the produce of the fisheries; so that if, in future, the Government should find it necessary to suppress the bounties, the fishing-business might be able to sustain itself, and struggle successfully against foreign competition.

The Prud'homme at Port-aux-Choix stated that there were many more fishing-vessels at Newfoundland this season than during the war with Russia, when great numbers of the fishermen were drafted into the naval service, to which they were liable from having previously received the Government bounty as enrolled fishermen. According to this Prud'homme's statement, there were this year on the east and west coasts of Newfoundland, 90 vessels of the 1st class, 50 of the 2nd class, and 30 of the 3rd class, in addition to 300 large vessels employed as "bankers," some of them of the burthen of 500 to 600 tons. He also stated that the "Compagnie Générale Maritime de France" has exclusive title to Red Island; that it was a Company possessing much power and political influence, having a capital of 50,000,000 of francs, and owning 300 ships and steamers, trading to all parts of the world.

The fishing-stages at Port-aux-Choix are conveniently arranged, and during the fishing-season they are neatly covered with canvas. The huts for the men are very wretched; they are lodged most miserably, very little, if at all, better than the Newfoundland dogs. The house for the Prud'homme, Surgeon, and fishing-captains, is neat and comfortable, with good brick chimneys, and altogether of a permanent character. A large building was nearly finished on the 10th of September, in the lower part of which the large boats, or shallops, would be hauled up for shelter during the winter; and the upper part would be filled with the small boats, or bateaux. There is a small schooner on the stocks

for repairs; and on the whole, the French act as if the country belonged to them entirely and exclusively. When the writer first landed at Port-aux-Choix, he was saluted by the Frenchman in charge, with "Welcome to my country!" as if it were part of the territory of France.

A little to the eastward of Port-aux-Choix is Boat Cove; it is a harbour for boats only, but is much exposed to northerly winds, which throw in a heavy sea. There is a small fishing-station here, which employed thirty men this season. They took 10,000 cod (making 1,600 quintals of dried fish), chiefly by bultow-fishing.

To the eastward of Boat Cove is Old Port-aux-Choix, with anchorage for large vessels all along its southern shore. This harbour has been surveyed by French naval officers during the present season, and distinguishing marks have been set up for the guidance of their vessels of war, which will resort to this port hereafter, instead of Port Saunders as formerly. It is separated from New Port-aux-Choix by a neck of land only 300 yards across, and from the Cove in Ingarnachoix Bay, called Grey Gamble, by another neck of land of about the same width. A radius of three miles from New Port-aux-Choix would include the best fishing-grounds in its vicinity, as well as Boat Cove, Old Port-aux-Choix, Grey Gamble, and part of Ingarnachoix Bay, thus securing everything desirable at this capital fishing-station.

The remaining French fishing-stations to the north-eastward are principally used as curing-grounds by the vessels engaged in the nomade fishery of the Gulf. There is but little fishing from Old Ferolle to Cape Norman, it being generally a low limestone coast, with shallow water, which the cod avoid by striking over at once to the opposite coast of Labrador when on their migration from the westward. These stations are now scarcely worth occupying. The French vessels attached to them have heretofore relied on stealing over to Labrador, and there completing their fares, which they are now unable to do.

At New Ferolle, the settlers stated that seventeen French vessels had been there during this season, having twelve bateaux, or more, attached to each

vessel, and had left 100 bateaux in charge of one family there, to be reclaimed next season.

The French employ six armed vessels each season on the coasts of Newfoundland for the protection of the fishermen and their vessels, and the maintenance of good order among them. Each of these vessels has a stated line of coast to guard. One schooner is usually stationed at the Island of St. Pierre, under the immediate orders of the Commandant there; a second moves along the coast from Codroy to Port-aux-Choix; a third, from thence to Croque, where the senior naval officer on the station (Commodore Mazères, in the frigate "Sérieuse") usually stations himself, to receive reports and adjust disputes. A steamer is generally employed between Croque and Cape St. John, and an armed store-ship completes the naval squadron.

The Salmon Fishery.

In former days the salmon fishery on that part of the coasts of Newfoundland resorted to by the French was most abundant and valuable, but, owing to the destructive mode of fishing they have pursued, it has dwindled into insignificance, and now seems in a fair way of being wholly annihilated.

The document No. 4, hereunto annexed, is a copy of the official table of salmon fisheries on the east and west coasts of Newfoundland, which were re-classed, and admitted to the "tirage général" in January last. At the meeting of "armateurs" then held, it was stated by the President that, with one exception, all the salmon-fisheries of Newfoundland had fallen into the hands of the English. He proposed that every grantee of a salmon-fishery should be obliged to fish the same by Frenchmen exclusively, the first season after he drew it, under a fine; this, he thought, would revive the fishery, and take it out of the hands of the English. One of the "armateurs" said, that the salmon-fisheries had been invaded to such an extent by the English, that they would not now yield sufficient to pay the expenses of the French fishermen necessary to look after them, and, consequently, they had been abandoned. Commodore Mazères said that, in fact, the grantees

of these fisheries let them to Englishmen, to receive half the produce. Very soon the English did not deliver the half, and ended by giving nothing at all. An "armateur" then stated, that two only of the Newfoundland salmon-fisheries had been sought at any time for the favourable results they might afford to the grantees. All the rest were merely asked in the hope of drawing some profit by re-letting them to the English. The proposed fine was rejected unanimously by the meeting, and the President then delivered a strong opinion as to the impropriety of re-letting the salmon fisheries to the English, and sharing the products; intimating, very plainly, that parties bringing into France the salmon so obtained, would run great risk of losing the bounty on their cargo of cod.

By Article 42 of the Imperial Decree, the mode of taking salmon at Newfoundland by the French, is expressly confined to "barrages" in the rivers and streams: they are not allowed to take salmon along the coasts. The "barrages" are frames of wood, very like an ordinary stable-rack, which are put directly across the streams, at their confluence with the tide, and effectually prevent either the ascent or descent of fish. To these "racks" are attached pounds or places in which the salmon are retained until taken out by the fishermen. The "racks" are put up early in the season, and allowed to remain until the end of September; in consequence, the female fish are prevented from ascending to their spawning-beds, and if they escape being taken, the ova drop from them in the tideway, and are lost. On the other hand, the "slinks," or spawned fish of the preceding year, are prevented from returning to the sea; and the writer was informed, by more than one fisherman, that, at times, hundreds of these spent salmon had been seen dead along the streams above the "racks," where they had perished from inability to reach salt-water. Anything more destructive than this mode of fishing by "barrages" can scarcely be conceived.

On the whole of the west coast the French themselves fished only one river this season; that was the River of Ponds, to the westward of the Bay of

Ingarnachois, in Mal-Baie. The product of the season's fishing was brought to Port-aux-Choix, and weighed while the writer was there. It proved to be only 46 quintals, equal to 23 barrels of pickled salmon, a quantity not more than sufficient to pay expenses. When the French leave a salmon river at the close of their season, they usually leave the "racks" standing for the benefit of their "gardien," who keeps them up until the latest moment, getting what fish he can, and then storing the racks in safety until the succeeding season.

The Prud'homme at Port-aux-Choix this year let the salmon-fishery at the River of Castors to an English settler, on condition of receiving half the fish caught. This settler "barred" the river; but finding after a number of days that he got no fish, left it altogether. This River of Castors formerly abounded with salmon; and now none seem to exist in it.

Except the taking of small fishes for bait, the French prosecute no fisheries on the coast of Newfoundland but those for cod and salmon. It is, therefore, unnecessary to speak of any other fishery in connection with them.

M. H. PERLEY.

St. John, New Brunswick,

October 19, 1857.
