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John Halliday
September 11 - 1817

R E P O R T

FROM

Select Committee on Newfoundland Trade:

WITH

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE

TAKEN BEFORE THE COMMITTEE;

AND AN APPENDIX.

Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed,
26 June 1817.

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REPORT.

THE COMMITTEE, appointed to inquire into the State of the Trade to *Newfoundland*, and into the Situation of that Settlement;—HAVE, pursuant to the Order of The House, examined the several Matters referred to them; and have agreed to the following REPORT:

YOUR Committee have commenced their Inquiry into the state of the *Newfoundland Fisheries*, as well as into the very distressed situation of the persons settled in that Island.

They first examined those Merchants who were best able to detail to them the present condition of the Residents of *Saint John's*, and in the different Bays occupied by *British* subjects.

The Evidence on these points was so uniform, so decisive, and so afflicting, that it was thought, from its pressing urgency, to be a duty incumbent on Your Committee to lay before the House, without delay, the opinion of the Sufferings experienced by the great majority of a very extended Population, amounting, unless speedily provided against, to the certainty of absolute Famine; and which has already involved in its consequences the violation of private property and the destruction of civilized order.

Unless, through the intervention of Parliament, some immediate relief shall be granted, it is the opinion of Your Committee, that the horrors of the ensuing winter will, if possible, be still further aggravated and increased. It appears also to Your Committee, that the Trade itself has experienced a serious and alarming depression: the causes from which this has arisen will require, in the opinion of Your Committee, in the ensuing Session of Parliament, a much more detailed and accurate investigation; but enough has been shown by the testimony of respectable Witnesses, to prove, that unless some aid is afforded to the Merchants before this House separates, the Fisheries will be most materially injured; the Capitals embarked in it by degrees withdrawn; and the Nursery for Seamen, hitherto so justly valued, almost entirely lost.

26 June 1817.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

Select Committee on the Newfoundland Trade.

Jovis, 19^o die Junii, 1817.

MICHAEL ANGELO TAYLOR, Esq. in the Chair.

George Garland, Esq. called in ; and Examined.

*George Garland,
Esq.*

YOU reside at Poole?—I do.

How long have you carried on your trade to Newfoundland?—I have carried it on for about 15 years, having had the conduct in England for about 15 years more.

Are you deputed from the merchants of Poole, to state to the Committee the difficulties under which the Newfoundland merchants now labour?—I am.

What are the difficulties under which the Newfoundland merchants now labour?—They are various; I will state them in their order. Perhaps it would save the time of the Committee, and make the whole more intelligible, if I refer to minutes I have made, as well from my own observation, as the facts which have come to my knowledge. It may not be improper for me to preface my statement with a brief account of the mode of conducting the trade. When this trade was first established, the merchants and their immediate servants were the only classes of persons engaged in it. The merchant residing in England made his outfit in the Spring of the year, both as it respected the number of servants he engaged, and the quantity of provisions and tackle he provided, on a scale proportioned to the extent to which he intended to carry on the fishery; the fish was wholly caught, cured, and exported by his own servants, and a very small establishment (if any) was left in the island through the winter. In process of time, however, a third class of persons sprang up, consisting of servants or sailors, who had chosen to remain in the island after the period of their servitude had elapsed, and of their descendants born in Newfoundland. These persons, denominated Planters, procured supplies of all the necessaries of life, and implements for the fishery, from the merchants, engaging to pay for the same in fish and oil. It soon became apparent, that this division of labour was best calculated to promote the success of the fishery; the merchant attending to those parts of the trade which were strictly commercial, such as procuring the needful articles of provision, clothing, implements, and, in short, every necessary whatsoever, which he lodged in his stores, and issued from time to time to the planters as their occasions required, and in the Autumn receiving the fish and oil in payment, which he exported to such parts of Europe as his judgment directed; whilst, on the other hand, the planter was solely occupied in the catching and curing of fish and preparing the oil, for which his laborious habits peculiarly fitted him, and in which his own interest prompted him to the utmost diligence. So preferable has this mode of conducting the trade been found, that it has been gradually superseding the mode first adopted; and, at the present time, the quantity of fish caught by the servants of merchants is extremely trifling; whilst that caught by the planters and their servants, is equal to the demand of every market in the world. I come now to the proof of the distress and depression of the trade. It has diminished immensely in its extent, within the last year. This indeed may not appear to be the case, from the official returns of the exports and imports in Newfoundland in 1816, in which returns the quantity of fish exported is stated to have been upwards of a million quintals; but the Committee will remark, this return is for the period between October 1815 and October 1816; and as the greater part of the catch of each season is exported after the month of October, the return in question relates in reality more to the catch of 1815 than of 1816. It is the opinion of those best informed on the subject, that the whole catch of the last year did not exceed 700,000 quintals. Another striking symptom of the distress and depression of the trade, is to be found in the want of employment for the
resident

George Garland,
Esq.

resident population, and the dreadful state (little short of starvation) to which many thousands of these poor creatures have been reduced during the last winter. To this subject I shall presently beg to call the attention of the Committee more particularly; for the present, I mention it only as a symptom of the decay of the trade. As a further proof of the ruinous state of the trade, it is to be remarked, that the merchant cannot obtain for his fish, when it gets to a foreign market, such prices as will admit of his allowing to the planter who catches it, a price sufficient to enable that planter to pay his account with the merchant for the necessaries of life and the articles requisite for the fishery. The average price of fish last year in Newfoundland, was 14s. per quintal, and nearly all the planters fell in debt to their merchants; yet even this price was more than the average produce of it in foreign markets, after paying freight and insurance, by full 2s. 6d. per quintal, leaving of course a loss to the merchant to that extent nearly on his shipments of fish. In consequence of all this, the more opulent merchants have contracted their trade; many have quitted it, and many have been completely ruined. The last symptom of distress that I shall adduce is this, that within the last two years between 2,000 and 3,000 writs of execution have been issued in the island, as can be proved by the surrogate of the supreme court, who is now in England. The evil therefore resolves itself into the smallness of the existing demand for fish in the foreign markets, except it be rendered at such low prices as involve immense losses both to the merchant and planter; owing to the increased expenses of catching, curing, and exporting it, as compared with those expenses in former periods of peace. I hope I have established the reality of the distress and depression of which the merchants complain.

What in your opinion are the causes of those evils?—One principal cause is evidently the great additional duty imposed on salt fish in Spain, since the restoration of the legitimate sovereign; and that imposed by Murat at Naples, but confirmed and increased by the king since his restoration. On this subject I beg to deliver in a document, showing the particulars of the advance of duties on fish, in both those kingdoms.

[The witness delivered in the same; and it was read as follows:]

Duties imposed on British fish imported into Spain during the under-mentioned years.

Reals vellon.	p. hard dol.	p. Eng. cw ^t .
1792 - 21 per quintal, a' 4/	exch. is equal to 4/2 $\frac{1}{4}$	per Castilian q ^t or - 4/7 $\frac{1}{2}$
1802 - 43/7	- - - - - a' - - - - - 8/8	- - - - - 9/6 $\frac{1}{2}$
1808 - 16/4	- - - - - a' - - - - - 3/4	- - - - - 3/8
1814 - 46/4	- - - - - a' - - - - - 9/3	- - - - - 10/2
1815 - 47 31 mrs	- - - - - a' - - - - - 9/7	- - - - - 10/6 $\frac{1}{2}$

Neapolitan Duties :

The duty previous to Murat's government, was two ducats and 50 cts. per cantar of 196 lbs. English, which at the present exchange of 3s. 5d. per ducat, is equal to 4s. 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per English cwt.

On the 23d June 1815, the duty was four ducats and 53 cts., and 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. thereon, which is equal at the same exchange to 8s. 10d. per English cwt.

In 1816, the duty was 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ ducats, with 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. thereon; and in the October of that year, 10 per cent. on the whole duties was added, making in all 5 ducats and 7 cts. per cantar, which at the same exchange is equal in the whole to 9s. 8d. sterling per English quintal of 112 lbs. being 4s. 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per cwt. more than was exacted previous to the French taking possession of Italy.

This great increase of duty raises the price of the article to the consumer in so great a degree, as materially to affect the consumption, whilst at the same time it renders it necessary for the importer to sell at a low price, in order to procure any considerable consumption at all. The great consumption is by those classes who will not eat fish, if it cost them much more than fresh meat. Another cause of the depression of our trade is this, that with respect to our import of oil, we are not placed on terms of equal competition with the Greenland and other whale fisheries, as will appear by a document which I beg to deliver in, and which shows, that whilst we pay a heavy duty on our oil, the importer of Greenland oil is not only virtually exempt from duty, but receives besides a considerable bounty.

[The witness delivered in the same, and it was read as follows:]

George Garland,
Esq.

Duties:

On Newfoundland Oil	-	-	-	-	1	4	11½	} per Ton.
- - - - - Blubber	-	-	-	-	0	15	7½	
On Greenland and Southern Whale Oil	-	-	-	-	0	8	3½	} per Ton.
- - - - - Blubber	-	-	-	-	0	5	2½	

Bounties:

Greenland Seas and } To every vessel that shall proceed upon and return from
Davis's Straits. } the whale fishery, 20 s. per ton on the ship.
Southern Whale } To each of eight vessels which shall be fitted and cleared out
Fishery. } between 1st January and 31st December, and shall sail to the
southward of the equator and return before 1st December in the subsequent year
with the greatest quantity of oil, &c. 300 l.

To each of four vessels which shall be fitted and cleared as above, and proceed to the southward of 36 degrees of south latitude, and not return under the expiration of 14 calendar months with the greatest quantity of oil, &c. 400 l.

To each of ten vessels, so fitted and cleared, which shall double Cape Horn, or pass the Straits of Magellan into the South Seas, and fish four months to the westward of Cape Horn; or double the Cape of Good Hope, and fish four months to the eastward of 105 degrees of east longitude, and return as above, 600 l.

To each of nine vessels so fitted and cleared, &c. which shall return with the next greatest quantity of oil, &c. being not less than 30 tons, 500 l.

Another cause is to be found in the increased general expenses of our trade, as compared with former periods of peace, in stamp and other duties, increased wages to clerks and other servants rendered necessary by the increased expenses of their necessary support; also the increase in the prices of cordage, provisions, and most other articles necessary for the fishery. Another cause of the distress of the trade may be found in the surrender by our government to France, by the late treaty, of a large part of the coast of Newfoundland, which is by far the most favourable part of the whole island, for the prosecution of the fishery; and to which, in consequence of the general scarcity of fish about St. John's and in Conception Bay, the inhabitants of those districts, the most populous in the island, were wont annually to resort during the whole of the fishing season, though at a distance of 200 or 300 miles. Since the cession of the French shore, the British fishermen of the said districts, confined to their own coast, have not caught above half the quantity of fish which they formerly did with the same outfit. The merchants urgently requested the Government, previous to the peace, to retain this valuable part of the island; and though we do not presume to question the expediency of the sacrifice which has been made of their individual interest for the promotion of national objects, yet I would submit that it strengthens their claim to reasonable relief. And lastly, but by no means least, another cause is to be found in the growing competition of the French Newfoundland trade, which is fostered by its government with the most anxious solicitude, freed from duties either on its ships or produce, and encouraged by enormous bounties on its produce and on the men engaged in the trade, as will appear by a document which I beg to produce.

[The witness delivered in the same, and it was read as follows:]

French Bounties on their Newfoundland Fisheries.

ON fish exported from Newfoundland or from France to the French colonies, 24 francs metrical quintal, which is equal to 12 francs or 10 s. pr. English quintal of 112 lbs.

On fish exported from Newfoundland to France, and from thence to Spain, Portugal, Italy, and the Levant ports, 12 francs pr. metrical quintal, which is equal to six francs, or five shillings pr. English quintal of 112 lbs.

On fish exported from Newfoundland to Italy Spain and Portugal direct, 10 francs pr. metrical quintal, which is equal to five francs, or four shillings and two-pence pr. English quintal of 112 lbs.

On every killogramme of oil exported from Newfoundland to France, 10 centimes, which is equal to 75 shillings pr. tun, of 256 gallons English.

On every killogramme of cods roes and eggs from Newfoundland to France, 20 centimes, which is equal to 8 s. 4 d. pr. English quintal pr. cwt; besides the above, a bounty of 50 francs or 41 s. 8 d. per man, is allowed to the French merchants, for every

*George Garland,
Esq.*

to nothing, and then the same result to the revenue will ensue; but with the additional misfortune to the country, of losing this trade so important to its best interests.

One serious evil attending the trade, which I ought to have stated sooner, results from the existing law of Newfoundland, respecting servants wages; the planters whose situation I have described, are for the most part very poor men, they take as I have before explained, every article required for their support, and for the prosecution of the fishery from the merchants on credit, and usually engage one or two other poor men, as servants for the season, at stated wages. At the close of the season, if a sufficiency of fish and oil has been caught to discharge the debt due to the merchant, and to pay the servants their wages, all is well; but if there be a deficiency, the servants receive the whole of the wages for which they contracted, and the merchant has only the remainder of the fish and oil, which very often is not half equal to the amount of his debt. Now, surely, every principle of equity requires, that the merchant who has furnished food for both the planter and his servants, all through the season, as also tackle for the fishery, should, in case of insolvency, share equally at least with the servant who has only supplied his labour, and has already received some recompence for that in his personal support with the planter through the season. It is obvious, that this enactment was founded on a supposition, that English merchants, and not Newfoundland planters were the servants employers, as indeed was the case in the early periods of the fishery; under such circumstances, it was clearly right that the servants should have a claim for the amount of their wages upon the fish and oil, the produce of their labour prior to the claim of any common creditor of the estate, whose demand might have arisen from transactions unconnected with the fishery; but when a planter is the employer, the merchant furnishing necessary supplies for the current season, and the servant contributing his labour, the case is essentially altered, and both should share in an equal ratio; besides the injustice of the law as it now stands, it takes away that stimulus to exertion on the part of the servant which would exist, if he knew that he could only share equally with the merchant in the produce of the voyage. We trust, that this evil will be remedied by an immediate alteration of the law. I beg the Committee to bear in their mind, that were Great Britain destitute of such a trade, affording a nursery for seamen, a vent for manufactures, the means of producing so great a balance in favour of its possessor, in the trade of that country with foreign nations, it would naturally become the study of the British legislature to adopt the measures I have proposed relative to exemptions from duty, &c. in order to create such a trade; and of course it will be more easy to preserve than it would be to create it.

The removal of the superfluous population of Newfoundland, is a question distinct from the representations I have already made. For information on the heart-rending condition of these poor creatures during the last winter, and up to the date of the last letters, I beg to lay before the Committee, various extracts of letters received from the principals or agents of some of the first rate houses.

The Committee will learn from them, that a lawless, because starving population, has been seen in various parts, breaking open the merchants stores, and carrying off their property, or seizing the vessels that arrived with provisions; and in both cases, setting the police (such as it is) altogether at defiance. In one instance, going with arms in their hands, demanding and enforcing a supply of provisions from the sitting magistrates.

[The witness delivered in the same; and they were read as follows:]

Extract of a Letter from Edward Kemp, agent to George and James Kemp; dated Brigus, 29th November 1816.

“ For some time past my attention has been much drawn towards the displeasing prospect before us for the ensuing winter, which seems indeed already to have set in; owing to the numerous failures and the general reduction of establishments, affairs assume in my apprehension a very serious aspect. A large portion of people are not only deprived of credit for general supplies, but are without the means of getting the mere necessaries of life; a scarcity of provisions is anticipated bye and bye, and must inevitably happen, from the limited supplies come to the country; add to this, the population is extremely great of Irish servants out of employ; the governor has chartered two vessels for the conveyance of superfluous population, and does not seem disposed to do more; but this is a very feeble aid when the people is so large, and they

they will most undoubtedly for winter support have recourse to fraud and violence. I can conceive no alternative to it at present, and my anxiety is greatly increased by the very suspicious character of several neighbouring harbours towards the head of the bay, which are thickly inhabited by people of the worst class, and who are now generally in distress. Above us there is only one mercantile establishment remaining, Dansons at Holy Rood, whose concerns there this fall are much narrowed; we lie therefore exposed to the first assaults, and I confess myself uneasy at the prospect. Dry goods alone in the store would not I think attract them, but where provisions are, their attention will be fixed, and stores once forced, no sort of property will be safe; I have therefore under all these circumstances, thought it most expedient and safe not to hold provisions through the winter."

George Gardiner,
Esq.

From another Letter, dated Brigus, 8th February 1817.

"The example of those Carbonear and Harbour Grace rioters; has produced a very mischievous effect through this end of the bay, and the ultimate point gained by them, in securing a provision by public regulation, has caused large bodies of men to confederate, in order to demand provision here also, on pain of plunderage of the stores.

"About a week since, one of our late rejected dealers, of a naturally lawless temper, and accompanied by others of the same cast, came and insisted on getting provisions, which were again refused, on credit; he became extremely riotous, and was forced off the room. A mob presently formed, and some blows passed, when I was apprehensive of mischief ensuing. This attempt at riot was preconcerted, and certainly intended to incite a general disturbance, but fortunately we were enabled to put it down without farther evil at the moment.

"That party however proceeded to organize forces, went up the bay with large assurances of abundance in our stores, inviting all disorderly persons, and forcing others to join a general attack upon this room, and they had actually raised a party sufficient to overwhelm the harbour, if they had then made the attempt. Through the past week we have been constantly kept on the alarm, and I thought it necessary to call a meeting of the principal Brigus planters, to resolve on defending the harbour, and I have every reason to believe it had a salutary effect in checking the rashness of the mob. There were some in this harbour likewise, who only waited the commencement of hostilities to share in the plunder, and I believe I may say, that all who were put out of credit were disposed the same way, part being however impelled solely by the force of want. As far as I could out of our stock of rooms provisions, I determined to assist those rejected planters that were really actuated by distress, sparing a $\frac{1}{2}$ cwt. of bread flour and pork to some, and $\frac{1}{4}$ cwt. of the same to others of larger families. The interests of the party thereby becoming different, reproaches and jealousies among themselves have effected a dispersion, and an abandonment for the present of any serious attack from that quarter. The priest has just spent a day here, and I think his exhortations to maintain peace and the security of merchants property, have been serviceable.

"With the sealing schooners, the chief strength of the harbour will go from us, and I am most uneasy about what may then turn up, especially as little stocks of potatoes and other supplies will then be exhausted, and the bulk of the population above us will be approaching to a state of starvation; I can scarcely venture to expect, that we shall pass through the winter with an entire escape of the stores.

"There will be much disturbance and difficulty about first supplies of provisions, and it will not be safe to receive more than can be thrown immediately into the hands of our dealers, and that in small quantities too, so that idle people may go elsewhere for credit, before the second quantity should arrive. It is much to be wished for, that the Governor should be prepared to send all the superfluous population from Newfoundland."

From another Letter, dated Brigus, 25th February 1817.

"Since my last respects (by this vessel) dated 8th instant, I am happy to say we have been tolerably tranquil, so far at least as to be free from any violence on the stores, although we are daily besieged by importunate and unprincipled claimants for provisions, who have developed still further the disorderly state of the times, and show the strongest inclinations to plunder and distress the merchants stores.

"All these people are moneyless, and almost all are entirely strangers to the house, yet make their demands in the most authoritative and insolent manner, holding forth, "That while the stores contain a biscuit they will have it." Now we

George Garland,
Esq.

have barely enough to maintain our our own crew till the 1st May, and whatever is taken will occasion us a proportionate distress; and I am thinking, that bye and bye we shall be forced to quarter ourselves about the harbour for a meal.

“ The most of these ruffians are without any shadow of claim upon our house, some undertake schemes owing to distress; but they are joined by great numbers who do not want, and who only engage with them for their own safety, or as in many cases to promote uproar and confusion.

“ The country is overrun with such dangerous characters; and if they are not sent from us next season, I believe no merchant will do well to leave much property here the following winter; but the nearer prospect of the spring gives much cause of apprehension.

“ From the probable state of such a population, in another month, from their known disposition to plunder in bodics, and from intimations already made, I have every reason to fear the first arrival in Brigus, will be in serious danger of capture by a lawless mob, who would either demand purchase without intention or perhaps ability to pay, or would unceremoniously take what they want by force of numbers. In such an affair, a few might be known amongst them; but their poverty would preclude any recovery of payment for the wrong done us, whilst the far greater part would be dispersed during the next Summer, and leave us not even the satisfaction of making an example of one of them, or the means of supplying our own regular dealers..

“ I think that whatever provisions come next Spring to Brigus, will stand in the most imminent danger of nearly total loss, for it seems morally certain they will become the object of immediate tumultuous attack. We have no military or civil power near us to overawe, nor would the harbour people, if they were all home from the ice, and so disposed, be able to resist the force we may expect against us. In this case of extremity, I feel it my duty to propose, that no supplies whatever shall be sent to Brigus next Spring, and that we continue only to sell what other property is here, until the advance of next summer shall disclose the eligibility of receiving a further stock for the subsequent fall.

“ I hope this letter will reach you in time, for a consideration of its subjects, before the supplies are sent off. If they be already provided, but not gone from the port, it were better they should remain in your stores until the storm be overpast, than that they come here; and be assured I shall be ever watchful of renewing the course of business as soon as it can be done safely.”

To Geo. & Jas. Kemp & Co.
Poole.

Extract of a Letter from John Elson, Agent to George James Kemp and Co.
dated Carbonear, 31st January, 1817.

“ The Macclesfield completed her lading and was cleared at the Custom House on the 18th inst. and could have departed on the 21st had the time favoured, but the weather was so adverse that it was impossible. Our books were closed, and I was ready at a moment's warning to embark with them, but no opportunity offered, and the harbour or bay has been full of ice ever since. While we were thus waiting, on the 25th inst. a most unexpected circumstance occurred; a mob of about 150 persons presented themselves, demanding supplies of provisions, or threatening to break the stores. As they could offer no compensation, and our stock was far from abundant, their request was of course not complied with, but the refusal was accompanied with the mildest remonstrances, an offer of subscription, and a promise to do all that could with propriety be done in their favour. All this was ineffectual, the door of our flour-loft was soon burst in. They proceeded to help themselves liberally of butter and flour, and after rolling out about 20 half hogsheads flour, and 30 firkins butter, left these things on the wharf under a guard, and proceeded to Gosse and Co's., where they acted with greater violence, and soon plundered their stores of about 80 bags bread, 20 barrels flour, 25 pork, and a parcel of butters. These outrageous acts were committed principally by a banditti of persons living in tilts on the borders of the woods at the south side of the harbour, the majority Irish, and many of them strangers who had come from other parts of the island, and settled down for the winter, attracted by the idea of this harbour having large supplies of provisions, a want of which had driven them from their former places of abode. They concealed themselves, as I suppose, for fear of being sent out of the country, until driven by want from their hiding places, when they entered into a combination to force provisions from those who held them, and were

able

George Garland,
Esq.

able to prevail upon some other persons to join them, who were always resident here, but who are discarded from their usual dealings on account of their bad voyages last year, or for other reasons, and who of course were also in want. Of the existence of a great number of the former class in this neighbourhood we had no knowledge, and the scheme was concerted so privately, that we were unable to take any precautions against it. They left the provisions on our wharf, under a very slight guard, and while they were at Gosse and Co's. the peaceable and orderly part of the inhabitants in our neighbourhood (stimulated perhaps a good deal by a dread that all the provisions would be taken away, and themselves be in want, before the winter closed) rallied about us, and thus assisted, we ventured not only to turn into the stores again our own goods from the wharf, but actually began to stop that which was coming up the harbour from Gosse. & Co's, and secured a good deal of it for them in our stores. In our scuffle, however, we lost of our own a few casks flour and 15 firkins butter. When things were in this state, we were again threatened, and in consequence proceeded to put our wharf in a posture of defence, by planting cannon, &c. I applied to the magistrates of Harbour Grace, in the midst of business as well as before, who appeared to be panic struck, and did nothing for our assistance; but the Catholic priest came over from thence, and was of considerable service in calming the tumult and recovering some of the stolen goods; but we were obliged to mount a strong guard on the stores from that time until the 28th, when the surrogate at length came, and appointed a committee of the respectable inhabitants to seek into and relieve the wants of those in distress, by whom it has since been ascertained that a considerable degree of distress exists; but that there is a sufficiency of bread and flour (and but a bare one) in the harbour, for the purposes of its inhabitants, if allowed out properly, until the time when a fresh arrival of supplies may reasonably be expected, and of all other provisions a plenty. At the first meeting of this committee it was ordered, at the recommendation of the magistrates, that the outrageous conduct of the rioters should for the present be overlooked; that each merchant should supply every man who had dealt with him the past year, with the necessaries of life at the fall prices; that a subscription should be entered into for the relief of those who had no merchants to apply to; and that the distribution of the bread and flour, in allowances of a sufficiency at a time to each individual for a month's consumption, should be in the hands of the committee. Every thing has, in consequence of these regulations, been since tranquil, but it is surprising to observe what a number are coming to claim assistance. There is no scarcity here of pork and butter, and I hope there is enough of bread and flour, if managed with prudence; but the worst now is, that we are threatened with visits from our neighbours up the bay and down the North shore, many of whom are reported to be in great need. In Harbour Grace, also, it appears they are much pressed, and obliged to be on constant guard to prevent mischief; but the stores have not yet been robbed there. Amongst other evils to be dreaded, I am seriously afraid that the seal fishing may be stopped, and this will certainly happen, if, by the time preparations are making for the ice, there appears a probability of supplies from home being kept out, and that the stock in hand is small, which it must then be. There are many, as I have before informed you, who have laid in their supplies for that fishery: and the fear is, that they will be called upon for it by those who are themselves incapable or unfit to go to the ice, and who will not be willing the provisions should leave the place.

“ It appears to me that the chief cause of these distressing circumstances is the great (though almost imperceptible at the time) influx of strangers, and that in future winters we shall be exposed to the like distress, unless protected by a strong military force. An application has now been made to St. John's for protection of this kind, but the intercourse is not open by water, and it takes a long time to send round the bay, and after all we have reason to expect but little help from them just now. At all events, it is incumbent upon those who are interested in the business of this country, to represent in the strongest terms the state of things to the Government at home, in order that precautions may be taken against the recurrence of such calamities, otherwise neither the persons nor property of those engaged in trade here will be safe in future.

“ I hope you will be enabled to send us some supplies of bread and flour early, and also of oatmeal, potatoes and peas. Though it will be for you to consider of the propriety of the vessels coming here direct, or touching at St. John's; at all events, the captains of any vessels coming early with provisions should be cautioned to avoid, if possible, the Southern ports, where there is no doubt they would be detained. It would appear there is a general scarcity throughout the island.

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From another Letter, dated Carbonear, 4th February 1817.

“ The number to whom it has been found necessary to extend the relief is astonishing; not less than 400 men, women, and children altogether, have been helped in this way, many of these are strangers lately come here.

“ All the dread now existing seems indeed to arise from the suspicion, that down the shore and up the bay great distress prevails, and that the inhabitants of those parts of our district may be inclined to pay us a visit in search of provisions. A regular watch is kept on our stores day and night.

“ In Harbour Grace the distressed people have gone to the court-house with arms in their hands, demanding provisions of the magistrates, which have been granted to them, under the direction of a committee, in a manner similar to that in which things are conducted here; but I am fearful there is less provision *there* in proportion to the number of people than *here*; but every thing is at present quiet there, as well as at this place, and every precaution taken that it should continue so. In the meantime an application is gone round the bay to Saint John's for a military force, which I hope will be granted, and that it may be effectual to preserve tranquillity. I must own however, I have strong doubts of the place continuing quiet, unless further supplies arrive before the end of April; but we must do as well as we can, and you may rely on every exertion in my power to keep order and guard your property.”

From another Letter dated Carbonear, 11th February 1817.

“ The number altogether relieved by the committee of supply at this place, now amount to nearly 500 persons (men women, and children). There can be no preventive so effectual against the recurrence of the outrages we have witnessed, and the state of alarm in which we are now placed, as the removal of a considerable part of the population, and this ought and will, I apprehend, be the first thing attended to after we have assistance from home.”

From another Letter, dated Carbonear, 19th February 1817.

“ We have not received any military assistance from St. John's, as was expected when I last wrote, nor it seems are we likely to have any help from thence, the force there being too small to be divided, and the season such as not to admit of the schooner *Pike* coming round, which, strange as it may appear, is the only vessel of war left on this coast, so that we are to depend upon our own exertions for the preservation of the peace, and I hope these exertions will be effectual; though in whatever way affairs may terminate, great blame is imputable somewhere, for leaving the country in so exposed a state.

“ It is expected, that at the beginning of March, there will be a considerable increase to the number of applicants for relief. Those to whom, immediately after the disturbance, a month's supply was given, will again be in need, and to those may be added, many who before the riots were partially supplied for the Winter, and whose stock is now nearly exhausted. I have hopes notwithstanding, that the provisions will hold out, and that the sealers will be enabled to go to the ice, though upon a shorter allowance than usual. Besides the strangers lately attracted to the bay, from the report of its having provisions and employment to give them, and the dealers discarded from old established houses here, there is a third and very numerous description of persons about this district, who are reduced to great need this Winter, and that is the planters, who have been accustomed to receive their supplies from Saint John's merchants and others, who, in the course of the last year, failed, or withdrew themselves from the business.”

To Geo. & Jas. Kemp & Co.

Poole.

Extracts from Letters from St. John's, Newfoundland, 4th to 31st March, 1817.

“ I have received advices from Harbour Grace and Carbonear, up to the 10th instant, by which it appears, that the people of those places were still disposed to display again the spirit of riot and violence, by obstructing the outfit of about 40 schooners which are destined for the seal fishery, from those two ports in Conception Bay, and the disappointment of which, to the owners, would, in such an event, be very considerable, and to some it might have a heavy loss.

“ Under these circumstances, and at the request of Mr. Pack and Mr. Elson, I made application to Captain Buchan, the senior naval officer on this station, for the

the Pike to be sent round to Conception Bay, for the protection of the outfit and departure of those vessels already mentioned, and he immediately complied with my solicitation, by ordering her to be got ready for sea. However, the committee of the trade, seeing the great necessity for Captain Buchan's presence here, soon afterwards sent in a requisition, that he would not quit the town under existing circumstances of unexampled distress; therefore I find he has now determined not to proceed to Harbour Grace, but he will most likely sail for Halifax the first fair wind after the 17th instant, in order that he may induce the commander in chief on that station to send supplies of provisions to this port, to replenish the naval stores, which are nearly exhausted by the pressing demand for all the articles necessary to support life.

“ From what I have been enabled to collect from the best authorities, I believe that this island was never before so calamitously situated as at the present time. The streets are now filled with beggars of the lowest order by day, and those of the middle class of society by night, who are yet ashamed to acknowledge themselves reduced to a state of mendicity while it be light. Such scenes of poverty and disease are now constantly in view, and the number of paupers, having lately doubled, the funds of the public charitable institutions are almost exhausted. This town now relieves upwards of 1,800 persons daily, and chiefly by voluntary contributions.

“ The surrogate (Captain Buchan) having been left with a considerable sum of money to distribute, the respectable part of this community must feel grateful to him for the wise and prudential distribution he has made, and which has tended, in great measure, to diminish the cries of hunger at this moment of importance, when it regards the lives of our fellow creatures.

With the exception of the flour which we yet receive from the commissariat for the use of the public, there does not remain any for sale in this place; and during the present two months, rice and peas have been issued as substitutes for bread and flour. There is little now left of either of these articles, not more than will be required by the charitable fund for their expenditure the ensuing three weeks.”

30th March.—“ You will observe, by the former part of this letter, that all remained tranquil, and the town continued to be orderly; and I certainly then entertained hopes, that the remaining part of the winter would have passed without considerable alteration; however, in this, I am truly sorry to inform you, I am disappointed; for during the past week, the town has been kept in a continued state of alarm, by the riotous proceedings of a lawless gang, consisting, in public, of about 100 men; and the inhabitants in general have been obliged to enrol themselves into a corps of armed association, to aid the police and protect the property, at least such as are respectable, and can be intrusted with a firelock, have taken arms.

“ On the 24th instant, the first appearance in the mobility that indicated tumultuous proceeding, was their taking possession of a schooner bound to Placentia Bay, which was reported to have bread on board; but on finding themselves disappointed after a minute search, they marched to head-quarters, where those of the ringleaders demanded of the officer commanding, some military assistance to open the merchants stores, at the same time stating that several houses continued to secrete bread. The major, instead of confining those fellows, allowed them to march off unmolested, so that on the day following, when the civil power took the ringleaders into custody, the town was forced to turn out to disperse the mob; and ever since, about 40 armed men have continued to protect the gaol for the security of those prisoners. The lower order of people are much enraged at the confinement of their leaders, and rumour says, that they have used threats and still continue to contemplate a rescue. I trust they will not attempt the prison; for should that be the case, *much blood will be lost*, as there is, no doubt, great determination on both sides. Besides the precautionary measures which I mentioned, the inhabitants keep up a regular patrol, and about 35 persons parade the streets all night, to check depredations which otherwise would be constantly committed, and to prevent unlawful assemblages. The good effects of this branch of our police are daily manifested; notwithstanding the duty of the town falls heavy on the respectable inhabitants; still most of the merchants contrive to support a nightly watch on their premises; and I have two persons belonging to our establishment always on the alert, and which I am assured, have alone prevented the stores on our premises being forced open.

“ For men to contend for provisions that are not attainable is absurd to every reasonable person; but the wretches who compose the lower department of this community,

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community, cannot be admitted into the class of rational beings; so that you will imagine how distressing the present situation of Saint John's is, and I am concerned to remark, without much prospect of speedy relief.

"Although the several charitable committees of this town have maintained nearly 2000 persons during the winter, and still continue to distribute their rations regularly, the housekeepers are obliged, in addition to all their subscriptions, to consent to receive by billet a certain number of men to their kitchen, and to those depraved improvident creatures to furnish a meal daily; the number of billets for single men issued up to yesterday, exceed 900, and I apprehend half as many more must be disposed of before the town can be tranquillized; such scenes of misery as exist here I believe few ever witnessed, and I assure you, that altogether our state and condition is truly lamentable.

"Our garrisons are but weakly manned, and part of those are troops not well adapted for our purposes; afloat the only sail here is the Pike schooner, captain Buchan, To eulogize this officer according to his merits, a more skillful pen than mine is requisite; I can only repeat, that his whole conduct during this dismal winter, deserves the praise of every inhabitant of Saint John's who can feel gratitude; he has exerted himself on every occasion for the public weal, and having gone hand in hand with the civil authorities, their united arrangements have evidently contributed principally towards the peace and security of Saint John's. Having given you some account of our domestic troubles, I am now to mention, with almost an equal degree of concern, the painful situation of our neighbours.

"It seems that the disturbances at Harbour Grace have increased, and that several vessels are prevented proceeding in the seal fishery by the interference of the mob, who have so mutilated many of the schooners, as to render reparation impracticable in time to prosecute their intended voyage; that Mr. H. Dawson is still obliged to keep all his servants under arms, for the safety of the stores on his own premises.

"The seal fishery of this island will not be nearly so extensive as last season from this port; not one vessel will be sent to the ice, owing to the dearth of bread and flour; from Conception Bay, the number intended for this fishery would not be so great as last year. I almost fear that not more than half of those intended vessels can have proceeded on their voyage from Trinity; I have not heard since Christmas, the weather has continued so excessively severe, that no boat could cross the bay.

"I beg to observe, that the evils which are now felt, arising from this excess, will necessarily be aggravated by neglect, and that to a most afflicting degree; for as the merchants will not send out supplies for next winter, whilst they know that thousands of starving wretches are to be left in the island, who must and will be fed if the provisions exist there, although they have not a shilling to pay for them, it follows, that all the population are likely to be involved in the common distress, and even those few who may lay in a supply during the Summer, will be compelled to share it with their unprovided neighbours. This is no common case, in which an erroneous decision on the part of Government may be afterwards rectified without any material injury arising, but one in which the lives and property of thousands are at stake; the ensuing winter will again surround the island with an impenetrable barrier of ice, and whether numerous or scanty, provided or destitute, the population, whatever it may be, must be left to its fate; I would beg to remark further on this subject, that the excessive population is not attributable to any want of caution on the part of the merchants; the persons in question were carried out by hundreds at a time, in vessels whose owners had no kind of connexion with the trade, but who found it more profitable to employ their ships as passage vessels than in any other way, and having once landed their passengers in Newfoundland, they cared not what might become of them afterwards. It has been suggested, that those who are not wanted for the fishery, may possibly be supported by agriculture alone in the island, but I beg to express my opinion, that such an idea is fallacious, owing to the sterile and rocky character of the country."

Would you wish to add any thing further to the evidence which you have given?
—No, I have nothing more to add; that expresses very fully my sentiments as to all the facts there stated; and as to the reasoning upon those facts, that is only considered as matter of opinion.

What remedy would you propose for that which you state to be the evil of the surplus population of Newfoundland?—I believe the best and only remedy that can be at present offered for that, would be the removal of it.

Can you state the number that you think ought to be removed?—I should think that 5,000 of them removed, any time before the early part of October, would leave the island in a state, though, perhaps, with considerable difficulty, yet that would remove the immediate distress of the island.

The population you stated to be between sixty and eighty thousand?—That is the best computation that can be made; I should think nearer the former number than the latter.

The immediately distressed part of that you do not estimate at more than 5,000?—I should think if 5,000 were removed, between this and the settlement of the trade in October, the trade would be enabled to struggle with the others, connected with another point, that we could receive such encouragement for the present year, in any way Parliament might think proper, as to enable us to send out supplies, without the danger of those supplies falling into the hands of the population now there, and being taken by force, which has been the case.

If, then, the trade received that encouragement, it would not be necessary to remove any persons at all?—I say, if the trade received any adequate encouragement, with the removal of 5,000, I think there would be no extreme danger for the ensuing winter.

If the trade received no encouragement, you would remove a still greater number?—If the trade received no encouragement, I think that number must increase, for the merchants will be afraid to send out supplies; and in case of supplies not being sent out, the number of distressed individuals must increase.

If no such encouragement, in point of bounty and other objects, is given, what number would you conceive it necessary to remove?—Five thousand at the least; the other I give as a matter of opinion, because it is impossible I can speak as to the consequences of the ensuing year; I say, 5,000 being removed, it is rather possible than likely that the trade may struggle through another year, but I cannot absolutely speak to the necessity of the trade being encouraged and that number removed; I should be afraid myself if Government were to say to us, We can give you no other encouragement to your trade than the removal of 5,000 of the population, that the merchants in the trade, and myself among the number, would be afraid to send out the necessary supplies for the inhabitants; but that is an opinion.

When you speak of removal, to what place do you calculate upon removing them?—I am perfectly unable to say to what place they can be removed, unless I knew how they were to be removed; it is impossible I can give an opinion upon that.

What would be the cheapest rate at which they could be removed any where?—I am of opinion the cheapest rate of removal of them, would be to give discretionary power immediately to the Governor, to adopt such means for the removal of them as may be found expedient on his arrival there; I cannot point out what would be the cheapest mode of removing them; I think no person could speak to that; if any ships were to be found there, that could be taken up for that purpose, I think that would be the easiest and the cheapest mode of removing them.

From what country do those persons come principally?—The increased population has arisen from the prosperity of the trade; four or five years ago many were carried out from England, still more from Ireland, and the remainder arise from the ordinary increase of population; and the depression of the trade leaves nothing for those to do, who were profitably employed in it at the time the trade was carried on to advantage; that no longer exists, and therefore they have nothing to do.

A number of persons were in the habit of annually coming out in the ships from Great Britain and Ireland; were they not?—Certainly; generally more than were necessary to navigate the vessels.

Can you state the number that came in the course of a year?—No, I cannot state the number; I should think they have decreased very much; very few went out from any port last year.

Have you any means of stating the number in the preceding year?—No; I should think that in the year 1814, there might have been carried out 1,000 or 1,500 probably from England and Ireland; I speak as matter of opinion, I cannot give any precise information on the subject.

Do you happen to know whether there are any large number of persons engaged to proceed during the present year?—I do not think there are, so far as my experience and knowledge goes; no more have been sent out by me than were absolutely necessary to navigate the vessels, and to do what was necessary to be done in the establishments when they arrived.

In order to render your view of relief effectual, it would be necessary to prohibit persons

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persons coming into Newfoundland?—Of that class of persons who go out unengaged. I think it would be hard upon the trade to inhibit entirely the carrying out persons necessary for their business; the increased population there arises from this cause, the adventurers in shipping without any connexion whatever with the trade of Newfoundland, carrying out persons and throwing them on the shore of Newfoundland without any employment.

You think it necessary that none but regular merchants should be permitted to carry out persons to Newfoundland?—That is my decided opinion as a merchant.

And that without some such provision the removal of 5,000 persons would not afford you the relief you desire?—Not to the same extent.

You have stated, that you can form no idea of the expense of removing those persons?—I can only go from the usual data; the usual payment for coming home was 4*l.* per head, but I should think now it might be done at less expense, at least to Ireland.

Does 4*l.* per head, include the victualling?—Certainly.

Is there much intercourse between Newfoundland and the North American colonies?—There is a constant intercourse, but not to a great extent.

Would there be a greater difficulty in procuring shipping for the North American colonies than for England?—No; I should think it would be less difficult to carry them to that country than to this, if they were willing to go.

Of course the removal must depend upon the will of the parties to go?—I should think so.

How late in the season is it customary or practicable for ships to sail from this country for the settlement, affording an opportunity of sending out provisions?—The practicability of the thing depends upon circumstances on which I can give no opinion; the usual time for sending out what is called a fair supply, which is to supply the inhabitants for the ensuing winter, has been from the middle to the latter end of October; I think as a merchant that is as late as we can depend upon.

Have you the means of ascertaining the measures taken by the merchants for the supply of the colony in the ensuing winter?—I should fear not more than from one-half to two thirds of the supply of former years.

Is the Committee to understand, that the number of persons in the colony is as great at present as it was in these former years?—I have no reason to doubt it, when I refer to former years; I refer to last year; there was but a limited supply sent out last year; but I mean two-thirds or half of the supply of the last year.

Have you reason to believe, that the merchants have been deterred from making the usual preparations for supplying the settlement with provisions, by the violent proceedings which have taken place during the last year?—I am decidedly of that opinion from my own experience and my own actions, as well as from the universal sentiments I have heard expressed by the trade.

Will the high price of provisions at present operate materially in reducing the supply to the settlement?—As far as my own experience goes, I believe it will have that effect in a very considerable degree.

You have stated, that the expense of conveying those persons from Newfoundland to England, would be four guineas, and that there would be no difficulty in finding vessels to bring them, or to find vessels to convey them to Canada; what would be the expense of conveying them to Canada?—I have not given an opinion as to the probability how far conveyances may be found; if ships and provisions are not sent out, how can they be removed, unless Government send out ships.

It is your opinion, that the Governor would not have shipping at his disposal without the provision of Government, to convey persons from the settlement?—As a matter of opinion, I do not think he would obtain sufficient shipping; but I think he may obtain some, if authorized to take them up as a matter of trade, to carry some of them probably to Nova Scotia, and to bring some home; but not the whole five thousand which it would be necessary to remove.

Would many persons be contented to go to Nova Scotia or to Canada, if an opportunity was afforded them?—I should doubt it.

You have stated, that a great proportion of the people are now out of employment, in consequence of the depressed state of the trade; what number of those persons who are out of employment, were formerly in the employment of persons who have become bankrupt?—I cannot answer that question with any precision; I should think a great proportion of them has arisen from the circumstance of the bankruptcies that have taken place of those that employed them.

And therefore that they have no natural protection from the persons who are
now

now there existing as merchants?—They have none; they have been maintained by charity.

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You have stated, that if relief is afforded to the settlement, and 5,000 men were removed, the settlement would be enabled to support the remainder of the population during the next winter?—I am of that opinion.

You have stated, that only one-half, or two-thirds of the supplies this year, have been sent out, as compared with those that were sent out last year?—I am likewise of that opinion.

How do you suppose the remainder of the population will be supported the next winter?—Because if Government were to give us the relief, we hope the merchants would be induced to send out an additional quantity of supplies while there is time to do it.

If the merchants do not send large supplies, a considerably greater quantity than five thousand men must be removed?—I refer to my former answer, in which I state that the want of assistance from Government must increase the evil.

Supposing no relief to be given to the Newfoundland merchants, by bounties or in any other way, do you think that with the removal of only five thousand persons, the merchant could carry on his trade with any advantage?—Certainly not; I think I have distinctly stated that before; I much doubt whether he could carry on his trade at all, so far from carrying it on with success, the carrying it on at all has been for two years at an immense loss.

Do you think that in removing the extra population, the expense would be less to Government, if they were removed to England or Ireland, or if they were removed to New Brunswick and Canada?—I am of opinion, that the expense, if Government were to take up ships, would be greater to bring them here, than to carry them to Nova Scotia and the American colonies; but I must beg leave to add, that I am likewise of opinion, that merchant ships would be with much more difficulty got to carry them to those places than it would be to bring them home, unless it was taken up so early as to permit the ships to return after carrying away the excess of population, into the merchants trade again.

If the extra population were removed in the fall of the year to Canada or New Brunswick, would not there be a great addition to the expense incurred by Government by such removal, from the situation they would be placed in on their landing, and the necessity of providing for them during the winter months, till they could either earn by the produce of their labour in cultivating the soil, what would be necessary for their subsistence, or provide themselves with masters, such as might be found in those colonies?—I can give no opinion as to what would become of the excess of population, after removal, whether removed to this country, to Nova Scotia, to New Brunswick, or to any other part of the world; I do not think it would be possible, unless Government undertook it fully themselves, to remove them by merchant ships at the fall of the year to either place; if the government by means of their governor, or by other means, take up ships that are arriving or might arrive soon, they might take them up to Quebec, and the ships might then return into their usual trade; I have no doubt it would cost Government a great deal more to carry them up to Canada or New Brunswick, and to maintain them there during the ensuing winter, than to bring them home at four pounds a head.

Are you not of opinion, that if measures were adopted as soon as they can conveniently be adopted, the removal of those persons would be performed at an infinitely less expense than if the measure is delayed for any considerable time?—I think my answer distinctly said, that if immediate measures were taken to remove them, I thought they might be removed at less expense and with greater convenience, immediately than they could be at the fall of the year; and I have strong doubts, unless Government provided all the ships, whether they will find any ships of merchants in Newfoundland that could bring away any great proportion at the fall of the year, because the ships cannot return to do their own business.

Your opinion is, that five thousand persons should be removed in order to relieve the island from its present distress?—Certainly.

The trade would even in that case require the protection that is prayed for?—I do think so in a greater or a lesser degree.

Supposing from any circumstance, the aid prayed for was not granted, are you of opinion that a greater number than five thousand would be required to be removed?—I have said that as a matter of opinion, I think there would be a greater number, for that the number of the distressed inhabitants must be increased, but I was asked a question whether that alone would be sufficient, I have never intended to express

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an opinion that that alone would be sufficient relief, but five thousand removed and any sort of encouragement given for the present year, I think would relieve us for the present year.

You have stated that it would be proper to remove five thousand, or to give the governor authority to remove as many as necessary, but that that would operate only as an immediate relief; but for the future preservation of the trade, that certain remedies, either to the whole or to a part of the extent you have mentioned, should be afforded to the trade, what effect would be produced if those persons connected with the settlement, were to understand that the consideration as to this relief was to be taken up in another year, and that no immediate relief was to be afforded?—I believe the danger arising from such a knowledge of the trade on the part of Government would operate to prevent sending out sufficient supplies for the population, that would be left after the five thousand were removed.

What would be the effect of their understanding, that the subject was to be fully and fairly investigated by a committee, with the intention of giving them every fair relief they were entitled to another year?—I believe such an opinion expressed by Government and believed by the trade, (and I should for one if I heard that expression believe it,) would induce the merchants concerned in the trade, to struggle very hard for the present year, in hopes that they might be able to do better in future.

It is still your opinion, that if no relief is afforded to the Newfoundland merchants, it would be necessary to remove from the island such a number of the population, as would be proportioned to the deficiency of supply sent out this year, as compared with the last?—I do think so.

And that if the same population should be in the island next winter as during the last, and only half or two-thirds the supplies sent out this year, the distress of the ensuing winter as compared with the last, must be proportionably great?—I believe so.

Under those circumstances therefore, you would think that one-half or at least one-third of the population should be removed?—I cannot give an opinion upon that; I do not know what sacrifices they might be induced to make.

Can you state at all, what proportion the trade at the present moment bears to the trade previous to the war in 1792?—I believe the state of the trade at present, is nearly about equal to the trade of the year 1792, perhaps the quantity of fish shipped since the late war may be something greater than previous to the war in 1792.

Do you happen to know whether the fisheries of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, have materially increased during that period?—I have no means of giving an answer to that question.

The men whom you propose to remove from Newfoundland, are mostly persons well acquainted with the practice of the Newfoundland fishery, are they not?—I am inclined to think not, that they are adventurers carried out on speculation, by persons not immediately connected with the trade.

For what purpose do you imagine those persons went out to Newfoundland?—To try whether they could get employment, as many had done when the trade was in a state of prosperity, but they finding so great a reverse, could find no means of employment nor no means of support.

How have those people hitherto lived?—They have been billeted like common soldiers on the charity of those, many of whom had very little to spare from the support of their own families.

Do you mean to describe that as their condition ever since their arrival?—Certainly not.

What was their original employment on their arrival in Newfoundland?—Some of them perhaps carried out a small means, others got employment a small part of the summer, others of them could get no employment, but lived upon the bounty of their fellow-creatures who went out with them; but when the fall came, all those means failed, and they could neither support themselves there, get masters nor come home; I believe these to have been the great causes of the evil.

This relates only to those who have arrived during the last two years?—Principally so, but I believe a part of those who had been previously employed increased the number.

Those previously employed had been employed in the fisheries?—Certainly, or in business connected with the fishery.

You have stated, that you are not aware of the fisheries carried on either in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick or Cape Breton, and the other of His Majesty's colonies having increased?—I am not aware in what proportion they have increased or decreased.

Do

Do you not suppose that the removal to those provinces, of a considerable number of persons well acquainted with the business of the fishery, would make them more formidable rivals to Newfoundland than they have hitherto been?—I certainly think it would increase their means of carrying on their fishery.

George Garland,
Esq.

What were the last dates of letters from Newfoundland?—The last dates from Newfoundland, I think, until this time, were about the 12th of April. Letters have been received to-day to the 25th of May.

Was the great distress in the settlement likely to be removed in consequence of arrivals up to that period?—Inasmuch as arrivals of provisions in various ways have taken place, there being provisions in the island, the distress so far must have been decreased.

There is no likelihood of the distress being very severe, during the summer season, for provisions?—I should hope not.

Is there any great chance of a proportion of the inhabitants being removed by the settlers during the summer season?—No, I do not think there is.

Then without the assistance of government, all the population who are there at present, will continue there during the following winter, with diminished means of employment and diminished means of subsistence?—I cannot say that I think all would remain there, but I think a very large proportion would.

Do you know what has now become of the fishermen that formerly were employed where the French now are?—Those who were employed by British on the French fisheries, whether at St. Pierre's, Miquelon, or the northern shores of Newfoundland, Great Britain being dispossessed of those places by the late treaty, the British fishermen of course fall on their old employers in the different parts of Newfoundland, independent of those fisheries.

That forms one of the causes of your superabundant population?—I should think it may in some degree increase it.

Though many of the ships laden with provisions have arrived, as is to be supposed, at this time in Newfoundland, do you think that the distressed part of the population of Newfoundland can be otherwise fed and supplied than by the voluntary contributions of the different merchants and others, without their having any means of being repaid for the supplies which they give to those persons out of employment, and who have been distressed through the winter?—I believe, that provisions having arrived at the different harbours of Newfoundland, if the merchants of those places do not employ the population that at present have no employment, and refuse to issue provisions to them, the population will take them by force.

Is the shipment of supplies from this country made with reference to the population of the settlement, or to the returns expected by the merchants?—To the returns expected by the merchants. I cannot think any merchant would send out without an idea of adequate returns.

James Henry Attwood, Esquire, called in; and Examined.

IN what capacity do you appear before this Committee?—I was deputed by the Committee of Merchants for the trade and fisheries of St. John's, Newfoundland, to present a memorial under date of the 8th of February last, to Earl Bathurst, on the subject of the distresses of the trade.

J. H. Attwood,
Esq.

[The witness produced the same, and it was read as follows:]

“ My Lord,

“ Saint John's, Newfoundland, February 8th, 1817.

“ We, His Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, the undersigned merchants of Saint John's, Newfoundland, being a committee duly elected by ballot, at a general meeting of the persons connected with the trade and fisheries of this island, for the purpose of representing the general interests thereof, and to facilitate communications with His Majesty's government; and having been duly acknowledged in correspondence with his Excellency the Governor, and the other constituted authorities here, beg leave to address your Lordship as the minister of the King, whose care and attention we presume the people are more particularly entitled to claim, in full confidence that we shall receive from your Lordship that consideration and support which the necessities of our case may require.

“ It would be in vain for us to attempt to describe to your Lordship the full extent of the unprecedented distress which prevails in this country, consequent on the sudden and dreadful decline of our trade and fisheries.

J. H. Attwood,
Esq.

“ His Excellency our Governor will, no doubt, ere this, have given to your Lordship some idea of the extent to which those distresses prevailed previous to his leaving this island, and which induced his Excellency to afford us the means of sending nearly 1,000 destitute persons from this town alone to their native country, for which relief the people of this community must feel ever grateful to his Excellency.

“ But we beg to represent to your Lordship, that the distresses which have been experienced by starving multitudes in this country, subsequent to the departure of his Excellency, for the want of the necessaries of life, as well as of employment to procure them, far exceed any thing he could have supposed probable.

“ Your Lordship will be able to form some idea of the state of this country, when we inform you that the civil power, aided by the military and naval forces here, is deemed insufficient for maintaining the peace; the merchants and respectable inhabitants are organized into nightly patrols, and armed for garrison duties, whilst the land forces, assisted by seamen and marines from the only man of war on this station, are dispatched to distant out-ports to quell riots and disturbances, where the faithful and well disposed subjects of the King, driven to desperation by hunger, are seizing vessels that arrive, or breaking open the stores of merchants in search of those provisions that are not to be found, and for the want of which they are perishing.

“ The alarming deficiency of the necessaries of life in this country, is not, as your Lordship might suppose, a casual thing, but a necessary effect of an obvious cause; it was foreseen long ago by every one here, that from the serious losses sustained in this unfortunate change of affairs, very few had the means of making those necessary importations, and the few that had such means deemed it imprudent to import those provisions which the majority of consumers could have no means of paying for, and late events have verified their apprehensions to a lamentable extent.

“ The cause we allude to of this state of things, is the rapid and unparalleled decline in our trade and fisheries before mentioned, which decline has been principally produced by the cession at the late peace of the most valuable part of this fishery to France, by which alone, the people accustomed to resort to those now ceded shores, were thrown out of employment, or left to seek it in the room of others who were receiving their accustomed employment on the present British establishment.

“ We mention this, my Lord, without presuming to question the propriety of a measure by which the dearest interests of one class of His Majesty's subjects are sacrificed for the general benefit of the whole, but we humbly submit, that as the sufferers by such measure, we are the more entitled to the consideration of His Majesty's Government with respect to the relief we may ask, and which it may possess the means of affording us.

“ Another important cause of the decline in our fisheries, is the great reduction in the value of our produce in all foreign markets, where it has suffered an unprecedented depreciation in consequence of the competition of French and American fish. And we beg most urgently to solicit your Lordship's attention to the large bounties given by the former power for the encouragement of their fisheries, which is already occasioning the removal of the capital employed in the British fisheries to those of France, and which, if continued, must prove the utter destruction in a very short time of these hitherto highly valued fisheries, unless some countervailing bounties can be afforded, on the part of His Majesty's Government, on fish exported from this country, and which it is the principal object of this Letter to entreat your Lordship to move and promote.

“ The next subject to which we solicit the serious attention of your Lordship, is the high duty which was imposed about the close of the late war by the government of Spain on British fish imported there, and which is continued to be exacted by that power. This increased duty, though but lightly felt at the time it was imposed, when all articles of provisions were high in Spain, now when all the necessaries of life are abundant and cheap in Europe, operates against the consumption of fish to a most important extent: and if the Government before mentioned could be prevailed upon to reduce those duties to their former standard, we calculate that the advantage to be derived therefrom would be equivalent to a very considerable bounty on our exports.

“ The third and very material object of our present address is, to request your Lordship's attention to certain local regulations and enactments, which the altered circumstances of the trade and fisheries imperiously call for; as connected with this subject, we take the liberty of submitting for the perusal of your Lordship the copy of a correspondence which has lately taken place between his Excellency the Governor

and

and our Chairman, by which your Lordship will perceive that we were desirous of receiving from his Excellency the particulars of certain alterations proposed to be made in our laws, and submitted by him to the merchants and others connected with the trade and fisheries of the out-ports, but withheld from us the duly recognized committee of the trade.

“ Since the departure of his Excellency, we have received from an out-port, a copy of those proposed alterations, which it seems his Excellency did not feel himself authorized to communicate to the merchants in general of Saint John's; a town, comprising at this moment a population of twelve thousand souls, at least six times the number of any other port in the island, where emanates a considerable part of the fishery carried on at the out-ports, and from whence is exported from one-half to two-thirds of the produce of the whole island, as will appear by the custom-house returns.

“ These regulations we have in concert with the other merchants of this town, whose interests we are deputed to represent, maturely considered, and to a certain extent approve of; but that part which draws an unjust and invidious distinction between the resident fisherman, or servant of this island, and the fisherman or servant engaged for this fishery in the mother country, claiming full payment of the wages of the latter, out of what may be the sole or almost exclusive produce of the labour of the former, is what we cannot subscribe to, and what we are convinced will be rejected by your Lordship and the British Parliament.

“ In other parts of these regulations, we also deemed some alterations and additions essential and desirable; and we have accordingly transcribed the particular regulations, which we most anxiously wish to see passed into a law, as necessary and indispensable to the present state of the fisheries of this island, and we submit them to your Lordship, as the result of our most mature and deliberate consideration, in the hope that they may meet the full approval of your Lordship and His Majesty's Government. But should your Lordship and His Majesty's Government view these matters in a different light, and neither see it needful to enact the regulations we propose, nor to allow the bounty we pray for; we beg leave to impress on the mind of your Lordship, the necessity of transporting, in course of the present year, at least ten thousand of the ruined inhabitants of this settlement, who have been driven to a residency here, from the impracticability of pursuing a transient fishery during the continuance of a maritime war, to some other country where their labour may find its reward; after which there will still remain a population not less, we imagine, than from eighty to ninety thousand, which must be gradually diminished by emigration, until it be reduced to that limited number which may be adequate to supply but little more than His Majesty's colonies with the produce of this country. But in order to prevent as much as possible such emigrations, and the consequent loss to His Majesty of so large a proportion of hardy seafaring people, we seriously recommend to your Lordship's consideration the propriety of encouraging and promoting the cultivation of the soil, a measure calculated to assist the labouring fisherman in the support of himself and family, and to stimulate him to honest industry, instead of spending in dissipation and idleness those periods when the fishery can afford him no employment. And it would also be extremely desirable, for the procurement of provisions at a cheap rate, to authorize the governor of this island, or his representative, to allow the importation of bread, flour, corn, fruits, vegetables, and live stock, from the United States of America, or any other country where the British flag is admitted.

“ Whilst addressing your Lordship on these subjects, which the particular interests of the trade and fisheries have required us to represent; we conceive it our duty to state, that a great majority of the people of this community have been long anxious for a permanently established government in this place, with power to enact such local regulations as are necessary for the well being and good order of a community so greatly increased in population.

We do not now presume to ask for, or even to point out the precise mode of government which we might consider the best suited to our peculiar local circumstances; but we submit with great deference to your Lordship, the propriety of appointing one or more Commissioners, unconnected with any of the interests of this settlement; to proceed to this country for the purpose of inquiring and reporting to His Majesty's Government what description of government may be best adapted to our particular circumstances.

It must be evident to your Lordship, that laws framed more than a century ago for the express purpose of promoting a transient fishery and discouraging residents

*J. H. Attwood,
Esq.*

here, are ill adapted for the regulation of a community so extensive as that which at present exists in the island of Newfoundland.

“ There are some other subjects of considerable moment to this trade and fishery which we forbear to press on your Lordship’s attention by an epistolary detail now. We have deputed Mr. George Richard Robinson and Mr. James Henry Attwood, merchants of this port and of London, gentlemen well informed on all the subjects introduced here, and practically acquainted with the true interests of these fisheries, to communicate this address to your Lordship, and to render such further explanations and information as may be required, and we doubt not that the serious interests which we have felt it our imperious duty to represent, will receive from your Lordship and His Majesty’s Government such prompt attention and effectual relief as existing circumstances may admit of.

“ With sentiments of profound consideration and respect,

We have the honour to be, my Lord,

Your Lordship’s most obedient humble servants,

(Signed)	<i>William Haynes, Chairman.</i>	<i>Pat. Huie.</i>
	<i>Newman W. Hoyles.</i>	<i>Nich^l Gill.</i>
	<i>John Teage.</i>	<i>James Mellidge.</i>
	<i>John Dunscombe.</i>	<i>Will^m Thomas.</i>
	<i>Tho. H. Brooking.</i>	

Mr. Attwood. That contains the unanimous sentiments of the trade resident at St. John’s Newfoundland.

Do you carry on a trade to Newfoundland as a merchant?—I carry on a trade from London and Birmingham, and have also an establishment at St. John’s Newfoundland, as a merchant.

Have you ever yourself been in Newfoundland?—I have been there twice in the year 1810, and nearly the whole of last year, up to the 12th of February in this year.

Have you been present during the examination of the last witness, Mr. George Garland?—I have.

Do you agree as to the general distress of the trade, in what was represented by the last witness?—I do; but I go further.

State what additional representation you would be able to make, by way of evidence to the Committee?—I have made some minutes upon the subject, which I will take the liberty of reading, if the Committee will allow me, or of speaking from them. As to the difficulties under which the Newfoundland trade now labours, they are principally these; the first and greatest, is the unequal competition which we have to maintain with the French in supplying markets common to both; this difficulty is perfectly insurmountable without considerable pecuniary aid can be afforded to the trade from the government of the country. And it is my decided opinion, that three-fourths of the present trade and fishery of Newfoundland will be lost to the country in the course of three years, if the present promulgated French bounties should continue to be paid by that government without any countervailing bounty on the part of our Government. I ground my opinion upon the following facts.

In the first place, the bounties given by France of 5*s.* to Europe, of 10*s.* to the West Indies, with the addition of a bounty on the men and boys employed, which is equal to about 1*s.* 6*d.* per quintal more, making on the average, a total bounty of about 8*s.* 6*d.* per quintal, on all the fish of every quality exported, besides a bounty of 3*l.* 15*s.* per ton, on the oil produced from the fish. These bounties I say, are equivalent to two-thirds or more of the present cost of the fish, which on the average of the three qualities usually made, is not likely to exceed 12*s.* per quintal.

And secondly, because they have no duties, I believe, to pay, either on their exports or imports, whilst we are oppressed with a duty on rum into Newfoundland, amounting to perhaps 10 or 12,000*l.* per annum; and on oil and other produce, outward and homeward, amounting perhaps to 6 or 8,000*l.* per annum more. The only advantages we have over the French are, first, in our Newfoundland establishments of stores, flakes, houses, craft, and all the necessary apparel for a fishery, which, if the fishery was discontinued, would be of no value to us: Secondly, in our better mode of curing the fish, consequent on our long experience. These advantages put together may be equal at this time to 2*s.* or 3*s.* per quintal to us, which is the only set off we have against their bounties shown to be equal to 8*s.* 6*d.* per quintal;

quintal: Thirdly, because it appears that the French are actually prosecuting their fishery with all the enterprise and activity that might be expected from such unlimited encouragement; notwithstanding the French fishery was so very unfortunate last year, that they were only able to supply little more than France and their own colonies with fish, I am told, on the authority of the French consul, that they have dispatched more than four times the number of vessels on the fishery this year, which they sent out last year. These are the grounds of my opinion, that without support by bounty from our Government or the intervention of some great political event, that three-fourths of the present Newfoundland trade will go from this country into the hands of France in the space of three years.

The second difficulty is in my opinion of minor import, inasmuch as it is one which our competitors the French are no doubt subject to in common with us; I mean the high war duties continued to be exacted on our fish in all the markets of Spain, as well as in those of Naples. These duties at the time they were imposed, were but little felt, because fresh meat was then scarce and dear compared with fish. I believe fresh meat in Spain, during some part of the war, was near 1*s.* 6*d.* per lb. at which time fish sold (exclusive of the duty, which was about 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ *d.* at the then exchange) at near 6*d.* per lb. consequently, fish was much the cheapest article of provisions, and was consumed in preference. Now I understand fresh meat in Spain is little more than 4*d.* per lb. and fish, including the duty, cannot be retailed at less; consequently, this duty, which was but lightly felt when other provisions were high, now when they are so comparatively low, it operates against the consumption of fish to a very important extent. The third difficulty may be said to consist in the superabundant population of Newfoundland. It was the opinion of the resident merchants, that there would be a surplus of 10,000 souls, which it would be necessary to remove or otherwise provide for before the approach of next winter, if no considerable support was given to the trade by Government; some persons in the trade have thought there would not be so large a number as 10,000 persons destitute by next winter; but it is my opinion, that the people will become paupers exactly in the proportion in which the trade declines. It certainly is not the interest of the merchants of St. John's to desire to have a single man removed more than can be maintained there, or than is necessary for the security of property, because by so doing, they only tend to advance the price of labour to the prejudice of their own interest.

Whilst on this subject, I feel it my duty to represent to the Committee, the unprecedented degree of distress which has prevailed at Newfoundland during the last winter. I left Newfoundland myself on the 12th day of February last, after having been an eye-witness of greater general distress in the town of St. John's than I have ever heard of having existed in any other British community; thousands at that period of hardy industrious men were daily walking the streets, without money, without provisions, without lodgings, and without employment; they were depending on casual charity for their daily sustenance, and generally had no other lodgings than the snow covered bounds of the merchants wharfs, or the bare-shelter of old hulks of boats hauled up on the beach, during the coldest nights of the severest winter that has been experienced in the memory of man, in that inhospitable climate; and it is my firm belief, that not half of the population of St. John's, Conception Bay, and all the district to the southward, had either provisions of their own, or money to buy them, or property, on the credit of which they could be obtained; and I am consequently of opinion, that more than half the population of Newfoundland have all this winter been maintained either by public charities, or private charities: this evil was certainly aggravated by the scarcity of provisions. Early in November, it was ascertained by a general inspection and inquiry into the quantity of provisions in St. John's, that there was only bread and flour sufficient for one month's supply for the population to support them through a period of five months winter, all the neighbouring parts to the southward were found to be in as bad or a worse state. At the time when this state of things was discovered, the governor had no authority to grant licences for the importation of provisions from America; and but for a supply, which was most humanely afforded by the commander of the forces from the King's stores, the state of famine and wretchedness would have been still more dreadful. If it is asked, what brought so great a number of persons so destitute, before much could have been suffered from French competition in foreign markets, I answer, that the losses in the trade have been most enormous; that a large proportion of the merchants, I think about fourteen in the town of St. John's alone, and nearly all the shopkeepers

J. H. Attwood,
Esq.

shopkeepers and planters, have been already ruined. I am satisfied that not less than 100 shopkeepers have been reduced to a state of insolvency in St. John's in the course of the last two years; I do not think I should much exceed if I said 150; I am satisfied not five of them remaining perfectly solvent. These people flourished up to the year 1814, and imported from 1,500*l.* to 15,000*l.* per annum each, principally of manufactured goods, which they chiefly vended among the planters from the outports and their servants: but a great proportion of the servants not being employed on wages last year, and the wages of the others being so greatly reduced, that they had nothing to spare for the purchase of dry goods; the sales of the shopkeepers either declined to nothing, or they gave their goods on credit to the persons who could get no means of paying for them. It is true, that the foundation of these evils is in a great measure to be attributed to the great reduction of the price of fish in foreign markets in consequence of the return of peace; but I contend, that the terrible excess to which these evils have gone, is to be attributed to the cession of half the territory of Newfoundland to France, and their consequent decrees. It is the loss of that most valuable and productive north shore fishery which threw thousands out of employment who were accustomed to resort there, and could get engaged for no other department.

It was those French decrees, promulgating bounties, which we had no prospect to contend against, that struck a damp into the hearts of the merchants and trade, and reduced the value of property in Newfoundland, beyond all former precedent, in all other countries; which produced dry goods to be sold frequently for one-fifth, and seldom for more than half of the original cost in England; which reduced the value of store-houses and fishing establishments to almost nothing, so that, in one instance, a merchant's establishment of stores and wharfs, which only three or four years ago cost near 3,000*l.* was sold for 120*l.* without any reason for it whatever but the depression of the trade. I contend it is quite impossible for the trade to support the excessive population over another winter unless the trade is supported; they positively have not the means. The starving multitude have no where to look for relief but to His Majesty's Government. The ship owners, who originally took them out, are no way connected with the trade, and are not to be found; the planters who hired them originally, and the merchant who received the produce of their labours, have all become insolvent, and need that relief which they would otherwise have been expected to afford. The merchants who yet remain unruined in the trade, have more than they can do in providing sustenance and employment for those who have all along been dependent upon them.

The fourth and last difficulty under which the trade labours, I would mention, is the operation of the law of the 49th Geo. III. so far as it relates to the distribution of the effects of insolvents. In cases of the insolvency of planters now, the servant is paid 20*s.* in the pound of his wages, in preference to all other creditors, not only out of the produce of the voyage, but also out of the other effects, as boats, crafts, stages, houses, &c. if the fish and oil be not sufficient. The consequence of this is, that the servants have no inducement to labour after they have caught so much fish as, together with the other effects of the planter, will be sufficient to pay their wages; and thus, having no motive for exertion, and having, in the common course of the fishery, no master present to overlook them, they neglect their duty, and report to their planter that fish was scarce; whereas they have probably been sleeping in their boats three-fourths of the day without trying for it.

What remedies would you offer?—The first great remedy I have to propose, and the only thing that can preserve any considerable part of the trade and fishery of Newfoundland to this country, is, a considerable bounty on fish, during the continuance of the French bounties, which are at present promulgated only for this and the ensuing year. This bounty should be proportionate to the extent of trade which parliament may deem it necessary to preserve to the country. If the present duties on the trade should be continued, I calculate that a less bounty than 3*s.* to 4*s.* per q^l on all the fish exported from Newfoundland to Europe, would be insufficient to support any considerable proportion of the trade in opposition to the French; but with such a bounty probably nearly two-thirds of the present trade may be continued, until some political events may occur to revive it. The next remedy is, the reduction of the duties on fish imported into Spain and Naples, in favour of British fish. The third is, the discontinuance of all the duties on the trade, and the alteration of the law so far as it respects servants wages. On this subject I take the liberty of submitting a copy of the alterations proposed to be made

made by the committee of merchants at St. John's, premising that, on the part which relates to laying restrictions on clandestine sales of fish and oil, some difference of opinion appears to exist; and as that part was only suggested with the intention of coinciding, as nearly as possible, with the alterations proposed by a committee in England, who are not now pressing the adoption of such alteration, I have no objection to withdrawing it on behalf of the trade at Saint John's.

*J. H. Attwood,
Esq.*

Can you suggest any immediate remedy by which the trade might be assisted directly, subject to future regulations?—I consider that no remedy can be effectual, even for the present year and the ensuing winter, but that of a bounty upon fish; other measures may afford a partial relief, but nothing that would be material; even the removal of the superfluous population, if carried to the greatest extent, would not be effectual; for many people who have lived there for 40 or 50 years, would rather perish there than be removed, and many of them are now greatly distressed.

Veneris, 20^o die Junii, 1817.

MICHAEL ANGELO TAYLOR, Esquire, in the Chair.

James Henry Attwood, Esq. again called in; and made the following Statement.

I YESTERDAY received a letter from St. John's, Newfoundland, dated the 24th of May, of which I beg leave to read an extract:—"It is impossible to describe the distresses of the winter, for all the inhabitants of the town were reduced to a state of beggary that were lower in station than respectable housekeepers, and absolute famine at length staring us all in the face; there are hundreds of miserable objects now wandering about the streets, existing one cannot tell how; the community is anxiously looking forwards, in hopes that some relief will be granted by Government to the trade, through the application of you and Mr. Robinson; I trust your endeavours will not be fruitless.

*J. H. Attwood,
Esq.*

Do not you consider that the bad harvest which has prevailed in the whole of the North American colonies, and the fire in Newfoundland, have materially contributed to the distress of the last winter?—I think that the bad harvest contributed scarcely any thing to the distress; very little indeed, because the prices of provisions were low at the time, the exports were made for the supply of Newfoundland during the winter; I think that the fire at Saint John's contributed in some measure to the distress; but I think, that as far as that contributed, it was principally relieved by the money granted by Government for that object, or at least so far as related to the distress among the lower orders of the people.

George Kemp, junior, Esq. called in; and Examined.

WHERE do you reside?—At Poole.

In what capacity do you appear before the Committee?—As one of the representatives of the merchants of Poole, at their request.

*George Kemp, jun.
Esq.*

Are you personally concerned in the Newfoundland trade?—I am, in connexion with my father and uncle, who have been in it for the last thirty years; I have been connected with it for the last ten years.

Where is your establishment in Newfoundland situate?—In Conception Bay, at Carboniere and Brigus.

Did you ever reside in Newfoundland yourself?—I resided there for three years.

Summer and Winter?—Summer and winter, at least one winter; the others I spent in England.

Have the goodness to state to the Committee what are the peculiar difficulties and distresses under which the trade now labours?—I heard the evidence delivered by Mr. George Garland yesterday, in the whole of which I entirely coincide.

In that evidence, one of the great evils stated to press upon the trade, is the excess of population; have you any thing to offer as to the cause of that excess?—I attribute it entirely to the diminished demand and price of fish in Spain, Portugal and Italy; for had the demand continued to the extent which existed during the war in Spain, and had the price kept up to that standard, there can be no doubt that all the present population of Newfoundland would have found employment

George Kemp, jun.
Esq.

and support; at the same time, it is clear that the prodigious influx of strangers to the island during that time, was most injudicious, because such a demand could not reasonably be expected to continue.

How many of that population do you think it necessary should be removed, provided a reasonable relief be afforded to the trade in other respects?—Five thousand persons, not less.

Supposing no relief be afforded in other ways, what is your opinion then as to the number which ought to be removed?—If no relief be afforded to the merchants, it is impossible to state the limit of the distress which might be occasioned from the want of sufficient importations, owing to many of the merchants giving up the trade, and others reducing their concerns in it to almost nothing.

In that case the removal of 5,000 would not in any shape relieve Newfoundland?—It would be a proportionate diminution of the distress.

Supposing the 5,000 you alluded to before, were to be removed, to what part of the British dominions do you conceive it would be most eligible to convey them?—My own opinion is, that it would be most expedient to remove a part of them to each of the following places, viz. to Ireland, to New Brunswick, to the Island of Saint John's, or other parts of New Brunswick, and to Upper Canada. My reason for specifying Ireland, is, that I conceive many of them would from local attachments, rather return to that kingdom than go elsewhere, and because I am persuaded, that the removal of them thither would not cost the Government one-third so much as to any other place (calculating on the temporary support of them by Government at all other places I have mentioned after their arrival); and lastly, because passages for them may be procured with more facility to Ireland than elsewhere, in the ships that come home with oil, and because the inconvenience to be sustained in Ireland from the increase of the population, by the return of a part only of the 5,000, would be but trivial; the object of carrying a proportion of them to New Brunswick, is, I presume in both cases, pretty much the same, to colonize a rich, but uncultivated country; this description I understand is particularly applicable to the Island of Saint John's, or as it is, sometimes called Prince Edward Island; of the other parts of the province, I have not heard any particular description that I can depend upon; it is also well known to be applicable to Upper Canada; it is however necessary to remark, that I am confident they may be sent to New Brunswick for half the expense as to their passage, which would be incurred by the voyage to Quebec; indeed I doubt whether any Newfoundland ships could be engaged to carry them to Quebec, but one or more of His Majesty's ships may perhaps be so employed, or vessels bound from England to Quebec, in ballast, may engage immediately to call at Saint John's, Newfoundland, in their way out, and carry them at reasonable rates.

What do you conceive that the Newfoundland merchants, or other persons, would require per man for their passage to Ireland, including the victualling?—I am sure the Newfoundland merchants are so disposed to lend their assistance to Government in this affair, that they would submit to a loss on their part; and notwithstanding the present high price of provisions, I think they would engage to bring them even at 3% per man, provided they were not restricted in point of numbers by each ship, so much as by a late act they are; every gentleman conversant with passage business knows that a ship of two hundred tons, with roomy 'tween decks, may conveniently take a hundred passengers there, and other ships in proportion; we have sent so many without the slightest inconvenience; they are not allowed to have more than half of the number below at a time, but are made to change their watch with the crew.

What do you conceive would be required per man for taking them to New Brunswick?—The same price as to Ireland, because, though the voyage is shorter, the ships would be out of their usual track, and would make no other freight.

Do you think that a large proportion of these people may be supported in Newfoundland by tilling the ground?—The question, of course, implies that Government will provide them with food, agricultural implements, seed corn, potatoes, &c. from the present time till next September twelvemonth. As to the capability of cultivation, I beg to remark, that during my stay in the island my attention was particularly directed to this subject, and my opinion is, that there are very few parts that will even be susceptible of cultivation by the plough; the island is composed of a rock of granite and slate, with a very small surface of soil, in many places none at all, and in very few above two or three inches; the only places where there is any quantity of soil sufficient for cultivation are the bogs in the island, but those bogs,

bogs, generally speaking, are incapable of drainage, because they are occasioned by large basins in the rocks, through which it would be necessary to cut, in order to drain off the water. I have understood, that in the neighbourhoods of the river Exploits there is some land comparatively fertile, but I apprehend there is no other considerable portion of fertile land in the island. I also beg leave to remark, that as far as my knowledge goes, from personal observation and inquiry, there is no limestone in the island, and consequently one great source of manure, the only one I am aware of, is cut off, except in places near the coast, where they may obtain sea weeds, or the refuse of the fish. I beg therefore to suggest how much more eligible it would be for Government to carry them to New Brunswick, or Upper Canada, where a fertile country, though uncultivated, seems to solicit their labour.

You are understood to speak now from your own observation on the spot?—I do, so far as I have stated facts positively, I speak from my own observation; when I do not speak from my own observation, I have intimated that it is my opinion.

Do you think that the grant of lands, and promise of support in Newfoundland to the poor, would induce others to emigrate thither from Ireland, who are not acquainted with the nature of the Newfoundland soil?—I do; and that to a serious extent.

What evil to the general trade of the island do you anticipate from the settlement of several thousands of those paupers as cultivators of the land?—I anticipate, that so soon as the support of Government is withdrawn from them, they will immediately fall into distress, and that the same violence will be repeated which was experienced last winter.

Supposing this evil now remedied, and supposing that 5,000 persons were removed, what is the nature of that relief to the trade which you conceive is not only necessary for its support, but reasonably to be expected from Government, in the present acknowledged state of the finances?—I believe a bounty is the only thing that can support the trade in full vigour during the existence of the French bounties, but I think that a removal of the existing duties on oil, blubber, and skins, would be a relief sufficient to induce the merchants to continue in the trade, and send out the requisite supplies for next winter.

Have you any other observations to offer than those which you have made to the Committee?—I would beg to observe, that although the emigration of any considerable number of persons from Ireland, or elsewhere, to Newfoundland, would be a very serious injury to the trade in its present state, yet any prohibition that may be enacted for this purpose should not extend to all classes of persons, because, sail makers, carpenters, smiths, and other artisans are sometimes necessary, though the general population may be too numerous. I would also observe, that I am fully of opinion, that if discretionary powers were vested in the Governor to engage merchant shipping in Newfoundland, a sufficiency of shipping might be secured to remove the whole superfluous population. I also beg to remark, that the superfluous population is not in any degree increased by the ejection of the inhabitants of Saint Pierre and Miquelon, because I believe there were no English settlers there at the time of the peace; it results more from the return of those who had been in the habit of fishing on what we call the French shore, or Northern part of Newfoundland, which has been ceded. I also beg to remark, I have seen a copy of the Saint John's Memorial, and that it contains (inadvertently, I dare say) assumptions respecting the Saint John's merchants, representing the trade of the whole island, which are by no means correct.

What do you mean by their not representing the trade of the whole island?—In the preamble to that memorial they allege that they are the representatives of the trade of the whole island, that is, that they are a committee representing the trade of the whole island.

Do you mean that they consider themselves as having the greatest share in the trade?—It is impossible for me to state exactly how far their representation was intended to go, but that which I have stated will appear on the examination of their memorial; I have no doubt it was inadvertent, but still I was fearful it might lead to a mistake in the views of Government.

At what period did you reside at Newfoundland?—From 1803 to 1806.

You have stated, as your opinion, that the removal of 5,000 persons might afford a temporary but would afford no substantial relief?—I stated that it would be a diminution of the degree of misery that would be endured next winter, if no relief in other ways was granted to the trade.

But it would not substantially relieve the distressed?—Certainly it would not, so far as my opinion goes, substantially relieve the distresses of the trade.

Do you think the mere removal of any number of persons, unaccompanied by bounty

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bounty and other advantages to the trade, would relieve the trade?—The peremptory removal of a very large number, I conceive, would give relief, by reducing the quantity of fish caught so very materially, as to raise the price of it in foreign markets; but that is a measure which of course will not be adopted, because it must be to so very great an extent,

You do not think that a sufficient number could be induced to leave the island voluntarily?—Not to effect that object.

In speaking of the great fertility of the North American provinces, have you any knowledge of those provinces, personally?—No; but I understand it to be admitted, that the shores of Lake Erie are as I have described.

Do you happen to know the distance or the length of navigation, from Newfoundland to Lake Erie?—I apprehend a passage can only be effected so far as Quebec, in a ship.

You do not happen to know that the length of time that must necessarily elapse in a passage to Lake Erie, must exceed that which would be required for a passage to the United Kingdom?—I apprehend it would very considerably exceed it, because the passage to Great Britain is very frequently effected in from fifteen to eighteen days, whereas that would be a very short passage to Quebec, only against the stream of the river.

You have spoken of your knowledge of the want of fertility of the soil in Newfoundland; have you been much over the Island?—I have in my shooting excursions gone a good deal about the neighbourhood of the coast, and have made particular inquiries from those who have resided all their lives in the island, and penetrated into the interior, respecting the character of it, and the result is as I have stated.

Is Newfoundland woody?—I have ascertained, from my own observation, as well as from what I have heard from others, that at least in that peninsula where the British residents are principally situate, I think it is called in the maps the Peninsula of Avalon, the wood is principally on the coast, from six to seven or twelve miles, and that the interior is a desert, nothing but a succession of ponds, and barren rocks with stunted vegetation upon them.

You have not been into the interior?—Yes, I have.

And the face of the country corresponds with your statement?—So far as I have seen it; of course I have not seen the whole of it, for it is of very large extent; the country is no where level for any considerable extent, but a succession of valleys and steep hills; there is a little soil in the valleys, but scarcely any at all on the sides of the hills, and frequently none on the summits, that soil is never any thing but decayed vegetable matter; there is no loam or calcareous matter in the island, I believe.

Do not you think that a soil composed of decayed vegetable matter, is likely to be sufficiently fertile for all purposes of agriculture?—If it could be sufficiently drained, and could be found in sufficient extent, I have no doubt it might, but the bogs are generally occasioned by hollows in the rocks, where the water has accumulated, and which consequently are not capable of drainage without prodigious labour; there are some small spots of a different description, but not to any considerable extent, except I believe in the neighbourhood of Exploits, there I believe the land is more fertile.

You have stated that three pounds per head, would be sufficient to remove those persons to Ireland?—Not without loss to the merchants; but, I think, rather than have their company the next winter, they would consent to a loss themselves.

Mr. Garland stated, the usual freight of passage home to England, to be four pounds, do you agree in that statement?—The usual rate has been, for the last six or eight years, for steerage passengers (those who do not go in the cabin) about six guineas

The price of freight has lowered considerably within this year and half, has it not?—Very much, but it is passages that I advert to now.

Notwithstanding the reduction in the price of freight, and some other shipping expenses, you do not conceive it could be done for less than three pounds per head, even with the merchants bearing some considerable part of the loss?—I think any thing less than three pounds, would be a proportionate increase of loss to merchants.

Were the Committee correct in understanding you to say, that you thought it would be cheaper and better to send those persons to Ireland, than to any other spot?—I am persuaded it would be much cheaper, almost beyond comparison; that it would be probably two-thirds cheaper to bring them to Ireland, to put them ashore there, and let them find their own homes, than to carry them to one of the colonies, where they must be supported for a year and half by Government, before the land would

make

make sufficient returns to support them; and I think also, that that would be better for a portion of them, because many of them, from local attachments to Ireland, would not like to go to Canada or New Brunswick. *George Kemp, jun.
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Do you think the removal of any number would be effectual, unless it were coupled with a prohibition for other persons to proceed to the island?—I conceive not, because as the proportion very much diminished from the exportation of some of them, the rate of wages would of course rise, and that would be a temptation for others to emigrate.

Do you imagine that any men would go out, unless taken by some of the merchants?—I believe that the greater part of the excessive population now did go out without any connection at all with the merchants engaged in the trade.

To what extent from the coast does your knowledge of the soil go?—About six to eight miles, and from thence I had a large prospect of a country which I saw to be the same as that I have described.

Did you ever hear of any person going further into the island, who could give an account of the interior of the island?—Yes I have; I have seen those who have traversed almost the whole of the peninsula, which I have spoken of; and have heard the same account from them as that which I have delivered myself.

Are you acquainted with the main island, more to the northward?—I have also been upon that on the French shore, about three hundred miles from the place where my establishment is situate, and the barrens, as we call them, that is, the desert country in the interior, approached still nearer to the coast in that neighbourhood than in the other.

You can state, from your own knowledge, that both sides of the island appeared to correspond?—The peninsula I referred to, and the coast of the French shore about the harbour of Saint Anthony's and Cricquet, and several others in that neighbourhood.

Do you suppose, if the encouragement were given which you have mentioned to be necessary, as an inducement for persons to become colonists in Newfoundland, that the habits of the people there would induce many of them to settle as cultivators of the soil, to engage in agricultural pursuits?—I do believe, that if the Government were to hold out such inducements, as that they would support them for a year and a half, or until their land became productive, and were to settle them in the neighbourhood of Exploits, where the land is better than any other place, that many of them would settle there.

That would be no immediate relief to any great extent to the overburthened population?—According to the extent to which it was carried, it would be a relief, if the Government supported them.

What would be the effect upon the state of the trade, if a great proportion of the persons now in Newfoundland were to turn their attention to agricultural pursuits, and to settle as agriculturists in Newfoundland?—I apprehend, that the effect of it would not be considerable at all upon the fishery, as I am convinced they could not carry on their agricultural pursuits with profit any where but in the neighbourhood I have spoken of; and if attempted in any other part of the island, it would be a serious evil to the trade, for in seasons of scarcity, they would come down on the merchants stores, and rob them, as they did last winter. I beg to say in addition to that, that if a great part of the population were now abstracted from the fishery, and no more were to go out to the fishery, it would have the same effect in raising the price of fish, by diminishing the quantity caught, as I have before adverted to.

Would it not alter the character of the present trade with Newfoundland, having a set of people settled there as agriculturists?—I do not conceive that their success would be so great as to provide any considerable quantity of food or woollen clothing, more than what they would themselves consume, and that therefore the effect of it upon the other parts of the population would scarcely be felt.

Then they would become a set of people completely distinct from those who followed fishing pursuits?—If they are so far removed into the interior, as to be unable to connect themselves with the fishery, they will of course be altogether distinct from those who are engaged in it, otherwise I should apprehend, in the neighbourhood of the coast that they might connect the cultivation of a small part of the land, in the case of each individual, with the fishery, and that that might be an advantage rather than a disadvantage, because it now exists to a considerable degree in those parts which have been long settled, and has been found to be an advantage, I mean as far as respects the cultivation of potatoes for their own sustenance.

You have stated, that it would be necessary five thousand persons should be removed,

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removed, to give present relief to the overburthened population; can you speak to your own knowledge, that five thousand persons would be willing to be removed?—I cannot; I only infer from those accounts I have received from our own agents, and persons returned from Newfoundland, that from the great distress which is felt, five thousand persons might be willing to remove.

Under that uncertainty, what sort of provision do you think Government should make for the removal of such persons?—That I have already stated in my evidence.

If an authority was given to the Governor, he would provide every means that was necessary for the purpose of removing such persons?—I have stated, that I thought he would be able to obtain a sufficient number of merchant ships.

As the great object for the lasting benefit of the trade of the settlement is, encouragement either in the facility of the trade, or in bounties, would not that facility, by giving encouragement, increase the quantity of fish produced, and when that came into the European market in competition with the supplies also from France, would not that reduce the price materially in Europe?—I conceive that there is a maximum of price now, beyond which we can never expect the price of fish to rise in Europe, and that that is determined by the price of fresh meat; I think that only a limited quantity of fish will be consumed in Europe, but that if we have sufficient support from our Government, we shall supply the whole of it, or nearly the whole, except what is consumed in France itself, because we shall have greater facilities in curing it in Newfoundland than the French.

If this encouragement were given which you ask for, would not that induce the persons engaged in the trade to put all those persons now in Newfoundland into employment; if they were all employed, would not the consequence be, that you would catch an additional quantity of fish; and would not that, in conjunction with the supplies from the French fisheries, produce a very large additional quantity in the European market; and would not that have the effect of reducing the price in the European market, from the extent of the supplies?—I apprehend, there will never be much more fish caught by France and England together, than will be required in the different markets where it is consumed, because the evil of low prices and great expenses will of course cure itself; by the merchants withdrawing from the trade, the evil will be, that the trade will be lost to England and gained to France, unless we have an adequate support with the French merchants.

Then the great inconvenience at present is this, that the English fishery having been carried to a very large extent, and the French fishery brought into competition with it by bounties, the British interests are placed in a state of undue competition?—Exactly so; that is my opinion.

And the consequence may be, in the course of a year or two, during which time the French bounties continue, that the British trade may be so far reduced, that it may not be brought back again to its former standard without some difficulty?—I apprehend that it will be very much reduced, but not entirely ruined, because all great concerns require some years for their establishment; and the fishery of France will of course require the same. I believe also, that the subsequent restoration to prosperity of the British fisheries, in the event of any political circumstance, would be more or less rapid, according to the circumstances of the political event referred to; if the price of fish rose very much abroad, the restoration would be rapid; if it did not, the restoration would not be so rapid.

With a fair encouragement on the part of our Government, are the advantages which we at present enjoy from the established state of the settlement in Newfoundland, so considerable as to overcome the French competition?—With an equal support from our Government, to what the French merchants receive from theirs, I have no question but we could exclude them from every market in the world, except France and their own colonies.

Do you consider that the trade being left in a depreciated state for a year or two, would have a very serious effect upon it?—That must depend upon the degree of the depression which existed during that period, and the circumstances which created it; if it were very much reduced indeed, owing to no kind of relief being given by Government, and none of the people removed, a proportionate length of time would be required for its restoration to prosperity.

You are of opinion it would require a considerable time to restore it?—If it were so considerably depressed, as for the merchants to withdraw their capital from the trade, it certainly would.

Are not the buildings of Newfoundland of such a description, that were they neglected for a year or two, they would be very seriously injured?—The stages and flakes

flakes are built entirely of fir poles; and I apprehend, that two years entire neglect, would be sufficient to ruin them in most situations; the sea would knock down the stages in the winter time.

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Would they be rebuilt at an easy expense, supposing they were so neglected?—That would be according to the value of labour at the time; the timber costs nothing.

Have not the merchants in the different parts of Newfoundland, where they carry on their fisheries, large and extensive warehouses, for the stores that they send out from Europe?—They have.

The erection of those of course is very expensive to the merchants?—The erection of the warehouses and dwelling-houses is very expensive.

Supposing that from the state and depression of the trade, the merchants could not occupy or keep in repair those warehouses and dwelling-houses, would they not of necessity fall into decay?—They would, the length of time required for their dilapidation, would of course depend upon the solidity with which they were built.

Supposing them to fall into decay from the circumstances above stated, would it not be a considerable addition of expense to the merchant to rebuild them, and put them into a proper state, so as again to resume his occupation in the fisheries?—A very heavy expense indeed, on our own establishment merely; I think the expense, if they were to be rebuilt, would not be less than four thousand pounds.

In point of fact, if a room has gone to decay, and is to be relet, is it not the habit and custom of Newfoundland, to let on a long lease, and at a low rent; but sometimes with an increasing rent, because of the great expense of refitting the room?—The practise of leasing rooms, I believe is almost confined to the town of St. John's; and I am not competent to speak from my own knowledge to the practise there.

Is it not your opinion, that several of the servants unemployed in Newfoundland have funds in this country?—Yes, I believe they have.

Do you think, if Government gave directions to the Governor, to procure conveyance for such as were disposed to go, that they would be glad to go out of the country?—I believe they would.

If such conveyance were given to such servants as were disposed to go, could those servants arrive in this country previous to the present harvest?—I do not think it possible that they could, without an unusual degree of celerity in the passages, and in the arrangement of affairs there for them to embark, which is not to be expected; I do not think upon the whole that it is possible, speaking in a general way, that they should arrive before the harvest.

Are you not aware that several of the Irish servants have funds in this country, and that if they were obliged and conveyance found for them, they would be able to go to Ireland and be comfortable when at home?—I cannot speak positively from my own knowledge, of any individual Irish servant who has funds, or considerable funds in that country, I spoke from my opinion that they had; I know that many of them were in very comfortable circumstances, with one two or three hundred pounds due to them, and that they have had the same in bills from our house; what has become of it of course I cannot speak to; but that circumstance leaves an idea in my mind that they have such funds.

Can you speak to the proportion of unemployed persons there would be likely to be during the winter if means were not taken to remove them before the fall, and if the trade were to receive encouragement?—It must depend upon the degree of relief afforded by Government to the trade in other ways, on which contingency the increase or decrease of the present trade would depend.

If no relief is given by Government, and no conveyance is found to take off the excessive population, and the trade carried on to the present extent, as intended by the merchants, what increase of distressed population will there be in the next winter?—My idea is, that it must be to an almost unlimited extent, it is impossible to say how far it may go.

Do you think by the removal of five thousand of the present population, it would be a sufficient inducement to the merchants to send out supplies for the remaining population against the ensuing winter?—Without any further relief from Government, I think that the danger would be materially diminished; and I believe, that in such case some supplies would be sent out; I think it likely that without the aid of government in other respects many of the merchants would be ruined, and that their supplies would of course fail.

Is it not your opinion, that the extent of supplies to be sent to Newfoundland by the merchants, much depends upon such measures as may be adopted by the Govern-

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ment in that removal, or in other ways giving relief to the trade generally?—Such is decidedly my opinion.

If no relief is given, either by removing the population, or otherwise, the extent of the supplies will be very limited?—Very limited indeed; on that subject I would beg to refer to a letter delivered in, and on Mr. Garland's evidence; it is a letter from our agent at Brigus, without any kind of previous communication with us on the subject; he expressly advises us not to send out any kind of supplies, except a trifling quantity of cooper's stores, or something of that sort, because he believes that such supplies will not be safe in Brigus, where one of our establishments is situate; he says, we had better give up the trade for a season there, and suffer the population dependent upon us to disperse themselves elsewhere, than to carry on the trade even in a limited degree through the Summer.

Do you think servants or men would be induced to go from England or Ireland in the present state of the trade, without being previously hired or shipped?—I think that none who knew the state of Newfoundland would be inclined so to do; whether such as were ignorant of the state of Newfoundland and in extreme distress in that country, would be inclined to run all hazards, as thinking their situation could not be rendered worse, I cannot possibly say.

Do you think if the sending out of servants was confined to the merchants employed in the trade, the evil now complained of, would for the future be remedied?—After the removal of the superabundant population, I have no doubt that would be the case.

If the merchants who send out servants at the expiration of their servitude, were obliged to send them home in case of their not finding masters, would not that also in some degree remedy the present evil?—In answer to that, the servants sent out by the merchants must of necessity, from the present state of the trade, be dispersed among the planters, and it would be impossible for the merchants at the close of the season to compel those persons to return to England.

Is not rum an article in very extensive use in Newfoundland?—Very particularly so indeed.

Would not the reduction of the duty on rum, afford more general relief, than the reduction of the duty and proposed bounty on oil?—I conceive that the reduction of the duty on rum would be of trivial importance to the trade at large; I am afraid it would operate as some encouragement to inebriety amongst the lower orders; the remission of the duties on oil and on seal-skins, I conceive would materially assist the trade, by raising the price of its produce.

What proportion of the settlers interested in the trade would be benefited by the reduction of the duty on rum?—So far as the benefit arose from the paying not so much for it by sixpence a gallon, all those who drink it would be benefited in their circumstances, whether the injury derived from the drinking it would not be commensurate with that, I cannot say.

What is the number of persons selling rum?—It is sold by every merchant in the island, and by all the publicans in the out harbours, and in Saint John's, and in short, by almost all those who sell any thing, except a few shopkeepers.

Then, as all persons who are engaged in the trade of Newfoundland sell rum, would not all be benefited by the reduction of the duty?—If the persons who consume it did not pay so much by sixpence a gallon, they would be so far as that goes benefited in their circumstances; but whether the effect of it may not be injurious, as affecting their industry, I cannot say; there will be a benefit to the trade in this respect, that the lower the duties on rum are made in Newfoundland, the greater is the quantity, it is presumed, that will be sent from the West Indies, and consequently a greater quantity of fish may be expected to be sent back there.

The answer you have given regarding rum, refers entirely to its consumption in the island; would not the drawback of duty on its export from Newfoundland to Nova Scotia or elsewhere, materially facilitate the trade from Newfoundland, and be of very considerable benefit?—I believe it would be of most important benefit to the trade, because the West India vessels would in that case bring probably full cargoes of rum, which if not wanted in Saint John's and in the island generally, might be sent to Great Britain or elsewhere; the West India merchant would not be afraid of making a full shipment of rum to Newfoundland, because he would know that if it did not find a market there it would elsewhere.

Although you have said a bounty on oil would be a very great relief, still this facility in regard to the export of rum, would, as far as it went, prove of material advantage to

to the trade?—I think it would improve the connection of the trade with the West India islands, and so far be of material benefit.

Then the Committee are to understand, that the trade between the West Indies and Newfoundland is a barter trade?—It is a barter trade, like all other barter trades, the balance is drawn for in bills.

Then you imagine if the West India merchant was induced to send more rum, he would be induced to take away more fish?—I am not much acquainted with the nature of the West India trade, but I apprehend such an event is not improbable.

That is the usual way in which he is paid for his rum?—It is; the value of a cargo of rum, sent from the West Indies to Newfoundland, is greater considerably than that of the cargo of fish sent back to the West Indies.

On what grounds do you suppose that the poor Irish, who are starving in Newfoundland, have funds in Ireland?—I did not state that; I stated, that from my own knowledge many Irish servants in Newfoundland were possessed of considerable property, which had stood to their credit on our books, and that they have drawn such money from us in some cases; how they have disposed of it I cannot say, probably sent it home to their connections in Ireland; but I cannot suppose that the great majority, or any considerable number of those who are in these circumstances of distress, have such funds; those who have such funds may probably continue to support themselves in Newfoundland without committing acts of violence; those who are in that distress, I apprehend, have not such funds.

John Preston, Esq. called in; and Examined.

WHERE do you reside?—At Tor Quay; am a merchant carrying on trade to Newfoundland, where I have resided principally about twenty-six years; I have been concerned in trade on my own account, and jointly with others, fifteen years. I am deputed by the merchants of Teignmouth to offer my evidence in support of the petition that is before the House of Commons, in behalf of the distressed inhabitants of Newfoundland.

Do you concur generally, as far as it goes, in the account which has been given by the other witnesses of the distress in Newfoundland?—I do.

Have you any additional statement to make upon that subject?—I have an additional statement to make?—I wish to impress upon the minds of the Committee, that the distress of the inhabitants of Newfoundland is so great that the removal of 10,000 or 15,000, would not enable us to prosecute the trade; that the inhabitants, occupying the whole portion of the island from Cape Saint Francis to Cape Saint Mary's, will be in all probability without any means of support for the ensuing winter, unless some encouragement is given by bounty, by reduction of duties, or some manner of relief that will induce merchants to export provisions for their support.

What number of persons do you suppose should be removed?—I suppose that 20,000 persons should be removed from Newfoundland, if no other step is taken.

What description of persons in Newfoundland, are in the greatest distress?—Planters and servants, who have large families.

When did you leave Newfoundland?—I left Newfoundland in December last.

What appears to you to be an effectual remedy?—It appears to me, the most effectual remedy would be a bounty of 3s. per quintal on all fish exported to foreign Europe, 2s. to Great Britain, and 2s. to the West Indies, or a reduction of the duties in foreign Europe, equal to that amount.

From the knowledge which you must have of the present state of Newfoundland, having left it so lately, what do you suppose will be the effect, if you neither receive a bounty or have an adequate removal of the population?—If we do not receive a bounty, the population of that part of which I speak, where we have establishments, will be reduced to absolute want, as the merchants cannot possibly carry out provisions under present circumstances, to supply them; it may be proper to observe, that I have resided at Saint John's, and have carried on trade at Saint John's, at Renues, Fermuse and Feriland. The last year we employed five hundred and forty-six men in those establishments; we had not less than 1,500, including the women and children, to support. The fishery last year, was so bad in consequence of the short catch and the low price, that the whole of these men fell in debt, and the prospect this year is still worse; and, as it is stated in the Teignmouth petition, that the want and the misery arising to the merchants, arises partly from the short catch of fish for the last two years; (it may be necessary that I should state, as it appears by the custom-house books, that more fish has been shipped the last two years than before) that

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I have kept an average of the catch for the last four years, so far as regards the inhabitants within the districts I have been speaking of; the average catch per man for 1813, was 124 quintals; in 1814, 122 quintals; in 1815, 84 quintals; and in 1816, 75 quintals.

Are there any other circumstances, not yet stated to the Committee, which you wish to state?—Not wishing to trespass on the time of the Committee, I do not desire to add any thing to that which has been already given in evidence, as to the distress; I give it as my opinion, that a relief by bounty, is the only material relief that can be afforded under the distressed state of the trade, at present, or as I have before said, a diminution of duty in foreign parts, which I fear cannot be effected.

Do you mean to confirm the opinion already given to the Committee, that without some such relief, the trade cannot proceed?—I mean to confirm to the Committee, that without such relief, the trade cannot proceed; it may be proper for me to state to the Committee, my opinion of the effect of a relief by a bounty; each individual fisherman, supposing he catches one hundred quintals of fish, the bounty 3s. would be benefited thereby 10l.; shore men employed in curing fish, 5l.; consequently, it would have the effect of increasing the means of support; by the reductions of the war duties laid on articles exported from this country, the individuals in distress would not be benefited much, as these duties are only laid on articles of luxury, exported to Newfoundland, which now cannot be bought or used.

State to the Committee the reasons why you think the fishery this year, will be much less productive?—Experience has taught us the last year, that all fish sent to market, has not sent us home within one shilling a quintal what it cost in Newfoundland, and the planters that were supplied in Newfoundland with provisions from the merchant, though the merchant gave one shilling per quintal more than he realized for it, were not able to pay him more than one half of their debt.

Have you any reason to believe that the distressed population of Newfoundland, have means of subsistence in Ireland, if they were removed there?—It is impossible I can say; I think it impossible that Government can remove them to Ireland; a great number of them consist of natives, who have resided, or their forefathers, in Newfoundland, for nearly a century, who have houses and small gardens attached, consequently having property in the country, I do not see that it is in the power of Government to oblige them to leave it unless they are actually driven out by famine.

You have stated, that it is your opinion, that the excessive population in Newfoundland now are natives?—If there is an excess, of course, they consist of every description; the most burthensome of the population in our district are planters, who have their families, and servants who have families; it is an impression which has generally gone about, that servants out of employment are the distressed individuals, but that is not the case; but families who have been thrown into distress by the short catch and low price of fish.

Do you speak of Saint John's?—Of Saint John's, and the districts from Cape Saint Francis to Cape Saint Mary's.

Do not you conceive that owing to the excess of Irish servants, a great part of the distress is brought on those individual planters?—No; if I am asked, whether I do not think that a great part of the distress in Saint John's last winter, arose from the excess of Irish servants resorting thither from the out-ports, I would say, it certainly did.

What is your opinion of the amount of the whole population?—My opinion is, that the population of Newfoundland amounts to upwards of 85,000.

At what period did the population of Newfoundland grow to its present extent?—It began to increase in 1812, in consequence of the encouragement afforded by the high price of fish in Portugal.

In the even state of intercourse which takes place between countries in peace, it is a natural consequence that the extent of employment for people in the settlement of Newfoundland, must naturally become reduced, as there will not be the same inducements for remaining on the same scale?—The population has been reduced the last year; the governor sent out of the country 1,100 persons, and many of those who had the means of leaving it, and who had not families, seeing the distress before them, left it; some for Canada, some for Nova Scotia, and some for Prince Edward island.

What was the population of Newfoundland previous to 1812?—Sixty thousand: when I state that, I speak from records which I have seen of the census taken.

Would a reduction of the duty on rum, afford more general relief than the proposed reduction and bounty on oil?—I do not think it would.

You

You do not think, that a reduction of duty on the consumption of rum in Newfoundland, or a drawback of duty on the export of rum from Newfoundland to Nova Scotia, or elsewhere, would materially benefit the trade?—I believe that a drawback of the duty, on rum when exported to Nova Scotia or Canada, would materially benefit the trade.

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Do you not think, if the Irish servants who could not get employment during the last winter had been employed, the situation of the inhabitants would not have been as it were?—I believe the situation of the inhabitants of Saint John's would have been much more comfortable.

Would that have afforded the relief which you needed?—By no means.

Nor would it have materially diminished the distress in Newfoundland?—No; but it would have diminished the alarm which the inhabitants of Newfoundland felt. In the petition from the Teignmouth merchants, there is one thing adverted to, with respect to the distribution of insolvents effects, as to servants wages; and it is there prayed that Government will cause some alteration to be made in the 39 Geo. III. and the Judicature Act, so far as relates to that distribution; and they pray that the servant may be allowed, one-third amount of his wages 20s. in the pound; that the current supplier of necessaries for the fishery shall then come in with the servant rateably for two-thirds of his wages; and that it may be necessary to make a distinction between payments to persons importing articles of luxury, and those importing articles necessary for the fishery; and such articles as may be deemed necessary for the fishery, be denominated by the court of sessions, or some other authority that the governor may think proper.

Lunæ, 25^o die Junij, 1817.

MICHAEL ANGELO TAYLOR, Esquire, in the Chair.

George Kemp, Esquire, called in; and Examined.

YOU are a Newfoundland merchant residing at Poole?—I am.

Are you of opinion, that giving a bounty on fish would relieve the distressed state of the population of Newfoundland?—I have no doubt it would in its operation.

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Would that relief be immediate?—It would be; I infer that from the circumstance, that the surplus population of Newfoundland the last winter, pressed so exceedingly hard upon the merchants, they being obliged in order to prevent the ransacking of their stores and the loss of their property, to enter into a contribution among themselves to supply this population, and those people not being removed to any extent, the pressure being now exceedingly great and likely to be greater in the winter, if those people are suffered to remain; I take it that the merchants must give their trade up, unless they are enabled to cope with all that expense that has come upon them extra on that account; and that in addition to that, some part of the bounty would not be appropriated for their own benefit, they would only deal with and administer with the right hand, that which they received with the left hand. It would be necessary some part of this should remain to reimburse them against the expenses of the trade generally, in consequence of the very bad state of it; and I do give it as my opinion, and I believe I speak the sense of the whole trade, having had communication with a great many persons upon the subject, that unless something can be relied upon by the merchants, they will so frame their out-fits and so conduct their business from this time, as to shut the whole business up entirely; that that would be the effect, if they should see from the proceedings of Government that nothing is likely to be done, the impression it will make upon the trade, as far as I have had an opportunity of seeing, is that it will be the total ruin of this trade to this kingdom.

You consider the bounty as reimbursing you for the sum, which you have expended in charity to those starving individuals?—I consider the operation of it would be that in part; I conceive that we are now going on with something like the same sort of business, how can it be otherwise; there are persons there who last winter had no employment, no masters, who have no masters now, a great proportion of them are without masters at the present time; those persons must starve unless provisions are handed out to them from the garrisons or they continue to be supplied from the same source that supplied them during the last winter; this is a thing so

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monstrous in its nature, that it cannot be supposed that a trade, otherwise not capable of maintaining itself, and affording any profit equal to the risk of it, should have this pressure of the population to be fed by the trade, it is utterly and absolutely impossible.

The effect of a bounty would be to enable you to employ the whole of this population?—I do not say that; I say it would enable us to struggle with our present difficulty, and would assist us in laying a plan for their removal, or contribute in aiding and assisting the Government in the charges and expenses of removing them. I do suppose that if a bounty of two shillings was given now, or an aid tantamount to that, that it would invigorate the merchants, that they would feel strengthened and encouraged, to cope with all the difficulties pressing upon the trade; in addition to the pressure upon this population, under the idea that the surplus of the population must be removed to a considerable extent; but the bounty would induce the merchants to keep as many of them as they could, on the supposition, that as trade has its ups and downs, we might get forward in two or three years; that the bounty would enable the merchants to cope with all their difficulties for the present, with a view to seeing what time might do for them; but I do think prudent persons who have realized capitals, will be drawing them out of the trade, unless other circumstances besides the bounty, induce them to continue in it. I was one of a deputation that waited on Mr. Pitt, many years ago, when the trade was in a state of great distress, and afterwards in the time of Mr. Perceval; and the representation then made before those gentlemen, seemed fully to convince them that present aid was necessary, and Mr. Pitt, I remember, said, "I see your difficulties; you cannot get with your fish into the Mediterranean when you have caught it, and I hope things will turn in your favour one way or other; I cannot tell how it will be, but we hope with the circumstances of the times, they will come round; what I shall recommend to be given to you, is temporary aid." That was afforded us for two or three years. The Board of Trade afterwards refused us a temporary aid, and we had the honour of waiting on Mr. Perceval, and the relief for that moment, was again granted and we asked it no more. We told Mr. Pitt and Mr. Perceval, that our desire was to have temporary aid; and as soon as we were in a situation, to throw up all those temporary aids, because when we came for it, it was only a mark of our distress, that it would not do to go on with a bounty always.

A present bounty would be an advantage to the merchant, and also a relief to the population?—It would be so in a measure. I beg to submit that this is as much the interest of the Government as of ourselves; we could, with some sacrifice, get out of the business, but we should not be able to get into it again; and unless such encouragement is given to new adventurers, to an amount half of which would enable us to keep on the trade, the trade will be lost to the country.

Can you point out any ground on which the two shilling bounty could be made to appear, as affording relief to the distressed population?—It would afford immediate relief, inasmuch as there are those of that population who cannot by any means be removed. Contributions on the part of the merchants (they receiving the two shilling bounty) would be readily made for the sustaining that part of the population which cannot be removed, for they would know that the Government re-imbursed them in whole or in part by this bounty; but no man possessed of the smallest degree of sense, would expect such population to be supported by merchants out of their own pockets.

The effect would be by making the merchant richer, that he would have more to contribute to the distress of the population?—By preventing his absolute poverty, we should not get rich by it, but we should be induced to continue the trade, if we were not obliged to support those who lie as a dead weight upon us, because we should have that relief so far as it went; still the Government assisting to remove as many as they can; we state, that there are 5,000 who are absolutely useless altogether, and who must be removed; the contributing to their support and maintenance, if they cannot be removed, could only be on the idea of our having assistance in doing so.

The bounty you propose would be a general bounty on all fish caught in Newfoundland?—I consider that all fish exported from Newfoundland, for any of the European markets, ought to have the allowance of the bounty; I do not go the length of saying, that I think that bounty ought to be given on fish exported to the West Indies, I desire to be understood differently.

Would the bounty be required on fish exported to Great Britain?—I think it would; it is not brought here to be sold here, for the people of this country will not

not eat it; but men in smaller concerns, and even those in a large concern, when they have a vessel coming to England, having only half a cargo of oil, fill up the ship with fish, meaning to tranship that afterwards for some part of the Continent; the ultimate destination of the fish first brought here is the same, and we pay the double charge, in fact, of its being brought here, and then afterwards taken to Portugal; but there is very little of that, the quantity so brought is very small, in proportion to that sent to the Continent, not worth distinguishing.

Was the fish caught by the English undersold by the fish of other nations in those markets, during the last year.

I do not believe that last year the other nations went to those markets that we go to, to any great extent; the French were supposed not to have had their fishery to such an extent, but that their own country consumed the whole or the greater part of what they caught; but we have understood, that they are now prosecuting the fishery with a view to have enough for themselves, and some to carry to the markets to which we go.

Your apprehension of danger from the French bounties then is purely prospective?—In a great measure so; experience has proved, that *they have gone to those markets* whether right or wrong. I do not call the reason for granting so much of Newfoundland by a late treaty to the French into question, but we have every reason to suppose, that the facilities they have will enable them to send a vast deal of fish abroad, and to the same markets we go to; and we believe, that though it goes to their own markets first, it goes there only as a sort of depôt; and that, if they have a great deal of fish, it is easily transported to Italy or to other places.

You think the French last year did not catch more fish than was necessary for France and her colonies?—Not much more, I should think.

Did the trade suffer materially from the competition of American fish previous to the American war?—The Americans did export a very considerable quantity of fish, I have been given to understand, to the same markets, Lisbon, Cadiz, Alicant; their fish is not so well adapted to the Italian markets; we suppose on account of their finding the voyage shorter, they went to Lisbon; but they did go to Alicant, and to Malaga.

The Americans carried on the fishery to a very great extent, did they not?—They carried on the fishery to a very great extent, till that regulation which was so wisely made, to prevent their coming so near to the coast of Newfoundland; for we have been well informed, that they took advantage of the circumstance, and had a communication with Newfoundland, which facilitated their export of fish to a considerable degree.

Do you happen to know the number of sail that might be employed by America in the Newfoundland fishery, a year, preceding the late war?—All the accounts I have of it concurred to give a number beyond what seemed to me credible; but that it was to a very great extent, no man can doubt.

Of greater extent than the French fishery is likely to be the present year?—I cannot compare that; as it was an illicit business, they could not be so bold with it as the French, who can legally do it; if I have been well informed, as to their means of procuring fish this year, those means are prodigious.

Do you know whether the Americans did not employ three hundred sail upon the fishery?—I have heard, five times as many. I cannot speak as to what they employed on their own shore, but we have had an account of those that came near to us in Newfoundland, much larger than that stated in the question; they were stated to have had 1,500 at one time.

The Americans had very great advantages in carrying on the fishery from their proximity to the coast?—They had.

You would look upon the American, if the fishery was continued to the same extent, to be a dangerous competitor?—We certainly should.

Even though the American Government gave no bounties?—I should, certainly.

The American fisher, though he received no bounty on his fish, would probably be as dangerous a neighbour to you as the French fisherman, receiving a bounty?—I should suppose, from proximity to the coast, and the habits of the Americans, and their dexterity, that he would; there is one exception I would beg leave to make, I think all the fish caught on the coast of America cannot be cured so well, as that which the French could cure, if they pleased, on those parts of Newfoundland lately ceded to them. I do not mean Saint Pierre and Miquelon, but the Northern parts; the fish caught on this part of the French coast is better suited to the markets of Spain and Italy in the Mediterranean.

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The Americans employed vessels in the fishery on the French coast as well as on the other coasts of Newfoundland?—They were not permitted to come round to that part of the French coast that is ceded to them in the front of the land; but if I have understood rightly, their fishing was chiefly in the Straits of Belleisle, what is called the back part of Newfoundland; their privilege of fishing was always guarded by being kept a suitable distance off the coast; but the communication with Saint John's is not so easy; when you enter the Straits of Belleisle, the ships employed by Government would not go round so often to prevent their fishing as in other parts; if they were more in front they would be more easily discovered by His Majesty's vessels.

Can you form an estimate of the quantity of fish that has usually been exported from Newfoundland into the Mediterranean by British vessels?—If the question refers to the whole export to Portugal and Spain, without the Straits and the Mediterranean, I can answer to that; I have never made a calculation; but taking it according to my general idea of the whole catch, separating that sent to the West Indies, in my mind, for the moment, I should suppose that 600,000, or from that to 700,000 quintals, might annually have gone to Spain, Portugal, and the Italy; I mean of prime fish.

Do you suppose it possible that France can send to the Mediterranean, in the next year, any thing at all near such a proportion of fish?—No, I should not imagine she could; if she did it would be total ruin to our trade.

Do you think she has the power?—I do not think she has the power of sending, this present year, that quantity of fish adapted to those markets, notwithstanding her great outfit.

Have you any means of knowing what quantity of the fish exported from Newfoundland into the Mediterranean, during the war with France, afterwards found its way into France for the consumption of the French people?—I have no means of knowing that; I should suppose but a slight quantity; the wants of Spain in those days were great, and our armies being in Spain and Portugal, there existed scarcely any necessity for those concerned in the fish trade to look to the French markets; but, besides, it must have been a thing totally hidden from us; it must have been by the Spaniards conniving, and it must have been done in such a way that we could have no knowledge of the fact.

The quantity of fish, however, exported into the Mediterranean during the war with France, increased very considerably beyond what it had been previously to the war?—That is going back a long time; I should not, from all the information I have had, and the experience I have had in business, expect that the difference was any thing very striking.

Was not the export the last year of the war much greater than it had been the ten years back?—Yes, I should suppose that might be the case; but it is not exactly because things are demanded; the success of the fishery itself varies; with all the art of man, the difference in the catch of fish in Newfoundland would be very considerable one year from another, whilst the call abroad might be equal.

The French fishers are necessarily subjected to great expenses in this and the succeeding years, from not having any buildings or stages erected in Newfoundland?—No more than they will continue to be; by the treaty they cannot, except in Saint Pierre and Miquelon, be permitted to have any sort of settlement on the island, or any thing that will continue beyond a year; I have understood they have no right to build.

Admitting they have buildings, the erection of these buildings must have been a great expense to them?—From the nature of them not very great there; they must construct them very slightly, knowing that they hold them only at the will and pleasure of those who may go round in the interval between the seasons and destroy them; knowing the way in which they have possession of Newfoundland, and the fishery requiring for the period they are there so little shelter, I believe they are not at such expense as might be imagined at the first view, and that whether they contrive to carry out such frames and buildings, or such slight things as may be easily put together or not, that they are not at such expense as might be supposed.

Do you not suppose that the carrying out frames and buildings, to be erected in Newfoundland, must be a considerable expense?—They would be mere stages, and things of that sort, which are of very little expense; they get the wood there, and with a very little labour put them together; the population of France being considerable; they take out more persons than we do, certainly; labour is cheaper in France than it is with us.

Do you know any thing of the relative expense of fitting out ships in France, to what

what it is in Great Britain?—The fitting out is not of the same nature; they go, of course, provided with all things necessary for the fishing, little temporary things for the buildings, and so on; we go on to take the fish when cured by us in Newfoundland; they go out to catch the fish, and cure it, and to take it abroad in their vessels; but I do not apprehend their expenses, for any thing relating to a temporary settlement on the island, can be of any very great moment.

Do not you apprehend, from the state of things you have described, the difference of the mode in which the French fishery is carried on from that carried on, in Great Britain, that the French labour under particular inconveniences, from which we are exempt?—I apprehend they certainly do labour under some inconveniences that we do not; that they have not all the facilities we have for the operation of catching and curing the fish, from their not having a regular settlement on the island; I infer that; but if the matter is looked to in its progress, their encouragement to carry on the fishery is far greater than ours, if the thing is taken in all its bearings; and I should suppose my answer going into this length is necessary, in order to prevent any misunderstanding; in short, they are encouraged from this circumstance, that they know when they have caught the fish they can bring it to France, and insure a consumption of it there from the habits and manners of their people, from their habit of eating fish, or that if they bring an excess of fish, they are near to markets that will take the fish from them; that is an advantage which overbalances, in a very high degree, all extra difference of expense in the preparations to catch that fish, for we know that we can bring no fish, comparatively, to this country to be consumed; we bring it, with our eyes open, at a great expense, knowing we must afterwards send it to Portugal, Spain or Italy, to be consumed; and another advantage they have is, that when they bring this fish to their country, they wait and have the choice of markets; we go to either Portugal, Spain, or Italy direct; they finding refuge in their own country, and lying so near to the scenes of action, can tell at once where to carry all the surplus quantity of fish they bring to Marseilles or Toulon, or wherever they carry it, and thus have such an advantage over us as outweighs any difference in the expense of actually catching the fish.

You are understood to say, that the French probably are at greater expense in their outfit to catch the fish; that they are at greater expense in erecting buildings at Newfoundland, and in catching the fish, but that you conceive those to be counterbalanced by the advantages they derive from having an easier choice of a market when they bring the fish to France?—Let me correct my statement; in some measure, it would be more expense to us to do all they do in catching the fish; but when I say they are at a greater expense, or somewhat greater, I apprehend that from their facility in procuring men, and the small charges they are at in feeding those men, from the manner in which they feed them, that though if we were to send as many men, and to catch the same quantity of fish by Englishmen instead of Frenchmen, it would cost us more; I do not think, if an account current was opened, that they would find the charge of all those people greater, nor so high, as we find ours; they live differently from us; they will eat of this fish; they will not consume pork, beef, flour, and so on, as we do; they have perhaps only one-seventh part of the meat; it would cost more to us to do what they do, but I cannot tell whether it costs them more to do that by five hundred than it does to us to do it by three hundred.

Do you not think that the mode in which the English fishery is carried on, gives it peculiar advantages over the French fishery?—I think it gives a considerable advantage over them apparently, and to some extent really; but that the frugal habits of the Frenchmen, and the whole method of their conducting it from first to last, takes away again some of that advantage that would otherwise appear to belong to the English to a great extent; and that, finally, their mode of disposing of their fish more than counterbalances every advantage we have over them otherwise.

Can you inform the Committee of the prices of British fish in any of the Mediterranean, markets during the last four or five years?—They have varied considerably within the last four or five years. I apprehend, that within the two or three last years of the war, prices were obtained in all the markets abroad so very far in advance to any that had ever before been obtained, that it led, in a measure, to all the distress that the trade now experiences. I would explain myself in this way, that such advantages, extraordinary advantages, encouraged the approach to Newfoundland of so many thousands of useless persons, who now form a population that we know not what to do with. Those persons were not taken out in the way in which merchants, in their cautious and regular way, carry men out, but by ship loads from Ireland and elsewhere, by persons who had no connection with the trade. If I

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am asked the present price of fish, the prices of the last year were such as tend to the ruin of the trade.

You say that the effect of having a monopoly price during the latter years of the war, encouraged a number of useless persons to go out to Newfoundland?—Yes; they heard of those advantages which the Newfoundland men enjoyed, which were magnified far beyond the truth, and they were induced to go. Persons were represented to have realized 50 or 60,000*l.* in the trade that perhaps got 20,000*l.*; and there are persons in the deputation that can give undeniable evidence, that in one year since the peace, all those advantages have been taken away.

When you speak of useless persons, do you mean persons going as merchants or as labourers?—Persons going to be hired, directly or indirectly, in the fishery.

Those persons were so hired at first?—I do not think that they were; I do not think they have been hired in the usual way; they might have had temporary employment from those who gave it them, rather than feed them.

How have they been subsisted?—In a way, perhaps, which no one can describe; but at last it came to their being supplied by contribution of the merchants. In the port where I carry on my trade, there were 300 hid till all the shipping were gone, and they came upon us as if they had dropped out of the clouds; they traversed from harbour to harbour, and lived in small tilts.

If those persons had never been employed, there is no reason why they should have been more troublesome now than at any preceding period?—They were never regularly employed, as I can understand, by any persons. They lay as a surplus population on Saint John's; the poor wretches were in a state of starvation; they came down to put themselves at the mercy of those who had property, and at last when they could not get it in any other way, they joined together and broke open the stores, and their number increased to that extent, that they drove the merchants and inhabitants who had property into the measure of feeding them till the Spring, on the smallest allowance that they could, hoping and trusting that some relief would come from the Government of the country at this time.

Those useless persons were exported to Newfoundland in the periods of the greatest prosperity to the fishery?—Just at the time that the report of such prosperity had that effect; but by the time they got there, things began to wear a different aspect; if there had been any thing like a continuance of the same prosperity, a great many would have been employed, though not as fishermen, yet as labourers, or in some way or other; for when the prices rose from 20*s.* to 40*s.* or 50*s.* a quintal, persons would make every effort to take labourers; but those prospects all vanished.

The accumulation was not all in one year?—I think it was the work of a year and a half, or two years.

Do you mean to say that 60,000 persons were carried to Newfoundland in a year and a half?—No, I think there never have been more than 20,000 persons more than could be employed in the common and ordinary times of the fishery; but I have understood, that many of those who went out took their wives and children with them, which was a thing unprecedented in the fishery; the merchants used only to send out labourers, not married men with children.

You state that the real impression of the trade; which you collect from others, though not yourself an eye witness to it, is that the French can catch their fish at a cheaper rate than we can?—I think so.

You have stated that you have yourself been here as one of a deputation before, when a bounty was given?—Yes.

That bounty was given on account of the temporary inconvenience under which the trade laboured, from not being able to go straight abroad with the fish, but having to bring it here and to tranship it?—Yes, that was the result of a conversation of about forty minutes with Mr. Pitt; he saw the nature of the business, and immediately promised us temporary relief.

Without going into what has brought Newfoundland into the state in which it is, it is known that Newfoundland is always supplied by the merchants, the people having no other means of getting their food; considering the great extent of the distress of all its branches, under all the circumstances under which the trade at the present time exists, do you conceive that if the small bounty of two shillings per quintal was immediately given, and that you were given to understand that the trade would undergo further consideration in the next session of Parliament, so as to look into its real state, that that would be a sufficient encouragement to the trade to send out their regular outfits, and to do this year as they have done before?—I do think

so, and if I may be permitted to go a little further, I will give my opinion that if that is not done, and if the deputation here now from the merchants should separate and go to their homes without a belief that any thing will be done to relieve them in this way, that the supplies they would send, would be only with a view to the winding up of their concerns, being fully persuaded that they must be ruined if they continued in the trade. In my own concern with my partners, in the making up of our last annual account, we appear to have lost twenty thousand pounds on a trade that may employ from 60,000*l.* to 80,000*l.* as a capital; the highest gain we ever made in one year, was 22,000*l.* and that was in the time of its highest prosperity.

Is it not your opinion that the other merchants employed in the Newfoundland trade have experienced similar losses?—I think that they all sustained a considerable loss, but that it fluctuated; that some perhaps lost in a higher proportion than we did, and that others perhaps lost in a less proportion; it is a delicate subject to enter upon; but knowing, as we do pretty well, the extent of each other's concerns, we can judge in some measure.

Do you know what quantity of fish was caught by America, previous to the late American war?—No, I do not.

Are not the persons out of employment in Newfoundland, principally persons who were dependent on concerns which are now bankrupt, and who have no natural protectors?—It does not arise from the circumstance of their having depended on concerns that are all bankrupt; but partly so, and partly from their dependence on concerns that would be bankrupt very soon, if they were to employ them.

You state that a bounty is necessary to enable the persons who are there still to carry on the trade, and to protect the present extent of population?—I guarded, in my answer to that question, that it was always in my contemplation and that of others, that some of them must be removed at all events.

The object of the bounty is to place you in a situation to employ people who are there, and to employ those that naturally can be employed?—I think that if a sum of money, equal to what a two-shilling bounty would be, were granted for the present year, it would enable us to cope with difficulties of every sort, so as to enable us to follow the course of former years; and that we could, out of that aid, assist in removing that surplus of population to the extent of five thousand.

The fact is, that there are at present a great number of persons in a state of starvation in Newfoundland?—There are.

This property would enable you to remedy those evils?—I think it would; the applications formerly made to the Government were, that sloops of war should be stationed in Newfoundland, one here and one there in the most populous parts; and when I say that this bounty would enable us to do that which is stated, I mean with the assurance that we are to be aided and assisted by those same sloops of war being stationed there for a proper time till this could be accomplished, for it would be out of our power with a two-shilling bounty, or any bounty, without the arm of government to effect it; if the governor should return, and if all the force should be withdrawn from Newfoundland which has been usual, I think we should be exposed then to great hazard; but I say that a two-shilling bounty, or money equal to that, would enable us to cope with all the difficulties, taking into the account that we are to be protected while we are regulating these affairs.

Have you any idea what the amount of a two-shilling bounty would be?—I should suppose it would be about 65,000*l.*; we limit our ideas to the export for Portugal, Spain and Italy or England; we do not include an exportation of fish to the West Indies that is not of a quality to deserve the bounty; all the fish claiming the bounty in times past have had the words "Merchantable Fish" inserted in the Act; now that which goes to the West Indies is not what is called merchantable fish, neither going to the West Indies is the bounty necessary.

As it appears that the population must be reduced before matters can be got to a comfortable state there, and that this bounty is given for this object, how long do you conceive it would be necessary this bounty should be continued?—I think it would not be absolutely necessary for the merchants to receive an assurance of any thing more than a bounty for the present time, or a sum of money, operating in the nature of a bounty for the present season, extending from the 1st of August to the 1st of August for instance, and that the investigation that the trade would undergo by the Government, or in the House of Commons during the next twelvemonth, would fix the necessity for a continuance or discontinuance of any aid to the trade; my idea is, that when we shall have removed the pressure, we shall be able to grapple with all other inconveniences in the trade. We entertain the idea, that it would be

*George Kemp,
Esq.*

improper for us to ask for standing bounties in the trade, and that if the trade cannot stand without them, the trade must fall; but that we need a sum of money to grapple with our present difficulties, and to give time to show whether the trade can be carried on without any further pecuniary assistance from government.

You conceive, that on getting this bounty, you should immediately take decided steps for reducing the present extent of the population?—We should; so that the trade in all its branches might go on regularly.

In looking to the granting of this bounty at present, you do not look prospectively to a bounty being granted permanently, in competition to the bounty given by the government of France?—We do not look for it.

All this you leave as matter of after consideration?—I do; I do not give it as my opinion that some assistance might not appear absolutely necessary, but I do not go into that question, trusting that the wisdom of government or of parliament would decide upon that in the next session. If the parliament or the government should be satisfied that we stand on a worse footing than the French fishery, and that we need assistance, we trust we shall receive assistance; but if it should appear that the industry of the Newfoundland merchants and fishers would enable them to get on without, we should not ask for it.

At the time the bounty was given by Mr. Pitt, there was no distress in Newfoundland arising from the same causes as the present?—No; there was no surplus population in Newfoundland at that time.

Is it within your knowledge that other branches of trade have since the peace suffered in an equal proportion with that of Newfoundland?—I have been informed that other branches of trade have suffered probably in an equal ratio with the Newfoundland trade; but it has always been the idea of English merchants trading to Newfoundland, that the government would look with a different eye upon them, than that with which they looked on artisans or persons in this country, for those engaged in such pursuits, could turn their attention to other things, but those who were engaged in the Newfoundland trade if turned out of it, had no one prospect; and they felt hold in their application to government, under the idea that government entertained such views of the fisheries, and especially the Newfoundland fishery, which does so much good to the country; that it would receive the fostering hand of government without so much time employed as we have employed already in our representations in this Committee.

You say, if a bounty was given it would be the intention of the merchants to reduce the population; do you consider it as in their power to do so?—With such assistance as the government will afford them through the governor, for the merchants are fully convinced that that surplus population which experienced such horrors during the last winter, will readily come away now; we expect to have the protection of government so far as to keep our property out of the hands of that surplus population. These protectors must witness the death of that surplus population by starvation, or if they proceed to acts of violence, they would suffer death; and the population there being convinced of this, I think will readily embark and be glad to come away.

Is it within your knowledge that great numbers of people of the same class as those whom you proposed to remove are now engaged to embark from Ireland for Newfoundland?—No; I do not believe there are; I do believe that to a very small extent, a few servants were carried from Ireland this year, and that by those persons who live in those parts of Newfoundland where this surplus population do not press upon them.

You have not heard of four or five hundred being going out?—No, I have not.

Do not you suppose that four or five hundred persons might go from Ireland without your knowing of it?—Undoubtedly.

Martis, 24^o die Junii, 1817.

BENJAMIN LESTER LESTER, Esquire, in the Chair.

George Kemp, jun. Esquire, again called in; and Examined.

*George Kemp, jun.
Esq.*

TO what extent do you conceive the granting of this bounty would employ the surplus population of Newfoundland, beyond the employment of them without bounty?—I do conceive that if a bounty of two shillings was given, and given as a permanent measure from year to year, as long as the French bounties are continued,
that

that we could employ all the population of Newfoundland that are now there; or at least that if there was a superfluity, it would be so trivial that it would be removed in the natural course of things, by the gradual emigration of twenty or forty at a time in the merchant vessels; but if no relief at all is given, I conceive that five thousand people must be immediately removed, and probably a much greater number afterwards; the circumstances of the case will point out how many.

*George Kemp, jun.
Esq.*

Then the Committee are to conclude, that your idea is, that if a bounty of two shillings is given, the consequence will be the employment of five thousand people?—More than that, for I conceive that the removal of five thousand people, and the doing nothing more, will not completely remedy the evil; that is, that there will still remain a considerable number, that it will so appear next winter that a considerably greater number than five thousand must still be removed; but I think, as long as a two shilling bounty is given, and given permanently, we shall be able to sell our fish in the foreign markets at a price, which though it will not give us any great profit, will save us from loss.

Then if the bounty was given for this year, and not given next year, it would re-produce exactly the same state of things as you now complain of?—I am decidedly of that opinion, that if a bounty of two shillings is given for one year, and one year only, and nothing is done to remove any part of the population, that at the end of that year we shall be in as bad a situation almost as we are at present; therefore it is that I have all along recommended in my former examination, the removal of all those persons who shall be in distress, according to the judgment of the governor; and the provision of some slight assistance to the trade, to enable them to meet the probable losses of next year.

What do you consider to be the amount of the superfluous population of Newfoundland, who would be out of employ this year provided no assistance were given? Certainly five thousand; and in the fall of the year circumstances will then show, whether more may be required to be removed or not; I conceive there will be, for I imagine that when the French bounties come into operation, they will be found to bear very hard indeed upon the British trade.

Then this bounty, according to your opinion, will have the effect of inducing the merchants here to send out a considerable larger quantity of tonnage for the purposes of the fishery?—Not larger than last year.

But larger than they otherwise would do?—Yes, for ourselves, in particular; and we must judge of other persons feelings by our own in the same circumstances. If no bounty at all is given, and no measures taken to remove the superfluous population in Newfoundland, we shall draw in our trade to as narrow a compass as we possibly can.

Then the bounty would operate as an artificial extension of your trade for a certain series of years?—As long as the French continued; after theirs ceases, we shall be able to meet them on equal ground.

In the event of your receiving two shillings bounty on all fish exported from Newfoundland to countries in Europe, would you send a large outfit, and would it be worth the while of the trade, in your opinion, to employ more men than under other circumstances?—Undoubtedly.

Then you think that would be the means of relieving the population, which otherwise would be left, a great number of them in a starving condition?—I think it will be essentially necessary to remove a part of them, or they will be starved.

If you have not the assistance of government, your outfit will not be so great?—Certainly not.

John Preston, Esquire, again called in; and Examined.

DO you think two shillings per quintal bounty, will assist in the employment of the distressed inhabitants of Newfoundland?—Most assuredly it will; in my former evidence, I stated that all the inhabitants between Cape Saint Francis and Cape Saint Mary's are now in very great distress; and no means of support can be afforded them the ensuing winter, unless some assistance be granted from the government; and my reasons for saying so are, that last year we gave the planters of Newfoundland 13 s. per quintal for their fish, which did not enable them to pay their debts by some considerable sum, and we lost one shilling per quintal upon it at market, which I believe to be the average of the losses on the trade in general; and I wish to state, that two shillings per quintal will operate in supporting those people. Newfoundland is an open market for fish, and speculators going from this country to purchase cargoes of fish, will naturally calculate on the advantage of two shillings on the export; that they

*John Preston,
Esq.*

*John Preston,
Esq.*

they will go into the market and give two shillings per quintal more than they would otherwise do, by which the planter and his servants, who are the catchers of fish, are benefited the whole of the sum that is to be granted, giving to each individual catcher of fish about seven pounds, in addition to his other means of support.

Upon that assurance that the planters would get that two shillings, would it be worth the while of the merchant who supplies goods from this country to risk the sending out a sufficient supply for the island?—Merchants who have their property there must endeavour by some means to protect it, and the residents that are in harbours where their property is, must in some measure be supported; and by the assistance of the two shillings which I have stated, provisions enough may be sent out for the inhabitants of Newfoundland.

You mean to say, that the merchant, with the assistance of this bounty, would be encouraged to come forward for the protection of his property?—For the protection of his property; there is no profit to arise to the trade even by the assistance of the two shillings per quintal.

You do not mean to say, that this bounty is with a view to his advantages in the trade, but merely for the protection of his property?—I mean to say, it is necessary for the existence of the trade and the protection of his property in the trade, and that instead of increasing the trade it must still decrease under the two shillings, that is not sufficient to protect it; and when I speak of the inhabitants of Newfoundland, I beg to be understood those who have resided there for years with families. There are a vagrant set of people who have gone out from different countries, and who have not been long enough settled there to be acquainted with the fishery so as to gain a livelihood; those have become troublesome neighbours, in general dissipated characters, and should be removed.

Do you think that a bounty of two shillings per quintal would induce merchants to carry on their trade to the extent they have done within the last few years?—Certainly not; in my evidence I have already shown that the planters the last year did not pay their debts by nearly one half, and that we lost upon the fish purchased from them one shilling per quintal; from which I prove that two shillings per quintal is not sufficient to encourage any extension of the trade.

Are the Committee to understand you to say that those vagrants, as you describe them, would not, under any circumstances of the bounty, have employment?—There are some dissipated characters that have gone from Ireland within the last year or two, that have not had sufficient experience of the trade to make themselves useful; and the value of their labour, under any circumstances, would not be sufficient to support them.

So that the bounty would not operate to relieve Newfoundland from the pressure of their being there?—The bounty would operate to relieve Newfoundland, so far as it refers to the misery under which the inhabitants labour; those persons are comparatively few, such as have been in Conception Bay and in other places breaking open stores and destroying private property, but the inhabitants of Newfoundland may get support by two shillings per quintal.

What do you conceive may be the number of inhabitants, not of the description of vagrants, who would be out of employment this season if no bounty was given?—I consider that two-thirds of the inhabitants of Newfoundland will be totally without food in the winter, I cannot immediately say employment in the summer, because they must have got into employment before this, they must strive for a livelihood; but the prospect being so very bad to the trade, the low price of fish, the dearness of provisions, and the large families planters in general have, must deter merchants from sending out provisions to support them.

You are understood to say, that what they could earn during the summer would be so little capable of affording them the means of laying in any food for the winter, that the merchants would not send out from thence, under the apprehension that their stores might be plundered, and those persons would not have the means of paying for them?—That is exactly what I mean to say; they will have, some of them, a temporary support during summer.

What would be the proportion of increase of wages the merchants would give in consequence of the bounty, as compared with the wages they otherwise would give?—It is not sufficient encouragement to hire at wages at all for the prosecution of the fishery.

Then in what way will this operate to relieve that class of society?—In as much as it would give the planter the means of supporting them during the winter; the fact is, the people in Newfoundland are starving; the planters, and those residing in

in the different harbours; and the bounty will enable the merchant to afford a temporary support to them, which otherwise they will not have. As to wages, there will be no encouragement to give wages for the catching of fish; the people now employed in Newfoundland for the catching of fish go on shares, each man taking his own fish for his labour; therefore, as a man will catch a hundred quintals, he will be benefited to the extent of 10 *l.* which will enable him to support his family for the winter; hence the merchant will be encouraged to send out provisions for the support of that description of inhabitants.

Then you wish the bounty to be given, not on the export of the fish to foreign ports, but on its being caught?—No; but the merchant going there, calculates on the two shillings which he shall receive from government, and therefore will give more to the planter, which will enable him to pay for his supplies.

You have stated, that the planter receives stores from the merchant, for which he gives fish?—He docs.

Then the price of fish at the present moment abroad is such, that without a bounty of two shillings, which the merchant purchasing from the planters will derive from the government, so as to enable him to give that planter a larger sum at the price at which provisions and things for outfit now are, will he be able to pay that planter sufficient to keep him alive?—He will not.

In point of fact, are not the planters in Newfoundland, for want of a remunerating price being paid to them by the export merchants, at this time deep in debt to those in England, who have supplied them?—They are deep in debt.

That entirely arises from the high price of things unfortunately from this country, and from the low price of fish abroad?—Entirely so.

John Job, Esquire, called in; and Examined.

YOU are a Newfoundland merchant, residing at Liverpool?—I am.

Are you in the habit of supplying the different necessary stores for the fishery at Newfoundland?—We are.

Do you supply the planters there?—We do.

Are they not at this time generally in debt?—They are.

Is that in consequence of the high price of the stores necessary to be sent out, and the low price of fish in the foreign markets?—The latter principally.

Do you believe then, that if government were to give to the export merchant two shillings per quintal bounty, so as to enable him to pay that two shillings more to his planter, the planter would be enabled to carry on the fishery so as to relieve the distress that at present exists in the island, and at the same time to pay his debts?—I have no doubt that it would give him temporary relief, but not enable him to pay his old debts.

It will enable him to carry on the fishery so as to keep the population employed?—It will.

Judging from what has passed before, are you not of opinion that if some relief is not given, he will not be enabled to do so?—He cannot support his family, and the trade must be abandoned in a great degree.

Do you think it would enable him so far to diminish his debts to the merchant at home, as to induce the merchant at home to send renewed supplies, and give him renewed credit in consequence?—I have no question myself, but that the trade will continue to send their supplies, if they get a promise of two shillings per quintal bounty, but not else.

Would it be worth the while of the merchant in this country, if a two shilling bounty were given, to suspend his demand for the old debt, and take his chance for the future?—As far as regards ourselves we should do it, and should be satisfied; I believe they would be glad to put up with the loss they have already sustained.

Have you a large capital employed in this trade at present?—We have.

Have you made up your mind as to what line you will adopt, in the event of government withholding such assistance as is now sought for?—We shall take early measures, such as prudence may dictate, to retreat from the trade before we lose the whole of our property; I state that as far as regards myself.

If the trade is allowed to go down, so that the stores and other things in Newfoundland are permitted to go to decay, is there a prospect within any time that any person can look forward to, that it can ever be recovered to the state in which it has been?—I think not; I have been many years there, and am persuaded it would take a great time to put to rights a place which had been neglected for three years only.

*John Preston,
Esq.*

*John Job,
Esq.*

John Job,
Esq.

In point of fact, the whole property lies in the erections that stand upon it:—
It docs.

They are of that nature that easily decay, and will require a very large capital to again place them in the same situation?—That is the fact.

Thomas Holdsworth Hunt, Esquire, called in; and Examined.

T. H. Hunt,
Esq.

YOU are a merchant residing in London?—I am.

Are you considerably in the Newfoundland trade?—Very largely.

The trade at this time is in great distress?—Very great.

If Government will not give any assistance, will it be worth your while to attempt to carry on the trade?—If we do not get any assistance from Government this year, and the assurance that an inquiry shall be made into the trade next year, with a view to relieving it from its present difficulties, we certainly shall curtail our trade as much as possible, with a view to the giving it up as soon as we can do it without a very great loss. It is impossible to give up a Newfoundland trade in one or two years without a sacrifice of half a fortune; but we shall give it up with as little delay as possible consistently with that, provided we have not better prospects than we have at present.

In the event of your so withdrawing yourselves from the trade, if the inhabitants of Newfoundland are not withdrawn in an equal proportion, they consequently will be left completely starving?—They will be left entirely destitute.

They have no means of obtaining supplies but from the merchants who take their fish, and furnish supplies in return?—None whatever.

How do you think a bounty would operate?—If a bounty of any certain sum be given on the export of fish, the price of fish in Newfoundland will naturally rise in proportion, consequently that bounty goes to the support of the planters and the people employed.

You say the people employed, do you mean the persons employed by the planters?—Yes; it is calculated that every fisherman should catch from 100 to 150 quintals during the season; a bounty of two shillings, of course, would operate as a bounty to the planter of from ten to fifteen pounds for each fisherman; this ten or fifteen pounds does not go entirely to the fisherman, but is divided with the person who is employed in curing and drying the fish. If a planter has a wife and family, and his wife and children are employed in curing and drying this fish, the whole of this bounty will go to that family, and will assist them in paying for their provisions for the winter.

If this bounty was granted, when would be the probable time you could expect to receive it from Government?—That must entirely depend upon the regulations that might be made; it can be received only when certificates are received from Newfoundland of the quantity shipped, I should suppose. I should conceive that from abroad we should not have certificates; because, if I purchase fish in Newfoundland under the idea that I am to receive this bounty, I shall give the amount of that bounty more for the fish than I otherwise should do; if any accident happened to that vessel, and she did not arrive at the port she was intended to discharge at, I should lose to the amount of that bounty if I did not receive it upon a certificate of its being exported from Newfoundland.

It is perfectly understood that the Government could not grant a bounty of that description unless they had a certificate of the fish absolutely arriving abroad, or of its loss; under those circumstances, when would be the soonest time that it could be demanded in the common operation of the trade?—Certificates might be obtained from abroad so as to arrive here in September at first, and from thence in every month till August next year.

What is the usual custom in Newfoundland as to paying the planters, whether in advance, or after you receive the fish?—In the beginning of the season we deliver supplies to the planter, with the understanding that he is to deliver the whole of his fish in payment, and if there be a balance in his favour, bills are given on England for that balance.

If there is not a balance then it is the loss of the English merchant?—I believe every merchant in the trade has lost an immense sum of money for the last three years, by their debts not being paid.

You would be content to forego those debts if you could keep the fishery still current?—Certainly.

Marmaduke Hart, Esquire, called in; and Examined.

YOU are a merchant in the Newfoundland trade?—I have been in the Newfoundland trade forty years, first and last.

The Newfoundland trade has gradually, for the last three years, been getting into a very distressed situation?—It has.

The supply sent by the British merchants to the island, and given to the planters in exchange for their fish, has brought the whole of them considerably into debt to the English merchants?—Yes, it certainly has; the whole of them very considerably, indeed; and the planters themselves have lost a great deal of money, which they had saved in former years.

In paying those whom they employed to assist them?—In paying those whom they employed to assist them.

It is conceived no assistance you could now get in the trade would enable you so to carry on the trade, that the planters would ever pay those debts to you again?—I should think they never would be able to pay it, except under very prosperous circumstances, which I do not contemplate at present, nor think possible.

But you would be content to forego those debts, provided you could anticipate that the trade could go on without further loss?—Most assuredly, and give them a chance of paying at any time hereafter.

If no bounty, or other adequate relief is given this year, would you not rather continue your trade, only with a view to withdraw your property from it, than with any view to any increased profit that you expect from the operation of the bounty?—Most assuredly.

If a bounty is granted for this year, with an understanding that the trade will undergo a complete review by the revival of this Committee next Spring, will you not carry on your trade this year, with a view to continue in it to future years, rather than with an intention to withdraw entirely from it?—Certainly, as far as I am concerned.

Would a bounty of two shillings on all fish exported to Europe be sufficient to make it worth your while to keep the trade alive during the present year?—Yes, I think it would.

George Garland, Esquire, again called in; and Examined

IF no bounty or other adequate relief is given this year, will you continue your trade only with a view to withdraw your property from it, rather than with any view to increased profits you expect from the operation of the bounty?—Certainly; I should carry on my trade with a view only to withdraw my property from it as fast as I could.

If a bounty is given for this year, with a perfect understanding that the trade will undergo a complete revision by the revival of this Committee the next Spring, will you not carry on your trade this year, under those circumstances, with a view to continuing it in future years, rather than with an intention to withdraw entirely from it?—If a bounty of two shillings is given for this year, with an understanding that this Committee will be revived the ensuing Spring, to take the whole consideration of the trade under their revision, I will continue to go on with my trade for the present year with a view to future years, rather than withdrawing my property from it.

Marmaduke Hart
Esq.

George Garland
Esq.

RETURN of the Quantities of FISH caught at, and Exported from,
1807, 1808, 1809, 1810, 1811, 1812,

YEARS Ending 10th October	1804:	1805:	1806:	1807:	1808:
	<i>Quintals.</i>	<i>Quintals.</i>	<i>Quintals.</i>	<i>Quintals.</i>	<i>Quintals.</i>
Fish made - - - -	No Return.	706,314	No Return.	520,552	478,735
COD FISH EXPORTED:					
	<i>Quintals.</i>	<i>Quintals.</i>	<i>Quintals.</i>	<i>Quintals.</i>	<i>Quintals.</i>
Spain, Portugal & Italy -	354,661	377,293	438,918	262,366	154,069
British Europe - - -	189,320	65,979	84,241	130,400	208,254
West Indies - - - -	55,998	81,488	100,936	103,418	115,677
British America - - -	18,167	22,776	32,555	23,541	40,874
United States - - - -	43,131	77,983	116,159	155,085	56,658
Brazils - - - - -	- - -	- - -	- - -	- - -	- - -
TOTAL Cod Fish Exported - -	661,277	625,519	772,809	674,810	576,132
SALMON EXPORTED:					
	<i>Tierces.</i>	<i>Tierces.</i>	<i>Tierces.</i>	<i>Tierces.</i>	<i>Tierces.</i>
British Markets - - -	-	609	- - -	2,303	- - -
Foreign Markets - - -	- - -	1,307	- - -	1,166	- - -
TOTAL of Salmon Exported -	3,739	1,916	2,040	3,469	3,272

Office for Trade, Whitehall, }
24th June 1817.

THOMAS LACK.

NEWFOUNDLAND, in the Years ending the 10th October 1804, 1805, 1806,
1813, 1814, 1815, and 1816.

1809:	1810:	1811:	1812:	1813:	1814:	1815:	1816:
<i>Quintals.</i>	<i>Quintals.</i>	<i>Quintals.</i>	<i>Quintals.</i>	<i>Quintals.</i>	<i>Quintals.</i>	<i>Quintals.</i>	<i>Quintals.</i>
677,761	731,066	618,494	709,163	816,000	865,132	866,580	819,200
<i>Quintals.</i>	<i>Quintals.</i>	<i>Quintals.</i>	<i>Quintals.</i>	<i>Quintals.</i>	<i>Quintals.</i>	<i>Quintals.</i>	<i>Quintals.</i>
326,781	No particulars returned.	611,960	545,451	706,939	768,010	952,116	770,693½
292,068		139,561	67,020	50,678	55,791	46,116	59,341½
133,359		152,184	91,867	119,354	97,249	159,233	176,603
41,894		18,621	4,121	14,389	24,712	24,608	37,443
16,117		1,214	- - -	- - -	- - -	588	2,545
- - -	- - -	- - -	2,600	- - -	2,049	-	-
810,219	684,470	923,540	711,059	891,360	947,811	1,130,661	1,046,626
<i>Tierces.</i>	<i>Tierces.</i>	<i>Tierces.</i>	<i>Tierces.</i>	<i>Tierces.</i>	<i>Tierces.</i>	<i>Tierces.</i>	<i>Tierces.</i>
3,337	- - -	2,323	3,494	2,910	2,247	1,066	1,551
727	- - -	371	337	827	1,178	1,686	948
4,064	5,747	2,694	3,831	3,737	3,425	2,752	2,499

N.B.—It has not been found practicable to make up this Account for the Years ending 31 December, the Returns transmitted to this Office being always made up to the 10th October in each Year.