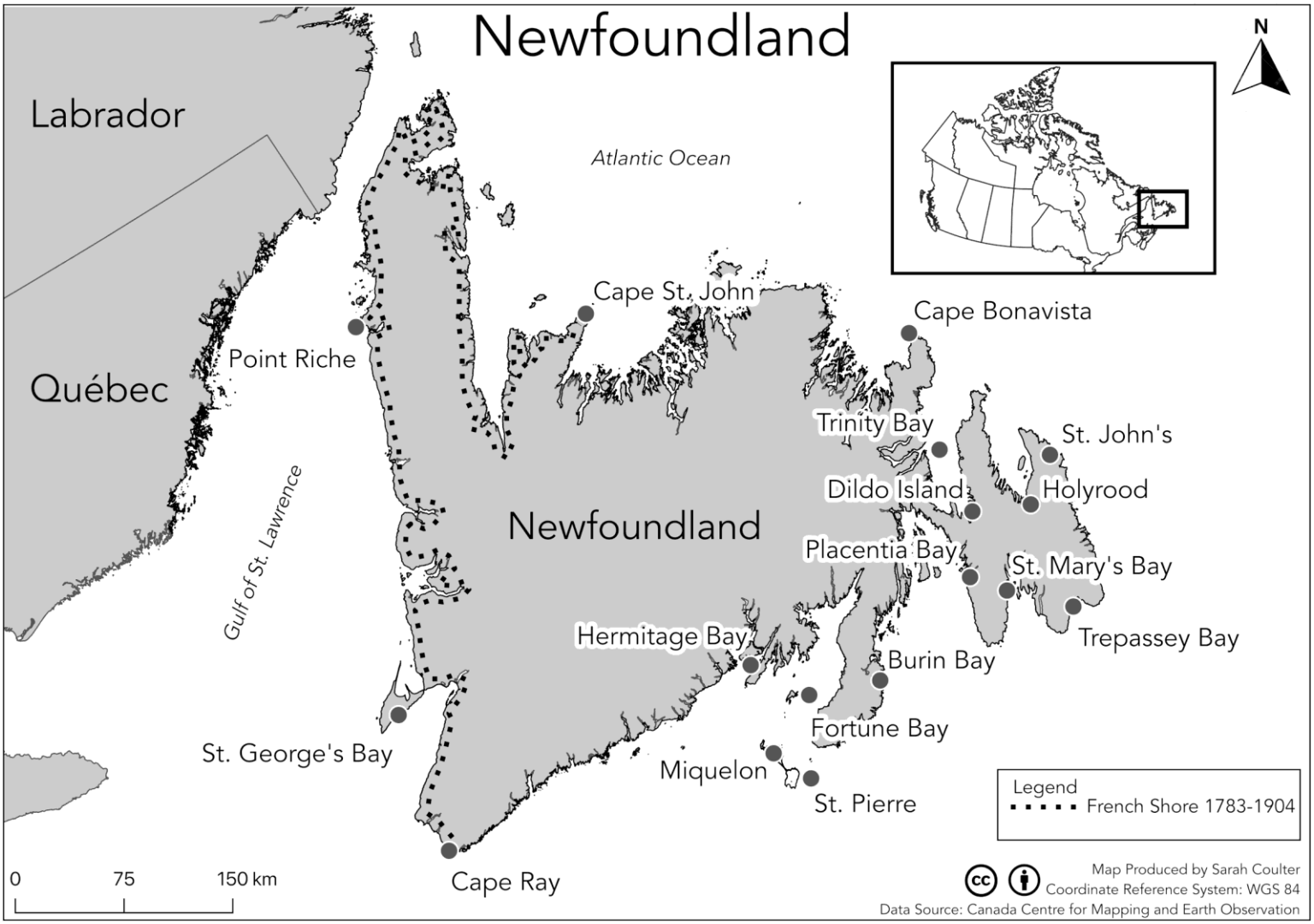
Newfoundland in International Context
1758 – 1895



An Economic History Reader

Collected, Transcribed and Annotated
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Victoria, British Columbia
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WAYS OF LIFE AND WORK

Fog and Foundering[1] (1754)

The waters around Newfoundland were notoriously difficult to navigate. Shipwrecks like the one described here were common.

We learn by Captain French, of the Sloop Mary, of this Port, in 29 Days from St. Peter's[2], in Newfoundland, that some Time before he sailed from thence, Captain Laws, in a Schooner belonging to the Island of Jersey, put in there to refit, having lost her Head, Cutwater[3] and Bowsprit[4], by running foul of a Biddeford[5] Ship, in a thick Fog, on the Banks of Newfoundland; and that a Marblehead[6] Schooner lying in the Harbour of St. Peter's, without any Body on board, was drove ashore in a Gale of Wind, and entirely lost, with the greatest Part of her Cargo, which she had taken in, but the Day before.

Hostile Waters[7] (1761)

In the 1700s, ships traveling between Europe and Newfoundland risked running into privateers. These were, essentially, pirates licensed by a government to plunder the merchant fleets of its enemies.

Two of the crew of the ship Alexandria of Glasgow […] were taken by the Duke de Peron, a privateer of Dunkirk, mounting 16 nine-pounders. […] When on board the privateer, they saw the mate of a Bristol ship, who told them, that upon the 1st, the ship he was mate of, bound from Bristol to Newfoundland, had fallen in with the said privateer, and engaged her three hours, when, by a hand grenade thrown in at the cabin window of the Bristolman, she was set on fire, and blew up, and all the crew, with a great number of passengers, perished, except five: That, before this accident, he reckoned they lost near sixty men killed and wounded: That […] a few hours before the Alexandria was taken, the privateer had taken a brig from Ireland for Newfoundland, and ransomed her for 300 guineas. They report the privateer to be a fine sailer, and were told by her crew, they had been chased sometime before by an English frigate, who could not come near them.

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[1] From NEW YORK. (1754, July 5). *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, p. 2.
[2] Possibly St. Peter's Roman Catholic parish in what is now Mount Pearl, Newfoundland. Mount Pearl was incorporated as a town in 1955, and is now Newfoundland and Labrador's second-largest city.
[3] The wedged front part of a ship.
[4] The 'spear' extending from the front of a sailing ship.
[5] A city in Maine.
[6] A town in Massachusetts.
[7] From Extract of a Letter from London. (1761, May 25). *The Caledonian Mercury*, p. 2.

Imports of Salt[8] (1819)

Salt was crucial for preparing Newfoundland's cod for export. Since there was no source on the island itself, it had to be imported – often from France, since the United Kingdom lacked an adequate domestic supply.

French Salt[9] for the Newfoundland Fishery. Now in BOND, at this Port, and free for Exportation to Newfoundland, *About 500 Tons of* BOLD FRENCH SALT, And which will be Sold on Reasonable Terms. Apply to F. S. SYMONS[10]. Who has for Sale, some excellent HOLLAND, GENEVA, CAPE WINES and [is] daily expecting several Puncheons of very fine-flavored Jamaica RUMS.

Falmouth, January 28, 1819.

The Great Fire of St. John's[11] (1846)

Newfoundland's largest city was destroyed by fire in 1819, 1846 and 1892. This letter, dated June 11, 1846 represents an eye-witness account written by a Roman Catholic in St. John's to the Bishop of Newfoundland, temporarily on leave in Ireland.

MY BELOVED LORD[12] – With a heart bleeding for the desolation and misery around me the melancholy duty devolves upon me of acquainting you of the total destruction of our beautiful town, for the Rev. Mr. Forrestal[13] has not even the means of procuring even one sheet of paper to write to you, and from utter prostration is unable to do so, had he the means.

On Tuesday morning Hamblin, the cabinet-maker, was boiling a pot of varnish in a house to the rear of the houses opposite Winton's[14] in Queen-street, and leaving

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[8] Symons, F. S. (1819, February 6). French Salt for the Newfoundland Fishery [Advertisement]. *The Royal Cornwall Gazette*, p. 1.

[9] Salt was a tempting target for privateers. "The *Intrepid* and *Filibuster* privateers, have taken the English ship the *Pomona*, laden with salt, and bound for Newfoundland." FRENCH PAPERS. (1803, October 4). *The London Times*, p. 1.

[10] F. S. Symons died at Falmouth on January 31, 1822, "after a long and painful illness". He was 46. DIED. (1822, February 9). *Royal Cornwall Gazette, Falmouth Packet and General Advertiser*, p. 3.

[11] Nugent, W. (1846, July 2). UTTER DESTRUCTION OF THE TOWN OF ST. JOHN'S. *The Freeman's Journal*, p. 3. Written by William J. Nugent (d. 1891), who is buried in the Belvedere Roman Catholic cemetery at St. John's.

[12] Michael Anthony Fleming (1792 – 1850), bishop of Newfoundland.

[13] Rev. John Forrestall (d. 1850).

[14] Henry David Winton (1793 – 1855) was the co-founder and editor of the Newfoundland *Public Ledger*, a newspaper. His reputation of being anti-Catholic (despite having campaigned for Catholic emancipation in the 1820s) led to attacks on him and his employees on several occasions. From 1835: "[W]e find the following particulars of a diabolical attack on Mr. Winton, editor of the *Public Ledger*, originating probably in the hostility of the lower orders of the Catholic population, to whom the politics of his paper had long been a source of irritation, and caused repeated outrages on his property:- […] Mr. Henry Winton, […] accompanied by Captain Churchward, […] were waylaid on Saddle Hill by five men, with painted faces, who in the first instance, struck Mr. Winton off his horse with a large stone,

the pot on the fire, retired to breakfast with his men at about eight o'clock, a.m. The pot boiled over, and the house took fire, a strong south-westerly wind blowing. In twenty minutes M'Carthy's house was blazing, and that side of the street was literally a mass of fire. In the meantime the fire had been wafted across the street, and Winton's house and all those at the east side of the street, to Water-street and on the west to Duckworth-street were burning. At half-past nine Mr. Dillon's house was one blaze, the greater part of the property having been removed to Warren's Wharf. Now Rogerson's house, fronting Queen-st., caught the flame and immediately, notwithstanding every effort to arrest it, spread eastward and westward at once. Stewart[15] and Rennie's stone buildings were consumed, the fire running *against the wind* to Newman's, sweeping away both sides of the street and all Duckworth-street as far as Brazel's, together with all the intermediate streets, and at the same hour all M'Bride's-row, including, of course, John Kent's and O'Dwyer's, were a heap of smoking ruins.

What need I particularize further? By nine o'clock in the evening every building of every description from Newman's to Bowden's room in Magotty-cove, in Water-street, in Duckworth-street, and all the cross-streets, and on the King's Road, as far as O'Mara's houses, which were saved, was utterly destroyed, leaving nothing but a vast and threatening forest of tall frowning chimneys – all, save only the chapel and palace!

But here comes, if possible, a more painful cause of mourning. About 3 P.M. a spark, by some extraordinary means, was wafted to your new school-house which in a moment became a mass of flame, and as all were engaged in town and no fears were entertained for that quarter by any, in a few minutes the Presentation Convent caught fire. It is incredible to think how rapidly the flames extended. Scarcely did more time elapse than I take to tell the mournful tale when that beautiful, the glorious edifice, was a body of living fire.

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and while he lay on the ground, insensible, cut off both his ears, part of one of his cheeks, and inflicted other severe wounds on his person, in a most brutal manner." NEWFOUNDLAND. (1835, June 15). *The Caledonian Mercury*, p. 4. In 1840, Herman Lott, one of Winton's employees, was kidnapped and interrogated by Irish Catholics who were upset at perceived libel of a pro-Catholic Judge Bourne. He was let go with a warning: "I was again addressed by being […] not to fear my master, he could not hurt me – he (my master) had asserted that Irish emigrants were 'refugee Ribbonmen' and Irishmen who had 'left their country for their country's good,' but that he and others like him would perhaps find out that there was a Ribbon Society in this country equally as terrible as ever it was in Ireland, and that he (Mr. Winton) would soon find his house too hot for him." RIBBONISM IN NEWFOUNDLAND – ATROCIOUS VILLAINY. (1840, November 25). *The Sydney Morning Herald*, p. 2. Ribbonmen were predominantly poor Irish Catholics who supported an independent Ireland and tenants' rights against their landlords' demands.

[15] "The stone premises of Messrs. J. and W. Stewart, being well built and protected with iron shutters, it was thought they might have stayed its progress for a time; but being surrounded on three sides by wooden buildings, viz., J. Rogerson and Son, Victoria Hotel, and Messrs. C. F. Bennetts and Co., as well as their own wooden stores in the rear, they were in a very short time surrounded by fir; and the inmates, cut off from other retreat, had to escape from the wharfs in boats and vessels, after having rolled into the water about one hundred tuns of seal oil, from the wharfs and stores." DESTRUCTION OF ST. JOHN'S NEWFOUNDLAND, BY FIRE. (1846, July 2). *The Freeman's Journal*, p. 3.

The nuns, God help them, made efforts beyond human strength to save your things, for the entire contents of the palace[16] had been removed there *for security*. Miss Waters[17], particularly, remained until the room in which she was became enveloped in flames, all the stairs too being on fire. Her retreat thus cut off she fled to the window, which she burst open and was about to precipitate herself to the ground to meet certain death; but called too by the hundreds who now surrounded, and particularly by the reverend mother, she remained calmly awaiting the rapid approach of the fire, until at length all the walls of the room, together with the floor beneath her feet, were burning. At length the people got a long beam up against the window, and with the utmost coolness this astonishing lady got out on it, and quietly slid down into the yard. Thus is everything of value you possessed destroyed, as well as all Mr. Kent's property, which also had been removed there, and Dr. Rochford's.

I should have told you that the fire took a direction up the hill, and consumed all the houses up behind Carter's, as well as in front, but it stopped there. Colonel Law[18] was extremely attentive to the unhappy nuns. He implored them to occupy his apartments in the garrison, which Mrs. L. and his family would vacate on the instant, and when they expressed their determination of taking present shelter in the Convent of Mercy, the Sisters having fled over to them at the first alarm to take them over, he requested they would pass through the garrison, and on their compliance he rode rapidly on, and ordered every man, woman, and child in the garrison to withdraw into the house until they passed. These delicate attentions, under such circumstances, ought not to be forgotten. The nuns went to the Convent of Mercy, where they arrived at about four, P.M., where they remain at present.

Here, then, is the rich, the great commercial city of St. John's, at the present moment without *one single* store[19], and without one single shop!!! What shall become

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[16] The bishop's residence.

[17] Probably the "Miss Catherine Waters" who, with other "religious ladies," "sailed in the St. Walter Scott, from Kingstown Harbour, [Dublin,] for their mission in Newfoundland" on May 4, 1842. "This ship [carried] out nearly one thousand tons of finely cut stone for the splendid new Cathedral of St. John, Newfoundland." CATHOLIC CHURCH. (1842, May 5). *The Freeman's Journal*, p. 2.

[18] In February of 1844, "Lieut. Colonel R. Law" of the Royal Newfoundland companies was promoted "from half-pay Unattached to be Lieutenant Colonel, without purchase." FROM THE LONDON GAZETTE OF FRIDAY. (1844, February 5). *The Glasgow Herald*, p. 2.

[19] "PRINCIPAL MERCANTILE HOUSES DESTROYED. Hounsell, Schink and Co, Stabb Rin and Co, William Grieve and Co, Wilson and Macneill, Robert Alsop and Co, Rennie, Stuart and Co, William Warren, jun, Boyd and M'Dougall, Peter Rogerson and Co, James William Stewart, C F Bennett and Co, J H Warren, Langley and Tissier, P and W Carter, W E Taylor, Shea and Murphy, Thomas Glen, John M'William, E and N Stabb, Pierce Grace, John and James Kent, R O'Dwyer and Co, Neill M'Dougall, Begg, Ker and Co, Bowring Brothers, R and J S Rutherford, Mathew Stewart and Co, M'Bride and Kerr, Richard Howley, Samuel Mudge, Warren Brothers, Baine, Johnston and Co, Wilson and Co, James Clift, S G Archibald, R F Trimingham and Co, James Fox and Co, Robert Prowse, W and H Thomas and Co, J M Rendell and Co, Gilbert Clapp, J B Baines and Co, Job Brothers and Co, Hunter and Co, Tobin and Co, John O'Donnnell, John Omars, Laurence O'Brien and Co, James Douglas and Co, Michael Foley, Parker and Gleison, James Morris, Nicholas Gill, G F Bonn, John Cussack and Sons, Walter Dillon, Dunscomb and Harvey, Robinson, Brooking and Co, John Brocklebank, William Boden, Michael Nowlan." DESTRUCTION OF ST. JOHN'S NEWFOUNDLAND, BY FIRE. (1846, July 2). *The Freeman's Journal*, p. 3.

of us? It is apprehended there are not provisions for a fortnight in the town, and all the building materials have been consumed. We had a meeting of the inhabitants yesterday, and came to resolutions praying the Governor to call the legislature together – to cause all vessels and boats with provisions to be stopped – every house to be searched, and a survey of the provisions and building materials available to be made, and all to be brought to a common depository, and to be dispensed equally by the commissariat – to establish a night patrol by land and on the water – and in the afternoon he convened a meeting of about fifty at the Government-house, and assured us of his compliance with our wishes.

We also appointed a committee to solicit from the clergymen of the different congregations the use of their churches, and from the Irish and Natives[20], giving their buildings for the accommodation of upwards of 5,000, perhaps fully 7,000 houseless creatures. The Rev. John Forrestal has kindly met them; he agrees to give the chapel, but the Cathedral could hardly be made available, but he permits the Governor to use the timber on the ground to make extensive sheds to cover them, and I solicited the Governor to order tents to be erected, with which he instantly complied, and to-day, there is a vast number raised on the Cathedral ground and neighbourhood. We have also determined to ask the Imperial government for a loan of 500,000l., to be lent on mortgages to enable parties to build promptly on their ground, and we propose to pass a bill in the assembly to restrict the breadth of Water-street to 100 feet.

I have thus given your lordship a full and unvarnished account of this deplorable catastrophe. I judged it far better to enable you to see the very worst of the picture at once, and therefore have allowed no false delicacy to induce me to palliate the relation. But how could I describe to you the misery of the people? M'Lea has lost 50,000l. without insurance; Bennett[21] has lost 30,000l., O'Dwyer, John Kent, Kitchin and H. Worth and Grace, &c. &c. have lost everything, even their books have been lost to Mr. Kent and O'Dwyer. Not a single stone house in town resisted the flames, Prowse's and even the Custom-house falling amongst the rest, with Baine's, Johnson's, Tobin's, Hunter's, Nicol's – in fact all.

We are hourly beset by those who, the day before, were regarded as independent, praying for food, and even those who have wealth still are unable to procure it, while robbery in every form stalks abroad, in a community proverbially honest. We are hiring vessels to take off emigrants. There are rumours abroad of efforts being used to fire the orphan house, and terror appears to pervade the whole community.

In mentioning that the fire reached Magotty-cove, I omitted to mention its extent eastward in Duckworth-street. The efforts made at Paddy M'Carthy's house stopped it and thus saved us, although John Stickley's place within a few yards of us was consumed with old Homan's house, but God's providence was pleased to cause a

[20] In this context, presumably native European Newfoundlanders, as opposed to migrants.

[21] "The oil vats of Messrs. C. F. Bennett and Co. and Messrs. Stewart, with their contents, together with many other combustible materials, and about 150 puncheons of molasses, being all on fire at once, the effect may be conceived, but cannot be described." DESTRUCTION OF ST. JOHN'S NEWFOUNDLAND, BY FIRE. (1846, July 2). *The Freeman's Journal*, p. 3.

change in the wind, which towards evening blew a gale from W. N. W.[22], a spark also contrived to bring the fire to the magazine on the hill, which exploded at about nine o'clock, just at the termination of the ravages of the fire. We had removed every thing, even our children, into the fields, where they remained perishing in the gale, for about two hours, but eventually, about ten o'clock, I induced them to come in, and towards five o'clock a few took an hour's repose on the ground, but we were in shelter. […]

Farewell, my lord, and believe me with affectionate sympathy for your personal sufferings, as well as for those of your people, whom you love more than yourself, your sincere, though humble friend,

W. NUGENT.

Visiting Newfoundland's Fisheries in 1849[23] (1849)

Throughout the 19th century, Britain shared Newfoundland's cod fishery with the French. France had access to part of the Newfoundland shore, and control over the nearby islands of St. Pierre and Michelon. In this account we get our first look at a peculiar form of international cooperation, where British fishermen would sell bait fish (capelin) to the French for use in fishing for cod. This happened frequently, despite France and Britain being rivals in the international cod market, and often without paying the duties (taxes) imposed on bait by the British government.

The following is an extract of a report dated the 2nd of Oct. 1848, addressed to Vice-Admiral the Earl of Dundonald[24], by Capt. G. G. Lock[25], R.N.[26], upon the fisheries of Newfoundland and Labrador, as ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, 1st June, 1849.

Her Majesty's Ship Alarm, St. John's, Newfoundland, October 2, 1848.

My Lord – I sailed from Halifax in her Majesty's ship under my command, on the 14th June, and anchored in the harbor of St. Pierre's in the afternoon of the 17th. I found the outer roads and inner harbor filled with shipping; there were 133 French vessels, averaging from 100 to 350 and 400 tons; 100 of these were bankers, chiefly brigs, lately returned with cargoes. They had taken in their salt, and were waiting for bait (caplin), which they told me would strike into the bays of St. Peter's and Miquelon in a day or two. This prophecy (whether likely to prove true or not) was merely mentioned to deceive me, as it is well known the supply afforded round their own islands is insufficient to meet the great demand. The next morning I observed boats discharging caplin into the bankers[27], which I ascertained had been brought

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[22] West North West

[23] From Lock, G. G. (1849, September 18). FISHERIES OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR. *The London Daily News*, p. 2.

[24] Thomas Cochrane (1775 – 1860), 10th Earl of Dundonald, nicknamed the "Sea Wolf" for his naval prowess during the Napoleonic wars.

[25] Granville G. Lock. He is listed as a Lieutenant aboard the *Ocean*, out of Sheerness, Kent, England, in the Navy List of 1834.

[26] Royal Navy

[27] In this context, ships fishing for cod on the Grand Banks surrounding Newfoundland.

over from our own shores during the night in English boats. The bait is sold in the harbor of St. Pierre's, either by barter for piece goods, provisions, or for money.

In every way this transaction is illegal; first, by vessels trading to foreign ports without a custom-house clearance in violation of Act 3 & 4 Will. IV., c. 59[28]; secondly, by sailing without registers; and thirdly, by defrauding the colony of a branch of its revenue.

Their only excuse is, that if they were not in self-defence to sell the caplin, the French would take it, as they formerly used to do, in defiance of all remonstrances and opposition; for it is, they say, impossible to guard every particular point where the caplin may strike along so extensive a coast so as to prevent the robbery, or, in most cases, even to see the French fishermen, in consequence of the frequent and dense fogs. This traffic has now become so systemized and general, and so productive to all the parties engaged in it along the coast, that it will be a matter of great difficulty to put it down. […]

The fishing season commenced the beginning of June, and will close the first week of October; they do not consider it will be a favourable one, however; fishermen are as hard to satisfy as farmers; their catch will probably average 1,000,000 quintals[29].

The [French] government bounty[30] is 11 francs per quintal – a sum equal to the value of the article itself. Owing to the embarrassed state of the French finances at home, and the failure of all their commercial establishments in the West Indies, there is comparatively no sale for the Bank fish this year. No accurate calculation can be formed of the value of the whole quantity of fish caught by the French, as many vessels carry their cargoes to France green; the fish are dried and salted there, and exported thence to the West Indies, and some to the Mediterranean.

I am assured that 360 vessels, from 100 to 300 tons burthen, are engaged in the Bank fisheries, employing from 16,000 to 17,000 men (exclusive of the coast fishermen). All these vessels return to France every winter; their crews spend the money they make there, buy the fitments they require there, sell their cargoes for the use of their countrymen at cheaper rates than the Newfoundlanders can to the colonists, and are knit together in a body by the regularity and system of their duties, and man their country's navy if required.

The French annual Great Bank fishery averages a catch of 1,200,000 quintals, and nearly the entire quantity is sent to the West Indies; Guadeloupe and Martinique consume two-thirds, and the remainder is exported to other islands.

The islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon are admirably adapted for the purposes to which they are applied; no expense to the government, they offer the best possible centre for all commercial operations, a depot for their stores, secure harbours for their shipping, and at the same time, owing to their proximity to the shores of Newfoundland, their inhabitants are equally well supplied with bait and fish as the British settlers themselves in their vicinity.

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[28] The Customs, etc. Act 1833.

[29] A quintal was either 100 lbs. (a short quintal) or 112 lbs (8 stone, a long quintal).

[30] Subsidy.

The French authorities, however, do not deny that the sole object of their government in supporting these fisheries at so great a cost is to form seamen for their navy. Monsieur Filleau[31], the intelligent commissary at St. Pierre's, candidly told me this, and added, that no private companies could of themselves support this commerce, unless the market price of the article rose to double its present amount.

Monsieur Delecluse, the governor, had also the honesty to affirm that the supply of caplin by the English from their bays and coast alone enabled the bankers to prosecute their fishings; and he believed that [due] to this traffic with his islands our poor settlers were alone enabled to support their existence. […]

The present is surely the period for our merchants to exert themselves to regain their lost ascendancy; while the French are paralysed by the failure of the French West India markets, and general loss of credit consequent upon the emancipation of the blacks[32] by the revolution of February[33]. […]

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

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

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

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

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

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[31] Jacques-Auguste Filleau (1821 – 1903). In 1850, he published an 80-page memoir of his time in St. Pierre and Miquelon, titled *Mémoire sur la colonie de Saint-Pierre et Miquelon, et sur les vrais moyens de consolider cet établissement*.

[32] France abolished slavery in its colonies in 1792, only to see Napoleon re-established it in 1802. A decree of 1815 abolished the slave trade, but did not come into force until 1826. Slavery was re-abolished in 1848, but not before France lost Haiti (Saint-Domingue) to a slave rebellion that lasted from 1791 to 1804.

[33] The February revolution led to the Second French Republic. Its leader, Louis-Napoleon, would declare himself emperor of France in 1852.

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

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

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

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

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

BURGEO ISLANDS – June 24th – The fishing is carried on throughout the year. It was good during the past winter, but indifferent in the spring; on the whole they have had a fair catch, 6,000 quintals since October. The fish are not so plentiful as they were five years ago. There are about 700 inhabitants residing on three islands; they are increasing in numbers; 14 years since there were only two families. The French do not interfere with their fishing, or appear on their coasts. The caplin had not been at all plentiful, but were beginning to strike into the harbours in great abundance, and would, they expected, remain on the coast for several weeks. They trade principally with Spain and Portugal, sending their largest fish to Cadiz[34], and generally commanding the early markets of both those countries, in consequence of their ability to prosecute their employment throughout the year.

These inquiries were principally answered by Mr. Stephens, agent to Messrs. Newman, Hunt, and Co.[35] There was, besides this establishment, a Jersey room,

[34] Cádiz is an important port city in southern Spain.

[35] As late as 1913, L. Newman, of this merchant company, was on the board of the Bank of England. BANKERS ON THE DIRECTORATE OF THE BANK OF ENGLAND. (1913, October 23). *The Wall Street Journal*, p. 1.

belonging to Mr. Nicholl, who has another fishing station, 30 leagues east, and one at La Poile.

During my visit there were two vessels in the port; one was receiving cargo for the Levant, and the other collecting fish from the different stations along the coast.

Most of the fishermen belonging to the settlement are hired by one or other of the above-mentioned houses, and they receive 4s. 6d. for every hundred fish delivered; but, unfortunately, they are dependent upon their employers for the supply, not only of their boats, but also for their food, so that by what I could ascertain I fear that a very pernicious system of usury is prosecuted. If this should continue, the merchants may be enriched, but the settlers will certainly never improve in civilization or prosperity.

The inhabitants, with but few exceptions, are all protestants. There are two churches, but at the time of my visit no clergyman – the Rev. Mr. Blackmore having been removed to a better living, and Mr. Cunningham, his successor, had not yet arrived. The magistrate is a Mr. Cox, at present in England. There is also a small school-house, to which the fishermen contribute a small annual sum for the education of their children.

The appearance of the settlement itself is without exception, considering the reputed value of the fisheries, the most disreputable and wretched I have hitherto seen. True, the ground is a bog, with granite boulders, and rocks rising from its centre, upon which the huts and cabins can alone be planted, but yet no attempt seems to be made to drain the filth and bog-water away from their doors, or even to make pathways by which to pass from house to house, without having to wade through black mire. The only causeway in the settlement is one formed of deal boards, from the church to Mr. Stephen's residence. Nevertheless, to my surprise, I must own that the people seem happy in their state of filth, and I heard no complaints of disturbance or of crime having been recently committed.

LAMALIN – June 30th – The fish truck in early and in great quantities, but there was not a catch in proportion to the abundance at the commencement of the season, in consequence of bad weather preventing the boats going out, until the caplin struck in, when they were fully employed, catching and taking them to sell to the French bankers. There has been but little bait at St. Pierre this year, so that caplin fetch a high price. As much as 15*l.* a day is made by each boat employed in this manner.

I was informed by Mr. Winter, the custom-house officer at Lamalin, that a duty of 6s. per quintal was imposed by the colony on bait exported; but in consequence of the law officers of the crown having given their opinion that bait caught and shipped (without being landed) could not be considered as exported, the boats adopt this method of taking away the caplin to evade the duty. […] After the fish have been cured, they are taken by coasters to St. John's and Burin. There are also two schooners that trade regularly from Harbour Breton, in the employ of Newman and Co., and Nicholl and Co.

The house and boat that are kept for the use of the officer and crew generally left at Lamalin during the fishing season have not been put in a state of repair this

summer. The boat has no oars, and looks very old, and the house has several panes of glass broken, and was not in a fit state to inhabit.

The settlement of Lamalin is not increasing. Much apathy exists among the inhabitants. No road is yet made, and only one small house has been built since last year. The population is not quite 400.

Mr. Butler, the late magistrate, died in the fall of the year, and Mr. Pack, from St. John's, is his successor. Mr. Pack is building a large house, about a quarter of a mile from the settlement, and expresses his intention of carrying agriculture to a large extent. The soil is good, and well adapted for potatoes, of which they have lately begun to export a considerable quantity. The potato disease, however, visited them last year, in consequence of which their seed is neither good nor abundant. […]

ST. JOHN'S has enjoyed a more productive season than for many years past, which, with the cheering prospect of abundant crops in grass, grain and potatoes, has given new vigour and life to the capital, after the fire[36] and famine of the last and preceding year. […]

CROC. – This harbor is a long narrow indenture, slightly curving toward its head, where vessels may lay perfectly land-locked. It is the head-quarter station for the French men-of-war, employed for the protection of their fisheries. […] The French have two rooms in Croc, on opposite sides of the harbor. When they return home for the winter, they leave them in charge of two Irishmen, named Hope and Kearney, only removing the canvas coverings of the stages.

They also leave some of their boats behind them, turning them over on the beach, and thatching them with spruce boughs, in the same manner that our own migratory fishermen do theirs on the coast of Labrador, to protect them from the weather. Their establishments are conducted upon the same principle as our own; [but] to my inexperienced eye, the fish neither seem to be so well cleaned, split, boned or cured.

The two rooms in Croc employ between them 30 seven-quintal boats and 130 men, 100 afloat and 30 shore men (as they are termed) in the establishments; six of these boats were exclusively occupied in catching caplin and herrings for bait, and were manned by crews of eight men.

Their fishing this year commenced the 5th June, and is considered good in point of quantity, although the fish are unusually small. The catch has been, to the present date (July 27), 7,000 quintals, and they anticipate 6,000 more before they close. They use seines principally, but they also fish with lines. Caplin had struck in very early, and in great abundance; they were now beginning to disappear; replaced by herrings. […]

The FRENCH COAST FISHERMEN do not receive so large a bounty as their countrymen engaged exclusively on the banks. The risk and expense attending their

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[36] The great fire of 1846 nearly destroyed the city of St. John's. "The whole town of St. John's, Newfoundland, is a ruin. Scarcely a shed is standing, and what was late the wealthy, populous, and flourishing capital of the island, is now a blackened ruin, crowded by a pauperized, shivering, and disorganized community." UTTER DESTRUCTION OF THE TOWN OF ST. JOHN'S. (1846, July 2). *The Freeman's Journal*, p. 3.

occupation is much less, and, consequently, the insurance lower. The coast fishermen sail from France in vessels of 150 to 200 tons, laden with salt, and containing their entire fishing equipments, comprising men, boats, nets, and provisions. When they arrive at the destined harbours, they moor their vessels, re-roof their last year's establishments, land their goods, lock up their vessels' hatches, and commence fishing. If the season prove prolific, traders connected with the planters will, perhaps, once or twice during the season, carry away the produce of their good fortune and industry, preserving a sufficiency to freight their own vessels back to France. […] This year there were upwards of 11,000 fishermen employed between Cape Ray and Cape St. John's, showing an increase of 1,500 men within two years.

The Newfoundland Seal Hunt[37] (1871)

In addition to the cod fishery, Newfoundland-based expeditions also hunted for whales and seals. This article provides details of the seal hunt as conducted in the early 1870s. Content warming: graphic depictions of the slaughter of seals, including baby seals, and subsequent processing of the carcass.

The ice comes down from the Arctic Ocean at the beginning of March, and with it the seals, who satiate their voracity in the schools of cod and other finny tribes. This agreeable business proceeds until the "whelps," or young seals, put in an appearance in the centre of a circle of admiring acquaintances, who range themselves in dignified state upon various adjacent cakes of ice surrounding the frigid domicile of the happy family. Considerable interest is manifested in the new comer until the mature age of ten days is attained, when the veteran is left to flop for himself and become the ultimate prey of his born enemy, man.

Until about three years ago only sailing vessels were sent to the ice, an idea prevailing that the steamers, being of greater speed, would get on the field too soon and kill the cubs before they were sufficiently grown. That idea, however, has been exploded, and now there are a dozen applicants for a berth on one of the steamers to every one for passage in a sailing vessel. The shrewd fishermen realize the possibility of making two cargoes with the aid of steam, and also comprehend that every trip adds to their exchequer.

WHEN THE FLEET SAILS

The sailing vessels leave the harbors of St. John's, Harbor Grace and Bay Roberts in fleets, generally upon the 1st of March, not sooner. The reason for choosing that date is that if they sail previous and get wrecked in the floes or gales, the merchant cannot recover insurance. The sailing vessels devoted to the pursuit of the seal are maintopsail brigantines[38], with powerful mainsails to assist in forcing the vessel through the ice. These vessels are here euphoniously denominated in the language of the guileless and hilarious islanders as "jackass brigantines." Whence

[37] From SWILERS AND THE SWILE. (1871, April 25). *The New York Daily Herald*, p. 7.
[38] A type of ship with two masts.

this designation is evolved, I will not hazard. The prows and forward sides of the brigantines are sheathed with iron plating to prevent the grinding of the timber in contact with the ice. On getting out of the harbors the squadrons simultaneously head up northwardly toward the Straits until the ice is fallen in with, generally in four days. The brigantine then cruises about or hangs on to a berg with her "ice anchors."

THE SEAL HUNT PICTURED

On sighting the seals from the masthead the ship's head is turned in the direction of the prey. If the ice is jammed too thick to permit the vessel's passage, the boats are lowered away and an exhilarating pursuit begins. Ofttimes the seals are five to ten miles beyond the ship, and a lively pull is necessary. Nothing in the way of food is carried, the men contenting themselves with a couple of hardtacks[39] and a glass of rum before leaving the ship. The crew is divided into "gunners" and batsmen," and these again apportioned into four gangs. The first gang performs the work of slaughter; the second gang haul the "pelts" on board the boats; the third gang transfer them and stow them away in the hold of the ship, while the fourth gang recuperate to relieve their brethren by indulging in a nap. The pursuit of the seals is exciting. Each is provided with a long staff, similar in shape to the American baseball bat, with the difference of greater length. These batsmen are extremely agile and level-headed. They leap upon the floating ice and make direct for the young seals. The latter are summarily disposed of by a blow on the nose from the bat or a kick from the foot, *en passant*. The foot blow is termed a "boot," and being dealt powerfully, settles the juvenile seal.

With amazing rapidity the batsman continues his work of destruction. He seems to be everywhere and his track is marked by havoc. He is generally provided with an alpenstock, with which he springs form "ice-pan" to "ice-pan," often alighting on cakes tilted at an angle of thirty degrees. A slip here would lead to death: but your genuine seal hunter rarely trips up, for he is educated from the cradle to endurance and agility, and endowed with fearlessness and a clear head. Should the animal prove a veteran and show fight, the gunner comes to the batsman's succor, and the sea monarch topples over with a charge of shot through his head. The rifle is not used, as it discharges the bullet with too much velocity, and a *ricochet* shot rebounding from an iceberg might injure or kill the wrong party, where so many men are scattered about. Therefore a long smooth-bore gun, loaded with shot slightly larger than buckshot, performs the service. When the young seal is hit it gives a cry startlingly similar to that of a babe, and it requires two or more trips to the ice before any save the most hardened can overcome a certain feeling of repugnance at their slaughter.

With the ancient parties, however, it is different. They are terribly ferocious, and incautiousness of precipitation will leave its consequences upon the unlucky wight who rashly ventures to close quarters.

The old seal's incisors will cut slices from a limb as clean as by the scalpel. Indeed, the enraged animal often vanquishes both gunner and batsman, and puts them to ignominious flight, as their only salvation.

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[39] A dry biscuit, popular as food on sailing voyages due to its long shelf life.

The great point is to save the laceration of the sealskin, and this can only be done by a shot in the head. The seal's frontispiece is protected by a thick "hood" of skin, which is bullet-proof. From this protection they obtain the designation of "old hoods." The only time when they are vulnerable is when they throw back this hood to fly at the attacking parties; and then the gunner lets drive a charge square into the distended mouth of the seal, finishing his career.

A LAUGHABLE PREDICAMENT

An amusing incident here occurs to me. One of the men had set his heart upon a "cub," and was chasing it, the seal making amazing time, and distancing the pursuer, who, in his eagerness to secure the coveted prize, rushed past an "old hood," when he was suddenly seized by the seat of his trousers by the seal. The man pulled and swore; the seal growled and tore. Everybody was convulsed with laughter, and could not move a peg to the man's assistance. At last teeth gained the day, the raiment parted, and the man, whose courage had long since oozed away, fled. He reproached one of the scoffers subsequently by the remark, when the incident was referred to, "Be jabbers, Moony, you're no man."

LOADING THE SEALS IN THE VESSELS

The work of slaughter finished, the disposition of the dead commences. The bodies of the seals are cut across the throat, around the flippers and down the belly. The carcass is drawn, and the pelt, with adhering fat or blubber, is laced up with sinews, shoe fashion. Two or three skins are used together in a bundle, and the third gang raise to the deck and stow them away in compact masses in the hold. The flippers are eaten by the sealers with great gusto in lieu of fresh provisions. I have heard many sealers declare that, when exhausted, they have resorted to the revolting act of taking the heart of a young seal and eating it raw. They declare that it reanimates them.

PROFITS OF THE TRIP

The cargo being stowed, the exultant mariners steer for home and begin to calculate the returns of the voyage. Presuming that the catch has averaged 20,000, the captain's share will be about one shilling for every seal; that will be about $10,000[40] in American money – a very fair month's work. The men will receive about $600 to $700[41] for their share. […]

THE VESSEL'S ARRIVAL IN PORT

The port reached, presumably St. John's, the vessel is hauled up alongside the wharf for the purpose of discharging her cargo. The men appoint a person to represent them, to see that fair weight is taken, for the fat and skin are weighed together. The cargo is removed from the hold, three bundles at a time, by means of blunt hooks, which do not tear the skin.

After the pelt has been weighed it is passed over to the skinner, here known as the "butcher," who dexterously separates the fat from the skin.

The fat is so tough as to necessitate sharpening the knife at every slice. The skinner makes no careless cuts, as every skin injured loses him a shilling. At St.

[40] About $212,000 in 2020 USD, adjusting for U.S. inflation.
[41] About $13,000 to $14,800 in 2020 USD, adjusting for U.S. inflation.

John's the skinning is done on the Southside Hills. The method of separating the pelt and fat is peculiar.

WHAT A SEAL YIELDS

The skinner sits on a pile of pelts, with his implements, and conducts his labors. As the fat is cut off in great cakes it falls into a large trough. As the trough becomes filled, a gang of men come around and empty the contents into their barrows and wheel off the fat to the "chopping house."

The chopping knife is something like a straight hoe, with a very sharp edge. It cuts the fat into pieces of about ten pounds weight. It is then hoisted up into the vat and left to decompose, which is effected in about a fortnight. The vicinity of the butchers and oil-triers abounds in an atmosphere decidedly anything but salubrious or agreeable to the olfactories; and yet, strange to say, every one connected with the fishing or preparation of the oil becomes exceedingly stout, and seems incapable of existence away from his bouquet of odors of seal.

A new system has been introduced into some of the manufactories here and at St. John's by which the fat, after it has been chopped up, is passed between two iron rollers with teeth, which rend and reduce it to a pulp. It is then turned into a vat, steam is turned upon the mass and the fat commences to run in a few hours. This plan is decidedly the more expeditious one. The vat is about two stories high in ordinary trying houses, is lined inside with tin or iron, and upon the exterior looks much like a log cabin. The oil, after being tried, is put into casks and shipped to the United Kingdom, where it is used for lubricating machinery and for the manufacture of an imitation sperm [whale] oil.

The skins go to France, the United States and England, being transformed into gloves, caps and boots. The French use them for patent leather. There is very little residuum, as almost every part of the seal is utilized.

The butcher gets the scraps, the flesh, flippers, &c., in addition to his regular pay of three cents per pelt for skinning, by which alone he realizes twenty to thirty shillings daily.

The children turn an humble penny by peddling the flippers and hearts at two pence, as food for the dogs. The entire juvenile and canine population are in ecstasies for weeks. The curs cease their howling, become models of civility, and placid contentment beams from their eyes.

PROFIT TO ALL HANDS

The catch for a sailing vessel with a crew of sixty men, if reaching 10,000 head, will distribute to each man of the sixty $480[42] in gold, and allow the captain as his percentage the sum of $1,000[43]. This is what enables the captain to transfer his flag, after two good seasons of two cargoes each, from the sailing vessel to a steamer.

The sealer, where he is paid in store goods, generally selects as the first articles his summer's supply of provisions, and to supplement this by the purchase of a crinoline for his daughters and a new gown for his dame; and then the profits of the voyage are exhausted. Should they not be, he dissipates his ready cash in a glorious

[42] About $10,000 in 2020 USD, adjusting for U.S. inflation.
[43] About $21,000 in 2020 USD, adjusting for U.S. inflation.

spree. If he is anywise shiftless he hangs around corners and patronizes lamp-posts, until the cycle of time revolves and brings on the cod fishery, which begins in the month of May. Those who are compelled to stay home also improve their time by catching seals in the harbors.

The Inuit Seal Hunt[44] (1889)

The Inuit also engaged in seal hunts, but in a fashion far different to those of their European counterparts. The following report is by Lady Edith Blake. Her husband, Henry Arthur Blake (1840 – 1918) was governor of Newfoundland from 1887 to 1888.

The seal is the main support of the Esquimaux[45], to whom every atom of the creature is of value. The blood, which they drink smoking hot, is their champagne; its flesh either raw or cooked is meat of which they never tire; even the entrails are eaten by them, and the membrane lining the stomach serves instead of glass for the solitary little window in their 'igloos' or snow huts. The skins form an important part of their clothing, and are the chief material for boots, tents, and kayacks; for the latter, indeed, no skins but those of the seal are used, as no others would stand equally well constant immersion in salt water, the walrus being too heavy for such light craft, though used for the 'oomiak,' or women's boats.

The seal-hunting by the Esquimaux is very different from the wholesale slaughter we have described. When a seal-hole (*i.e.* the opening in the ice where the creature rises to breathe) is found, which in winter is generally done by a dog specially trained for the purpose, the hunter feels with his spear through the superincumbent snow, till he finds the opening; then he takes up his station and patiently waits, sometimes for two days and nights, till he is rewarded by hearing a seal blow. At the second or third puff the hunter thrusts his spear through the hole, usually penetrating the skull of the unseen animal, which instantly dives, running out several fathoms of the line attached to the spear. Gradually the man drags the struggling seal upwards, and, enlarging the breathing-hole, hauls it out on the snow.

When the seals are basking on the ice in the sunshine, the Esquimaux approach within striking distance, lying flat on the ice and advancing by a sort of wriggling motion, which no doubt the seal mistakes for the movement of one of his own kind. At the same time the hunter chants his 'seal song,' which is described as a "loud peculiar noise, a mixture of Innuit, singing and bellowing, which seems to work a charm upon the seal."

When the seal is killed, a feast takes place, to which all the neighbours are bidden. The first ceremony is to consecrate the animal by sprinkling water on its

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[44] From Blake, E. (1889). On Seals and Savages. *The Nineteenth Century*, *XXV*, 513-526. Written by Lady Edith Blake (1846 – 1926), an Irish writer and illustrator.

[45] "The Eskimo call themselves 'Innuits,' which [means 'the people'], 'Eskimo' being derived from 'Ashkimai,' *i.e.* 'eaters of raw flesh,' a term applied to them in contempt by the Cree and Sauteaux Indians." Blake, E. (1888). The Beothuks of Newfoundland. *The Nineteenth Century*, *XXIV* (142), 899-918.

head. Frequently the feast is simply a gorge on the raw flesh; when the meat is cooked it is boiled in salt water and blood, the broth being eagerly drunk by the guests when the flesh is taken from the pot. The chief or igloo wife then hands portions of the meat to those present, having first politely sucked each morsel to prevent the fluid dripping from it, and at the same time the hostess considerately licks off any hairs or so forth that may have adhered to the meat.

The Truck, or Credit, System[46] (1871)

Newfoundland's fishermen were seldom paid for their work in cash. The 'truck', or credit, system was infamous for keeping this portion of the population in perpetual debt to local merchants.

The fishermen may, or within a short time could be, practically be said to be under the control of the merchant princes, who rule the country, discourage the development of its fertile mineral resources and seem to doom the people to the precarious struggle with the deep for their livelihood, they lying back in ease and drawing the substance of the poor fishermen.

The method by which these merchants assert their sway is complex, but always redounds ultimately to their own advantage.

These observations apply to the merchants dealing with the seal fishers, although the rule is pertinent to the traders with the toilers of the sea who engage in other fisheries.

HOW THE FISHERMAN IS IMPOSED UPON

It is thus:- Each merchant supplies a certain number of fishermen (or "planters," as they are denominated in these regions) with provisions. The latter in turn retail them to the fishermen in their employ, or, perhaps, as in many cases, the merchants retain the profit all to themselves by ignoring middlemen and selling direct to the sealers.

In these transactions, it must be understood that rarely does money pass. The merchant is too wily to allow the men to assume that position of independence which always attaches to the possession of a few dollars.

No, he overcomes the fisherman with guile. He realizes the necessities of the son of the sea and inveigles him into the meshes of the network of the disgraceful credit system, which dooms every humble Newfoundlander to a life of battle with the deep for sustenance.

These merchants or planters may be likened to cormorants in their rapacity.

This glaring imposition has been practiced for a century nearly; but a better state of things is at hand.

The winters here are awfully severe, and it is at this period that the merchant steps in and plays his "points" on the fisherman presumably in his employ.

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[46] From SWILERS AND THE SWILE. (1871, April 25). *The New York Daily Herald*, p. 7.

The merchant, with astonishing benevolence, waives the question of cash payment and allows his employé provisions sufficient to carry him through the winter's siege, said store generally consisting of the wholesome and durable commodities of salt beef, pork, tea, flour, hard biscuit and molasses. Payment just then is immaterial, so the merchant blandly says, and an account is made out, wherein all the articles are set down at enormously extortionate figures.

Times are hard, of course, and cash is beyond the question, and invariably the poor fellow is dragged into a bargain whereby he is bound to retrieve his debt by a share of his catch in the following spring. The existence of the fisherman's family depends upon his bargain with the merchant, and should the catch prove poor and inadequate to satisfy the rapacity of the merchant, the sealer or fisherman finds himself burdened with a debt which seems irremovable.

EVILS OF THE CREDIT SYSTEM

The merchant to the fisherman becomes the veritable Old Man of the Sea, and the mariner enacts the Sinbad portion of the business and assumes the burthen perforce.

However, the contract system has been greatly improved since 1864, the most disastrous year probably experienced here, the catch being only 26,000 seals.

The merchants, who had trusted to bounteous percentages upon the catch, were sadly disappointed, and have since grown cautious of trusting to luck in this premature chicken business.

The Preparation of Salt Cod[47] (1871)

Content warning: graphic descriptions of cod processing.

The preparation for the cod fishery makes fishermen, merchants and planters bestir themselves. A stranger, on entering the harbor of St. John's through the Narrows, is somewhat puzzled at the sight that presents itself to the eye on either side. There, jutting out from the rocks on the hillsides, he beholds a number of hanging gardens, propped up by long poles. He naturally inquires what those artificial green fields are used for, and is told they are the flakes upon which the cod fish is cured. Their construction is simple, consisting of green spruce boughs laid down, one after the other, and interlaced with poles. […]

As soon as the boats that fish near the harbors are loaded they return to the stage head, a large store[48], made of the same material as that which composes the flake, with which it is connected. The boat here is unloaded, and the fish is taken charge of by a man called a tend table, whose duty it is to put it on the splitting board, where it first goes into the hands of the cutthroat. He, armed with a dagger-shaped knife, slits the throat of the fish and cuts it down the belly, then passes it to the header, who stands, like a Jack-in-a-box, in a round hole. As soon as he has gleaned

[47] From SWILERS AND THE SWILE. (1871, April 25). *The New York Daily Herald*, p. 7.
[48] In this context, a storehouse, or place where things are stored.

the precious liver away from the entrails, he presses the neck of the fish against the edge of the board and breaks off the head, that drops into a pound, pushing the body to the splitter, who sits in front of him. The trade of the splitter needs much practice and skill, so that he may cut out the soundbone[49] and split the fish down to the tail without driving the knife through or slicing on any portion of the body. When it leaves the hands of the splitter it is drawn away to the salter, whose position is one of much responsibility, as upon his skillful treatment depends, in a great measure, the good quality of the voyage. The fish is salted, tier above tier, until the bulk stands three or four feet high and ten or twelve feet long. It is kept in this condition for the space of two or three weeks, when it is taken to the ram's horn – a large square box – lowered down into the salt water and thoroughly cleansed. After this cleansing process it is placed in a bulk, which the fishermen term a water horse. In a few days this aquatic equine animal is carried to the flake and spread out to dry. Under the rays of the sun it presents a beautiful sight, as in this early portion of the process it is spread face up, and has a golden tinge. It takes about a month or six weeks' care to render the fish fit for market. It is classified into four qualities; the first and most valuable, is called merchantable; the second, Madeira; the third, West India, and the fourth, *tal qual*, or 'such as it is'[50]. This last name, as well as the second[51], was taken from the Spaniards, who trade a good deal with the island. The West India quality also suggests why the name was given it. Almost all the fish coming under that head are shipped to the islands bearing that name.

And now for a few words relative to the manufacture of cod liver oil. It is now about eighteen years ago since a lucky individual named Fox invented the simple process by which a pure refined oil can be extracted from the liver of the codfish. Before that time they were simply thrown into puncheons exposed to the sun, and as they slowly melted into oil it was drawn off and filtered into casks. The oil then was of a dull red color, was most repulsive to the smell, and in its very taste the strongest of emetics. Now it has a clear, bright hue, and is as transparent as the most crystal spring. The disgusting taste and smell are gone, and it is looked upon as a health-giving medicine.

The cause of this great change is to be found in the mode of manufacture originated by Mr. Fox[52]. It consists of the following simple details:- The livers, after

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[49] A part of the fish's backbone.

[50] In Spanish, 'tal qual' means 'such as it is'.

[51] Madeira is a Portuguese island located west of Morocco. The word means 'Wood' in Portuguese.

[52] "Fox, George Wakefield, of Manchester, in the county of Lancaster, colliery furnisher. – 'Improvements in the treatment of cod liver, castor, and other medicinal oils, in order to render the same more palatable.' […] Letters Patent were granted to the said George Wakefield Fox, on June 16th, A.D. 1869, in which preparations the said oils were mixed with a sweet syrup, acid, and essential oil, or aromatic flavouring matter. According to the present invention wholesome tonic bitters are substituted for the above mentioned acid, and in a preparation of palatable cod liver oil with quinine a mixture is made of cod liver oil, sweet syrup, quinine, or sulphate of cinchonia, aromatic flavouring matter, and spirits of wine. In a preparation of palatable castor oil the quinine or other bitter is dispensed with." Woodcroft, B. (1871). *Chronological and descriptive index of patents applied for and patents granted, containing the abridgments of provisional and complete specifications for the Year 1870*. London: George Edward Eyre and William Spottiswoode.

being well washed, are placed into a large boiler that fits into another boiler, a distance of about three inches being preserved between the two all over, with the exception of the rims, which are hermetically welded together. Into this space water is pumped, and from the force of the steam made, the livers yield their last drop of pure oil, which is skimmed off as soon as it is formed by a man employed for that purpose, as well as to keep stirring the contents of the pot, so that they may not be burned. When skimmed off it is filtered through a double set of thick moleskin bags to free it from any dregs that it may yet retain. It takes about two and one half gallons of livers to produce one gallon of refined oil.

The Norwegian Method[53] (1892)

Norway's cod liver oil was long considered superior to Newfoundland's. In the early 1890s, Adolph Nielsen, superintendent of fisheries and himself a Norwegian, sought to change that by introducing the Nordic method to the colony's cod processors.

Acting on the instructions given by Mr. Nielsen[54], superintendent of our fisheries, some of our people are introducing the Norwegian method of manufacturing cod liver oil used for medicinal purposes. It is well known that Norwegian cod liver oil brings everywhere the highest price in the markets, being preferred to every other. This is entirely owing to the superior skill and care exercised in its manufacture. The first and most important point with them is to select fat and healthy livers which are of a whitish hue, diseased livers being greenish and lean ones red; and to reject all that are not up to a high standard.

Great cleanliness is observed throughout the whole process. The livers are first put into tanks and carefully washed in warm water; then they are allowed to drip over an open wire. They are then placed in high, round vessels or kettles, surrounded by steam at a pressure never exceeding five pounds. By this process the livers boil very slowly or rather simmer for eight hours, after which the oil is dipped out and filtered twice through cotton, and put in large tin vessels tightly soldered. The oil is now white and appears quite pure.

The process, however, does not end here. The oil is shipped to Christiania where it undergoes a chemical treatment which frees it from the microscopic globules of blood and from stearine. It is finally filtered through paper and is ready for the market. From the residue a kind of brown oil, of inferior quality, is made; and from the dregs a fertilizing compost.

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[53] From NEWS OF NEWFOUNDLAND. (1892, May 7). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 11.

[54] Adolph Nielsen (1852 – 1903) arrived in Newfoundland in 1889. He was invited by a commission formed to modernize Newfoundland's cod fishery and establish hatcheries to replenish fish stocks.

Women at Work[55] (1879)

While it was unusual for women to join fishing expeditions, women did much of the on-shore work, including the movement of cargo.

Women do the work of longshoremen on the wharves of St. John's, Newfoundland. When the time arrives for vessels from Southern Europe, Brazil, [the] West Indies, and elsewhere, to take aboard their cargoes of salt cod, herring, etc., files of females with tucked-up gowns, bared arms, and coarse brogans, may be seen along the wharves, carrying flat barrows of fish to and fro. Each barrow has four handles and is borne by two women. They perform the same labor as men in this business, but their pay is inferior. Women also go on the "Summer voyage" to Labrador, and act severally in the capacity of "splitters," "salters" and "headers."

More Details of the Truck System[56] (1880)

So long as our fisheries continue to be prosperous, and matters go on smoothly, we are not inclined to introspection; but when "bad times" come, when fisheries fail and prices decline, and from the fisherman comes the cry of hunger, and disappointment clouds the brow of the merchant, then we set to work to "consider our ways," and to repent of the evil of our doings. We are keen then to discover the flows and imperfections of our system of conducting business, and we weep over the vicious principles which underly the "credit system" with broken and contrite hearts. But no sooner do the codfish become plentiful and a rise in the foreign markets takes place, than we dry our penitential tears and resume our old courses, for which many plausible excuses are readily found.

Just now we are passing through a penitential phase. The price of codfish is low; the quality of much that is brought to the merchants' stores is inferior, owing to injury in the cure caused by a hot summer. Prospects are gloomy. Fishermen have but small balances to spend in the stores; many of them are in debt and unable to procure the necessaries of life to sustain them during the long winter. Merchants and planters look apprehensively at their lengthening lists of bad debts; and Government becomes nervous at the prospect of heavy demands on the public funds to keep many hundreds from starvation during the dreary winter. […]

There can be no doubt that the "credit system" lies at the root of the evil; but its ramifications are deep; it has continued for generations; it pervades our whole system of conducting business, and it will not be uprooted in a day. Those who carry it on now are not accountable for it, as it is an inheritance from their ancestors; and it has gone on so long that we have grown insensible to its evils. […]

As it operates here, "the credit system" is a modification of the old "truck system" which was abolished by law in England many years ago. The merchant

[55] From GENERAL SUMMARY. (1879, July 26). *The Burlington Free Press*, p. 2.
[56] From OUR NEWFOUNDLAND LETTER. (1880, November 13). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 2.

makes advances in the necessaries of life, and gear at the fisheries, to the fisherman, at the commencement of each season, and at the close receives the fish in payment. Or, in some cases, the merchant makes advances to the "planter" or middleman, who deals directly with the fisherman, gives him his supplies on credit, partially superintends his operations, and receives the produce of his labors.

It is easy to see the unsound principles which underlie such a system, and the evils it must inevitably work among all concerned with it. First of all it establishes a false and vicious relation between capital and labor, between employer and employed; it makes the one, to a certain extent, the serf of the other. Its tendency is to create abjectness and servility on the part of those who mortgage their future industry for advances in the necessaries of life, and a proneness to tyranny and hardness on the part of those who thus acquire undue power over their humbler fellow-creatures. Further, as a matter of course, the borrower has to pay a very heavy interest on his loan, so as to cover the risks which the lender has to run. When payment turns on the uncertain return of the season's labors, high charges must protect the supplier.

Subject to the laws of competition, which among a small body of capitalists do not act very stringently, the supplier fixes the price for his goods and also the price at which he will receive fish in payment. Of course, in practice, this result is modified by the demand for fish in foreign markets, and by the number of suppliers who may be competing with one another; but it still gives the capitalist an undue power over the working fisherman. The latter has to pay often an exorbitant price for his goods, while the capitalist is compelled to make such charges as his conscience cannot approve of, otherwise he would speedily be a ruined man. Ignorant and thoughtless men, having obtained supplies in advance, payment of which depends on the success of their labours, are strongly tempted to indolence, extravagance and dishonesty.

The direct tendency of the system is to undermine and destroy manly independence, forethought, industrious habits, and even common honesty. With a debt hanging on his neck, and perhaps increasing year after year, till he becomes utterly hopeless and without spirit or energy to better himself, how can the poor fisherman thrive? If, through all, he becomes honest and industrious, he finds himself taxed to make up for the defalcations of the indolent and dishonest. A premium is thus held out for roguery; activity and thrift are punished.

Whether the fish are carefully cured or otherwise, the merchant is compelled to take them, as he has no other way of getting payment for his advances. He can only pay less for the badly handled article; but the character of the fish suffers, all the same, in the foreign market, and a vast injury by the production of an inferior article, is inflicted upon the whole business of the country.

Reckless, ignorant borrowers cannot be expected to make good payments, and so the capitalist finds himself often without returns. Those whom he has supplied have not put forth anything like the industrious efforts they would have discovered if they had been working untrammeled by debt, and with the hope of improving. Thus the system works evil to all concerned – to him that gives and to him that takes.

Of course, these remarks apply to the system as a whole. I am happy to say there are many noble exceptions in its working – many instances in which right and

justice rule in the transactions between man and man. But the native tendency and the general results of the system are, as I have described, calculated to undermine industry and demoralize to a greater or lesser extent.

A Visit to St. John's[57] (1887)

The oldest British colony is so difficult to get at that after trying in vain to reach it from half a dozen points in succession, the traveller may be excused if he jumps to the conclusion that it moves up and down the coast of the North American continent. […] At Montreal, Boston and New York, I tried in vain to catch steamers, until at last, a lucky thirty-six hours in, the cars brought me on board of the *Caspian*[58] at Halifax. St. John's is two days' steaming from there, but at the expiration of forty-eight hours, a thick white fog hid the bowsprit form the sight of the officer on the bridge, and as the coast is very dangerous, and the captain reckoned that he had run about the proper distance, we lay to and waited for half a day. The fog lifted at last suddenly, and sure enough, there, half a mile straight ahead of us was the entrance to the harbor. The contrast between the forbidding cliffs of the coast line and the cosy shelter of boats and town within, makes one's first glimpse of Newfoundland curiously striking and pleasant.

The town itself must be one of the oddest places on the face of the earth. Half the streets run up and down at an angle of forty-five degrees, more or less, - at any rate, they are so steep that I have known a young lady stop to rest three times on her way up to mass; there is not an inch of paving in the whole town, and consequently after a shower or snowfall, the electric lights with which the town is lighted, almost ironically, reveal depths of mud appalling to anybody but a Newfoundlander, and puddles, each one of which the unwary stranger learns too late is a veritable pitfall. Water-street, the Broadway of St. John's, is several miles long, and the houses on it vary from a few shanties in one place to a double row of substantial stone buildings and shops in another. For a good part of its length, it runs parallel with a series of wharves, bustling with boats of all kinds; and one end loses itself among the "fish flakes," as the flimsy scaffoldings are called upon which acres of salt cod-fish are spread out every day to dry.

The Governor's house is an uncomfortable-looking flat building of white stone, inadequate and ill-drained; the Parliament building is also of white stone, but newer

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[57] From Norman, H. (1887, December 9). IMPERIAL INTERVIEWS. – IV. *The Pall Mall Gazette*, p. 1. Written by Sir Henry Norman, 1st Baronet (1858 - 1939).

[58] This steamer continued to operate into the early 1900s, despite traveling in dangerous waters. "HALIFAX, N.S., June 6. – The steamer Caspian, at this port from Liverpool, via St. John's, N. F., had splendid weather and made a fine trip. On Monday afternoon […] she passed a small iceberg, but the next day from 4 o'clock in the morning until the same hour in the afternoon, she passed hundreds of icebergs. They were on both sides of the ship and of all shapes and sizes, forming a regular forest of ice. The largest 'berg was about half a mile long, but was flat, being only about 60 feet in height. Some of the others were much taller, but the vessel steamed down the centre of the line and only twice was obliged to change her course to escape them." FOREST OF ICE. (1890, January 7). *The Boston Daily Globe*, p. 1.

and much more substantial, while perhaps the most satisfactory building in the town, except the places of worship, is the Atlantic Hotel[59], the size and character of which are a surprise to every stranger. It is so large that it was evidently built with a view to the Newfoundland that is to be, and I have seldom stayed at a more comfortable hostelry. Its proprietor, Mr. Foran, receives the compliments of his guests with the deprecating remark that he "fears it will be some time before Newfoundland grows up to this hotel." […]

There is probably no part of the British Empire about which such erroneous impressions prevail as about this, its oldest colonial portion. In England all that most people know about it may be summed up in three words, - fogs, fishes and French. The former, because they constitute at once the familiar landmark and the alarm of ocean travelers; the second because Newfoundland has for nearly four hundred years been the most famous fishing ground of the world; and the third because along with the New Hebrides, Newfoundland has constituted for some time past one of the standing menaces to European peace. Of these three prejudices, the second one alone is now accurate. The fogs do exists off the Banks, where the Gulf Stream and the Arctic current meet, but they reach only the south-eastern corner of the island, and even from that westerly breezes blow them over the Atlantic during three-fourths of the year; while the French make no claims, or if they make them, do not insist upon them, which point even remotely to possible hostilities. […]

Unfortunately for Newfoundland, however, […] the general belief that it is a howling and almost uninhabitable Arctic wilderness is a mere fly-speck besides the centuries of ill-treatment through which it has passed. […] As long ago as 1583, the leaden arms of England were nailed to a post at its water's edge. Yet for nearly a century it was a penal offence to build a house upon its soil, and the series of edicts issued by ignorant monarchs to protect the monopolies of unscrupulous merchants, forbidding any one to go to Newfoundland as a settler, putting masters of vessels under heavy bonds to bring back every year as many persons as they took out, at last dispatching a naval officer with orders to drive out the fishermen and burn their dwellings, and even going so far as to recommend that no women should be allowed to land in the island, and that those who are there should be removed, are a disgrace to the age which produced them.

All this, of course, has long since passed away, but Newfoundland is to-day practically as much under the rule of merchant monopolists as ever it was. To this fact its backwardness and the poverty of most of its population are due; and so long as this *régime* lasts, there is no hope for the development of its resources or the happiness and progress of its people. The truth is that the whole community is an embodiment of the truck system: a score or so of merchants – the lineal descendants of the "merchant adventurers" who persuaded Charles I that "Newfoundland should always be considered as a great English ship, moored near the Banks during the fishing season, for the convenience of English fishermen" – control the island, socially, commercially, and politically, and the fishermen belong to them – themselves, their boats, their nets, their houses, their families and all. A mediaeval serf or a Southern

[59] This Hotel was destroyed in the Great Fire of 1892.

[slave] in 1860 was about as much master of his own destinies as the average Newfoundland fisherman of to-day. Socially, their wealth, and in several cases titles ill-bestowed by British Ministers, give these merchants pre-eminence; their political influence may be judged form the fact that out of twenty members of the Government side of the House, as returned in 1886, no fewer than sixteen are merchants; and when they meet in their upper room and decide among themselves what price they will pay to the fishermen for fish on the one hand, and at what price, on the other, they will sell to them common necessaries for themselves and their families, they are simply controlling the issues of life and death for a majority of the community. For these merchants have two kinds of commercial establishments: first, the wharf and warehouse to which the vessels return with their catches of fish, and where the split cod is sorted out according to its value, spread out day by day on the "flakes" till its cure is completed, then packed away in huge square stacks until its time comes to be shipped to the West Indies or the Mediterranean or (the best qualities) to other markets; and second, the stores at which they supply the fishermen (on credit) with every single thing they, their wives and their children may need.

One of these stores is an extraordinary sight – an *omnium gatherum* of the most comprehensive kind. Wall-paper and oil-skins, rainbow-tinted bonnets and the thickest of brogues; crinolines and crockery; furniture, groceries, chimney-piece ornaments, carpets, clothing – every possible want for the individual or the household, from a lead-pencil to a chest of drawers, from a pin to a petticoat is supplied there to the fisherman at the beginning of the fishing-season, both for his own needs and the clothing and feeding of his family during his absence.

The nets and lines he uses, and the boat which carries him safe or goes with him to the bottom – it is about an equal chance in those dangerous seas – belong equally to his merchant-employer, and when he returns and hands over his catch, the appraised value of it is placed to his credit against the debit of his purchases months before, and the difference is his earnings or his debt, as the case may be.

Needless to add that under such a system, especially when the waters have been grudging their harvest for a season or two, debt is as natural to most of the Newfoundland fishermen as the air they breathe. The visitor is told how many thousand dollars stand to the credit of fishermen in the Savings Bank, but however true that may be, poverty is the normal condition of the great majority of them, and regular winter starvation is familiar enough to a good many.

Exactly as in the old iniquitous days, the merchants discourage immigration, discourage agricultural and mineral development, discourage the opening up of the island by roads and railways, and discourage everything else that would tend to raise the price of labour on their wharves and in their warehouses, and by raising up an independent and non-fishing class put an end to their control of the community and their profitable ownership of "lives o' men."

An unusual Currency reform[60] (1888)

Newfoundland had its own currency, but the coins of many nations were in common use. This was a problem because some of these denominations worked on a decimal system, such as the U.S. dollar, and others worked on the basis of pounds, shillings and pence of Britain. Imperfect rates of exchange between the two systems created possibilities for arbitrage and led to some coins leaving the colony, to the detriment of commerce. In 1888, the Newfoundland Legislature passed an act lowering the value of foreign coins to discourage their use and encourage the standardization of Newfoundland's own currency.

An act was passed last session of the Legislature, making it imperative that all accounts should be kept in dollars and cents. This act came into operation on the 1st January of this year, and once the transition is made will be attended with beneficial results.

Hitherto our currency was of the most confused and miscellaneous description – the despair of foreign visitors, who found it impossible to master it. American, Canadian, Mexican and British silver were in circulation, and also a local silver and copper coinage. Accounts were kept in colonial pounds, shillings and pence. The British sovereign passed for 24 of our shillings.

The copper currency, however, was the most amusing anomaly. Our silver shilling was marked 20 cents, and we had ten and five-cent silver pieces. But in copper they were valued at 24, 12 and 6 cents. The consequence was that cents were collected and exported largely to Canada, a profit of four cents per "shilling" being realized. The scarcity of coppers was a great inconvenience.

All these absurdities are being swept away by the new act. The silver 20-cent piece now passes for its true value – 20 cents in copper, and so with its fractions. In order to get rid of the foreign silver coins and to secure uniformity in our circulation, the banks have issued the following notice of the rates at which foreign silver coins will be received by them:-

On and after January 3, foreign silver coins will be taken at the banks as follows: Mexican and Spanish dollars, five franc pieces, etc. – 50 cents. Mexican and Spanish half dollars – 30 cents. American and Canadian notes, 3 per cent. discount.

English Silver	Canadian	American
2s 6d – 60 cts.	50 cts. – 45 cts.	$1.00 – 80 cts.
2s – 48 "	25 " – 23 "	50 – 40 "
1s – 24 "	20 " – 18 "	25 – 20 "
6d – 12 "	10 " – 8 "	20 – 16 "
		Dime – 40 "
3d – 6 "	5 " – 4 "	½ " – 40 "

[60] From BURYING THE WREN. (1888, January 19). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 7.

The effect will be that these foreign coins, being receivable only at these heavy discounts, will disappear and find their way back to their own homes; and we shall have a uniform coinage of our own, which will be a great convenience to the trade.

Improvements come slowly, but they do come at last. Once our people acquire the method of reckoning in dollars and cents they will realize the benefits, but time will be required to effect the transition from the old to the new.

Cod and Lobster Hatcheries[61] (1891)

By the late 1880s, over-fishing had led to a decline in the cod populations around Newfoundland. Norway had responded to a similar situation by creating fish hatcheries, and in 1887 the Newfoundland government established a commission to investigate the possibility of adopting Norwegian techniques. In 1888 Adolph Nielsen, a Norwegian, was offered the position of superintendent of Newfoundland's fisheries, with a mandate to establish a cod hatchery. He quickly got to work, and would continue at his task until his death at St. John's in 1903.

The annual report of the Fisheries Commission for 1890 was recently presented in the Legislature. It shews that the commission are making good progress in the work of placing the various fisheries under judicious regulations, so as to secure their preservation and protection, and also in adopting measures to restored depleted waters. The report is a record of very valuable work accomplished by Mr. Nielsen[62], the superintendent of fisheries, during the year, which if maintained and extended will be of incalculable benefit to the colony. As his work progresses, we discover how much our fisheries have suffered from having been left to take care of themselves in the past, and also how much may be done to remedy errors, and restore what has been injured, by the application of practical and scientific methods. […]

The commission aim at ascertaining the causes which have brought about such an alarming decline in our shore cod fishery, and also in our salmon and other fisheries, with a view to their removal. Destructive methods of fishing, the result of ignorance and recklessness, causing an enormous destruction of immature fish, have been the main cause of the decline in the fisheries. The commission aim at the application of judicious enactments regarding the various gear employed in the fisheries, and the regulation of close seasons so as to protect young fish life. Then for the restoration of depleted waters, artificial propagation is resorted to as the most effectual remedy.

So far, artificial propagation has been confined to codfish and lobsters; and in these a remarkable success has been achieved during the year, especially in the propagation of lobsters.

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[61] From PROPAGATION OF SEA FISH. (1891, April 21). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 7.

[62] Adolph Nielsen (1852 – 1903)

At Dildo island, Placentia bay, the commission have erected the largest and finest hatchery for marine fishes in the world. For the hatching of cod, last year was peculiarly unfavorable owing mainly to the presence of large bodies of ice around the shore to a late period of the season, and the consequent difficulty of obtaining spawning fish. Notwithstanding these difficulties, Mr. Nielsen succeeded in collecting 33,820,000 of fertilized cod ova. Of these, 17,000,000 were hatched and planted in the waters of the bay in a good, healthy condition. Thus, of the whole collection of ova, 50½ per cent. were successfully hatched, which is reckoned a satisfactory average.

The total number of spawning codfish collected was 700. Of these 28 per cent. died from various causes, such as the effect of injuries from the hooks when they were taken, and diseases of various kinds. Thirty-five per cent. yielded when "stripped" the number of ova referred to. Mr. Nielsen has found, in his experience, that all female spawning codfish contain a large quantity of dead ova, and that this affects the fishery unfavorably year after year, and greatly reduces the actual fecundity of the codfish.

"This fact," says the report, "shows the necessity of husbanding carefully the bounties of the sea, and of assisting nature, by artificial propagation, when the balance is destroyed. The margin on which human operations can be exercised without injury to the fisheries is not so great as is generally supposed. The same reason suggests how necessary is the protection of immature fish, on which the continuation of the species depends. However prolific cod and other fish may be, the natural destructive agencies at work continually are proportionately great, and when man's destructive activities are added to these fisheries, may be readily exhausted."

It is satisfactory to find that these seventeen millions of young codfish, planted in the waters of Trinity bay, even in the first season, showed their presence and growth. "The fishermen around Dildo reported that during the month of September they repeatedly saw large shoals of very small codfish, such as they had never seen before, from one to two inches in length." Mr. Nielsen has no doubt that these are the growth from the fry he planted in June and July, and which in September, would be grown from the length of one to two inches. Many of the fishermen are of the same opinion, as they say these shoals are totally unlike in size to any small cod they had seen previously. Their prejudices against cod hatching are now giving way, and many of them are warm supporters of the enterprise, and believe that it will have a most beneficial effect on the cod fishery.

When it is remembered that this is the first year in which cod ova could be obtained, and that the work commenced under many difficulties, such a degree of success must be regarded as highly satisfactory, and as affording abundant warrant for perseverance in an enterprise which, if ultimately successful, will secure great and lasting benefits to the colony. […]

The report contains an account of a brilliant success in lobster hatching. At the Dildo hatchery, Mr. Nielsen carried on the hatching of lobster ova simultaneously with that of codfish. He collected during the season, at various lobster factories, 20,927,200 lobster ova, of which 15,070,800 were hatched and planted, against 7,995,400 ova collected and 4,039,000 planted in 1889. The percentage of loss in the apparatus last year was 28, against 49½ the previous year.

Mr. Nielsen's success, however, has been most marked in connection with the floating incubators which he invented, and on which he bestowed much thought and labor. Four hundred and thirty two of these incubators were distributed at fourteen different stations, from Fortune Bay in the south to Green Bay in the north. Twenty-four men, instructed by Mr. Nielsen, were placed in the neighborhood of lobster factories, and the men regularly visited these lobster factories, stripped the ova from the lobsters and conveyed them to the incubators. The returns when summed up at the end of the fishing season showed that at the fourteen stations 390,934,500 lobsters were hatched and planted in the waters. Adding to these the number hatched at Dildo, the result of the season's operations was 406,005,300 young lobsters planted in good condition.

The report contains the following comment on these operations:- "It must be noticed that the ova obtained at the factories would all have been destroyed had they not been thus brought to life. The result, therefore, exhibits a clear gain to the extent named, in hatching the germs of lobster life which otherwise would have perished. There can be no doubt that the destruction of such great quantities of ova at factories has been the great cause of the decline of the lobster fishery everywhere. In the method now employed, it seems to the commission we have obtained an invaluable means of arresting the decline in our lobster fisheries which, in many places, threatens entire extinction, and of sustaining the stock of this valuable crustacean."

An Epidemic of Diphtheria[63] (1889)

St. John's suffered from recurring epidemics of diphtheria. Authorities typically responded by isolating sufferers and limiting public gatherings.

It is now over twelve months since the first cases of diphtheria[64] occurred in St. John's. At first the cases were sporadic, and occurred only at intervals. During the fall the increased, and before Christmas the disease took the epidemic form and spread over the whole city. Many of the poorer classes were so unwise as to conceal the fact that there were cases in their houses, and in this way the infection was spread.

The Board of Health spared no efforts to check and remove the disease. They were clothed with full powers, and the Government placed sufficient funds at their disposal. The sanitary department of the city were also active. All day schools and Sunday schools were closed, and children under 14 were forbidden to attend church or other meetings. These efforts have been at length successful, and the epidemic is abating rapidly. Last week there were only 23 cases under treatment and 4 deaths.

The Health Inspector reports that up to this date there have been in St. John's and the vicinity two thousand cases of diphtheria, and three hundred and sixty

[63] From SIR WILLIAM WHITEWAY. (1889, July 11). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 2.

[64] A contagious respiratory illness caused by a club-shaped bacterium. Its name comes from the Greek word for 'leather', because of the leathery covering the bacteria form at the back of the victim's throat. In addition to breathing difficulties, diphtheria can lead to fatal heart failure.

deaths, or an average of 18 per cent of the cases. […] We have got a terrible lesson which will not be soon forgotten. The most stringent measures must be taken to improve the sanitary condition of the city, and to stamp out other contagious diseases when they appear. A thorough system of drainage is now in progress.

The Ravages of Diptheria, 1888-1891[65] (1892)

St. John's, Nfld., April 22, 1892. – We are now almost entirely free from diphtheria, only a few sporadic cases having occurred during the last six months. Few places, in proportion to population, have suffered more severely from this terrible scourge than this city. Its virulence cannot be accounted for by bad sewerage. St. John's is built on the slope of a hill; the soil is dry and porous; the drainage is into the harbor, and, though far from being perfect yet, has been greatly improved during the last few years and is fairly good. A new system of sewerage is being carried out which when completed will render it one of the best sewered cities on this side of the Atlantic. There is nothing here to show that dirt or foul sewers had anything to do with producing or inveterating this fell disease. It was noted all through, though, that the dirtiest and closest parts of the city, as a rule, suffered least. Diphtheria often found its victims in the best houses where cleanliness and comfort reigned supreme; and families living in the country around, in open and dry situations, were often attacked. […]

Our experience here seems to suggest that the efforts of boards of health have but slight controlling power, once the disease has become epidemic. […] The grand aim should be to isolate quickly individual cases, at first appearance of the disease, and so stamp out the destroyer at the first.

The visitation of this terrible disease in St. John's has been of the most serious character. To say nothing of the pecuniary loss, the expenses incurred by the operations of the Board of Health, which were enormous, but unavoidable; the cost of medical attendance etc; the loss of employment in the case of working people; the injury to trade; what can be said of the sad bereavements in families; the misery and anxiety; the tortures of the sufferers; the bitter tears and broken hearts; the whole sad aggregate of suffering caused by this modern pestilence.

The disease first showed itself in epidemic form about May, 1888, it culminated in the following year, and declined slowly in 1890 and 1891 – in all continuing its ravages for three and a half years. The following returns which I obtained from the records of the Board of Health will show the extent of its ravages:

[65] From NEWS OF NEWFOUNDLAND. (1892, May 7). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 11.

City of St. John's	Families	Cases	Deaths
1888	99	273	67
1889	878	1,881	350
1890	329	803	157
1891	217	511	132
	1,523	3,468	706
Orphanages		99	8
		3,567	714
Outports[66]	126	403	95
Total	1,649	3,970	809

The proportion of deaths was almost exactly one in five of all who were attacked by the disease. […] The foregoing returns do not represent the ravages of the disease throughout the island. In a large number of fishing villages it has made its appearance and carried off numerous victims; but no reliable returns from these are available. In a majority of instances these cases in the outposts were sporadic and the disease was speedily brought under control, but the aggregate of deaths has been considerable.

The Great Fire of 1892[67] (1892)

Yesterday afternoon a fire broke out in St. John's that threatened to far exceed in extent of money damage and loss of life that of the disastrous conflagration of 1846. About 4 o'clock a house on Long's Hill was discovered to be on fire. The firemen responded promptly to the alarm, but when they arrived the southwest wind that was prevailing had caused the fire to spread to an adjoining building, which was then burning furiously. Desperate efforts were made to stay the progress of the fire, but it was soon seen that these would prove fruitless. Most of the houses on Long's Hill were very old wooden ones, and they caught fire and burned with great rapidity. The large burning brands were caught up by the wind and carried to the roofs of other structures, which were soon burning furiously. It was seen that the Fire Department was helpless, and people living in the path that the fire was destined to take began to remove their portable household effects. It is feared that some people lost their lives by their foolhardiness in returning to their homes when the flames were close upon them. While these dwellings were burning it was found that the new Methodist college was on fire. Efforts were made to save this building, but they were fruitless. The college was the education headquarters of the Methodists in Newfoundland, and its loss will be severely felt by the denomination.

[66] In electoral districts of St. John's East and St. John's West
[67] From DEVASTATED BY FIRE. (1892, July 10). *The St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, p. 5.

By this time the wind was blowing a gale, and the fire spreading with terrible rapidity. Buildings situated some distance from the burning structures caught fire from the burning embers and were destroyed without a hand being raised to save them. The firemen and the people were completely paralyzed, and the fire did its work of destruction without stay. It was now growing dark and the scene was a magnificently beautiful, though appalling, one. Building after building caught fire and the whole city was as light as day. The roar of the flames was terrible, and the heat was so intense that it was impossible to get anywhere near the burning buildings. Now and then high and heavy walls would fall and then immense masses of burning embers would soar upwards to be caught by the gale and carried elsewhere to add other buildings to the conflagration. Men, women and children ran about in terror, and thieves, taking advantage of the confusion, entered houses that had been deserted by their occupants and stole whatever they could lay their hands on and carry off.

The Masonic Temple, Orange Hall, the Roman Catholic cathedral and Bishop's palace, St. Patrick's Hall, the English cathedral, the Athenaeum, the Kirk, the Commercial Bank, the Union Bank, the Atlantic Brewery, the Atlantic Hotel, and Limberg's Brewery, all fell prey to the devouring fire[68].

The English cathedral was a magnificent structure, and was considered to be the finest piece of Gothic architecture on this continent. It was yet incomplete, though it had been fifty years in building. Nearly all these buildings were in the center of the city, and before long they were nothing but masses of smoking ruins. In addition to these the Court House, police headquarters and the Government Savings Bank were destroyed, as were also the Presbyterian Church and the office of the *Telegram*[69].

The flames were now raging with increasing vigor in the direction of the water front, and in a very short time were eating every house along the wharves. The shipping lying at the wharves had been warned of its danger, and the crews of the various vessels hastily cast off their lines and took their craft outside the harbor. On one side of the bay are the steam seal-oil factories and the warehouses in which their product is stored. It was thought that these buildings would catch fire. It was also feared that the Dry Dock and Marine Railway would be destroyed. The fire burned out the telegraph office and for a time all communication with St. John's was cut off.

This morning, however, the telegraph officials established temporary offices in what they considered a safe part of the city and further details were received. These

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[68] "The principal buildings, houses and hotels burned are as follows: Brydens, Bowering Bros., J & W. Pitts, Goodfellow & Co., Ayre & Sons, G. K. Nowling, Baine, Johnsons & Co., Bairds, Thornburnet, Terrier, Cliftwood & Co., Hearns & Co., the City Club, Harvey & Co., Stotts grocery, McMurdo & Co., Atlantic Hotel, the American Consulate, the Gordon House, H. P. Walsh, Ryan & Co., the Bearnes & Co., the Market House, Aldridge Hotel, the Royal Hotel, the Court House, Customs, March & Sons, Shea & Co., Booking premises, Pitts steamer wharf, soap and tobacco factory, St. John's Tannery, Coastal steam wharf, Lindberg's brewery, Union and Commercial Banks, Commercial Exchange, all the law offices and doctors' residences, the School of Art, the principal home mission and merhcnats' offices and insurance agents' offices." A Ruined City. (1892, July 10). *The St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, p. 5.

[69] A newspaper.

later dispatches stated that the fire had raged all night and threatened to destroy the whole city. It is known positively that one man and six children have perished, but it is thought that when the terrible excitement that now prevails subsides it will be found that the loss of life will be much greater.

Later dispatches state that the parliamentary buildings have been destroyed, and that at the time the dispatch was sent fully 600 buildings had been burned up. Many of these were dwelling houses, and their occupants have been compelled to seek refuge in the fields. The military authorities have furnished them with as many tents as possible, and the authorities are doing everything in their power to alleviate the distress[70]. Many of these unfortunate people have lost everything they had in the world, and imperative calls will be made upon charity in behalf of them.

This morning the fire communicated to the seal oil factory and stores, and the whole south side of the city was burning. A large fire was coming down the fresh water valley, and the whole population of St. John's was in an agony of despair, seeing before them the complete extinction of the city.

A private dispatch received here states that the fire has swept Water, Gower and Duckworth streets, and from Bandy Rankin's to Signal Hill the only buildings standing are the Union Bank, the Roman Catholic Cathedral and College and the Devon Row Railway depot. About 600 houses are burned.

Another dispatch says that fire has broken out in Monktown, in which are situated the residences of the most wealthy inhabitants of the town.

The principal street of St. John's is more than a mile in length, and every building was of stone or brick. After the fire in 1846 the authorities refused to permit wooden buildings to be erected on the street. This street has been practically destroyed.

It is known that everything has been destroyed from Birch Cove east of the wharves of the Alliance Steamship Company. Over this distance the flames made a clean sweep. From what can be judged from the reports received here, it is estimated that at least 15,000 persons are homeless. Upon learning of the terrible conflagration the Mayor called a meeting of citizens for the purpose of taking steps to provide relief. In consequence of his call a large number of citizens assembled at the Mayor's office to-day. A committee was appointed and its members immediately purchased $4000 worth of provisions and lumber. The steamer Ulunda has sailed for St. John's with the committee's purchases on board. Her cargo consists of 20 chests of tea, 250 barrels of flour, 100 pounds of cornmeal, 150 pounds of biscuits, 50 barrels of pork, 5 puncheons of molasses, 35,000 spruce boards, 150 tents and 4 marquees to be used to shelter the people homeless. The military and naval authorities have also sent a lot

[70] "The drill shed parade rink, Browning bakery and Clouston's factory are being made ready to accommodate the homeless as rapidly as the work can be carried on. Sheds are being erected in Bannerman Park to shelter the burned out." A Ruined City. (1892, July 10). *The St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, p. 5.

of tents and canvas. A public meeting will be held on Monday next to establish more general relief. […] The loss by fire […] is said to be $20,000,000[71].

Hungry and Dying[72] (1893)

There is great suffering in Newfoundland among the poor people, and this includes the majority of the population. They would get away from the scenes of poverty if they could and come to the States, but they are too poor to do even that.

The people who live in crowded tenements are not as pitiable as those who dwell in the miserable little "tilts" which are the homes of the Newfoundland miners and fishermen. In squalor they are about equal; but the poor of the great cities need never be without food – there are charitable societies ready to step in between them and starvation – nor need they waste away under disease for sheer lack of medical aid.

But the toilers of the sea and the toilers underground on these rugged northern shores are in winter completely isolated from the centres of supply, and the little they can lay by in the fall must last them during the winter, while on the diphtheria-scourged eastern and northern shores of Newfoundland – some two hundred and fifty miles in length, and over a thousand miles, if the indentations of the coast are followed – there are only four physicians, while in the whole of Labrador there is none at all.

The standard of living among these people is very low. "To live" means with them little more than to be able to clothe themselves and obtain food enough to keep from starving. Of the luxuries of life they are absolutely ignorant. Their "tilts" are mere shelters. The sides are of logs stuck upright into the ground, the chinks filled in with moss; the roof of branches covered with birch rind, and in Labrador with sod. What little earth there is "down on the Labrador" seems to be on top of the "tilts."

SUBSTITUTES FOR DWELLINGS

Many of these shelters have nothing but the bare ground for a floor. They usually consist of one room, about 10x14, which is kitchen, bedroom and living room all in one for a large family. In the corner of this wretched substitute for a dwelling is a rough deal bed for the parents. The children will perhaps sleep under the bed. The older members of the family, and not infrequently strangers, sleep promiscuously on the floor. Such a condition of affairs is evidently equally at variance with the laws of sanitation and morality.

In the middle of the "tilt" there is usually a large cooking stove, in which a fierce fire is maintained all winter. This produces in the crowded room a hot, fetid, disease-breeding atmosphere. Consumption[73] almost vies with diphtheria in its ravages along this coast.

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[71] "It is estimated that the insurance on the buildings destroyed and on stock will amount to $4,000,000, which sum will cover about half the loss." A Ruined City. (1892, July 10). *The St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, p. 5.

[72] From HUNGRY AND DYING. (1893, November 27). *The Boston Post*, p. 2.

[73] Tuberculosis.

A spoon, a broken cup and a tin plate constitute all the utensils in many tilts. A few herring, a little molasses and the hard biscuit they call bread are the only provisions. These, with tea, are the staple articles of food of the Newfoundland fishermen. Anything beyond these is a luxury which he rarely enjoys. If he can in the fall lay in enough "long sweetin'" (this Southern term for molasses has travelled to these northern regions), herring, bread and tea to last him for the winter, with rigid economy, he is better off than most of his neighbors.

CAN'T AFFORD CODFISH

It might be supposed that, as the Newfoundland and Labrador waters are a veritable codfish "garden," the fishermen could obtain plenty of fresh fish in the summer and salt enough of them to last the winter.

They can no more afford to eat codfish than we can afford to eat greenbacks. Codfish in Newfoundland is money. Of real money the Newfoundland fisherman sees little or nothing. Persons of unquestioned authority say that in some of the outports one can find people who would know what a coin or bill was if you put it in their hands.

The "truck" system results in the virtual enslavement of the fishermen, yet it seems quite impossible to abolish it. The fishermen in the spring draw their supplies from the merchants on the credit of their catch for the coming season. These supplies are furnished at the merchant's figures, and if the voyage is a good one, the rate per quintal is unusually low, or the price of winter supplies unusually high. At all events, things seem to work so that the fisherman is eternally in debt to the merchant.

There is, however, something to be said on the merchant's side. Fishermen will, if the voyage be poor and insufficient to cover their debt for supplies, take their fish to another merchant and exchange them for their winter's supplies, so that the merchant who fitted them out receives nothing in return for his goods.

Three kinds of fishery engage the attention of the Newfoundlanders – the shore fishery, the floating fishery on the banks or far northward, and the fishery "down on the Labrador." Each has characteristic features, but all aim at the same prey – codfish. All other fish, except it be salmon, the Newfoundland fisherman despises. Cod is money! All other fish are simply fish.

An Abandoned Newfoundland Whaler[74] (1893)

Newfoundland whaling ships regularly ventured into dangerous Arctic waters. Some never came back. One such abandoned whaler was discovered years after its final voyage, as chronicled here by Charles Bertrand Lewis.

In the spring of 1850 a whaler named the Emily Benson left St. John's, N. F., for a trip to the polar sea. She was a new craft and carried a crew numbering fifty-two men. She was spoken and reported a month after sailing, but from that time on,

[74] From Lewis, C. B. (1893, October 10). ABANDONED. *The Akron Daily Democrat*, p. 3. Written by Charles "M. Quad" Bertrand Lewis (1842 – 1924).

no news of her reached the public. After three years had gone by she was posted as lost and the insurance paid over, and no one took any further interest in her fate. It was believed that she had been nipped in the ice and had gone down with all hands.[75]

The last trace ever had of the Scotch whaler Jean McLaren, which was cruising in Baffin's bay in the year 1869, came from an American whaler which encountered her off Cobourg island, at the entrance of Jones' sound, just as the first ice was beginning to make. The American was on her way out of polar waters, knowing that winter was close at hand, while the Scotchman, having been told by natives that there was every sign of an open season, was hanging on to fill her casks.

Two days after the American spoke [to] her there was a heavy gale, accompanied by snow and followed by cold weather, and it has always been believed that the McLaren went down with all hands. She was a large, new ship, and on her first cruise and among her crew were two sons of the owner. At the end of two years, when it could no longer be doubted that the ship was lost and that if any of her crew were still living they were cast away on some of the bleak shores of the north, the bark Relief was fitted out to make a search. She did not carry a full crew as a whaler, but was to hunt for whales and seals while she prosecuted her search.

Our starting point was Cobourg island, and we arrived there with the opening of the season. From some fishermen we learned that a ship supposed to be the McLaren had been driven off to the north by the gale spoken of, and they had heard that she had been lost, but we could get no reliable news. We worked to the north, however, instead of going through Jones' sound, and did not give up the quest until we anchored off John Ross mountain. We intercepted dozens of kayaks and landed at least 20 times on capes and islands, but we found no relics and got no information from the natives.

During the summer the McLaren was in the bay there were half a dozen other craft of her rig there as well, and the natives did not know one from the other. Before we started on our return to the south we had made a fair catch, and though the summer was waning, the captain determined to run through Jones' sound and beat up the island off the east coast of Grinnell Land. While we were provisioned and equipped for a winter in the polar regions, he had no intention of being caught. We had squally weather and flurries of snow before we got back to Cobourg island, and by the time we reached New Kent island the cold nights were making ice. At New Kent we got our first reliable information of the missing ship. She had not put in there, but a vessel answering her description, which had been considerably damaged aloft, had been sighted at sea, driving to the north under pressure of a gale which lasted several days. […]

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[75] This paragraph is taken from a later version of the article, in which the author replaces the Jean McLaren with the more famous arctic exploration ship, the *Discovery*. It continues, "Seventeen years after the sailing of the Benson the Discovery set out from the port of London for a polar cruise. She was sent out under the auspices of the Royal Geographical Society, and when not heard from for almost two years a vessel called the Rescue was dispatched to look for her, and I was one of the crew of the latter." Benson, C. B. (1902. August 24). Twenty Years After. *The Democrat and Chronicle*, p. 14.

At Graham's island we learned from the natives that a ship had been cast ashore on North Lincoln island, across the great bay to the east. The trouble in securing anything like accurate information arose from our want of an interpreter. Conversation had to be carried on by signs entirely, and no doubt we misunderstood the people in many instances.

We crossed the bay in a gale which brought winter down upon us, and on reaching Lincoln island we worked the bark into a little bay and found her frozen fast within 10 hours. […] In three days the ice was 15 inches thick around the ship, and the weather grew so cold that the decks were roofed over, stoves set up and everything made tight and snug.

We had been in our berth three weeks before the weather settled down so that it was deemed to send out exploring parties. […] The captain's idea was to search the coast north and south of our harbor as far and as thoroughly as possible, and I happened to be one of the party of seven men headed by Mr. Williams, the first mate. […] The mate was determined to push ahead for five days as determined by the captain, but toward the close of the fourth day, […] three or four men simultaneously caught sight of a ship in a bay a mile away, but which seemed at our feet. […] This craft was a full rigged brig, and the bay was a strange one to us. We cheered and waved our caps, and every man of us was highly elated as we hurried along down the slope to board the stranger.

The thought that she might be a derelict did not occur to any one until we were close upon her. The bay was but a cove, not more than an acre in extent. The brig was not lying in the waters of the cove at all, but among the rocks on the shore 50 feet from water. She lay with her head to the north and had only a slight list to port. Her looks aloft told us the story as we came to a halt. Her sails had been furled and stowed as if the work had been done in a gale. None had blown away, but all were rotting on the yards.

As we stood looking up a gust of wind brought a cloud of black dust down in our faces. Here and there a loose rope was swinging about like a serpent suspended by the tail to a limb, but the rigging as a whole was in fair shape – that is, it seemed to be. But later on we found every rope ready to part at the lightest pull. Masts and yards had been weather beaten until they were gray white in color, and here and there a species of fungus had attached itself to all woodwork.

"She's an abandoned whaler," whispered the mate as we stood grouped about him. "From the looks of her she's been here for years, and there's no danger of finding any sights aboard. She looks to me like a Russian. One of you go astern and see if you can make her out."

We had come upon her broadside. One of the men walked down to her stern and stared and blinked for five minutes before he could trace the faded letters and make out "Emily Benson, St. John's, N. F." She wasn't a Russian, then, but a Newfoundland whaler and sealer. Not a boat was in sight on her davits, while her rudder had been carried away and several planks above it crushed in. […]

The brig stood so high that we had to board her by clambering up the fore chains. We had pictured her deck a scene of desolation, but were agreeably

disappointed. There was some little disarray, but no such disorder as might have been expected. The cabin doors were shut, the hatches on and the slides drawn over the fo'castle. Her try works were still standing, and the big kettle in which blubber was melted was half full of a substance which had once been oil. The scuttle butt or cask holding drinking water was simply a heap of rotten staves, and the same was true of the beef barrel. Here and there were rotten spots in the deck planks, and the fo'castle deck was almost hidden from sight by the growth of fungus.

Had the eight of us grouped together in any one spot our united weight would have broken the deck beams, and had we swayed on the rigging we could have loosened all the chain plates and perhaps brought down all the yards and top-gallant masks on deck. Our first move was to enter the cabin. The doors were readily opened, but we had to stand aside for 10 minutes on account of the unpleasant odor of what is known as dry rot, and a breath of it choked the lungs like smoke.

The skylight and all the windows had been closed and sealed, and the cabin was as dark as a prison solitary. We got a couple of candles from our stock to light the way, and in the course of half an hour we had seen everything there was to see. The brig's log told us everything. It was lying open on the table in the cabin, and beside it were a pen and paper.

Just seven years[76] and 20 days before we found her, the whaler had been driven into the bay during a gale. She rode out the storm safely enough, but winter caught her there and held her fast. Very early in the season a storm from the west drove a great mass of ice into the bay, and such was the pressure that the brig was lifted up and carried ashore. The 40 odd men of her crew wintered aboard her, and when spring came they divided into two parties and set out in search of help. One party went to the south and the other across the island to the east. The mate remembered the story as published. Death from sickness and accident reduced the crew to 28 men before they were taken off by whalers.

The log was written up to the date of leaving the ship. We wondered why no craft had been sent to dismantle her and remove her cargo, but a brief investigation explained that. She had only a few barrels of oil in her hold, and the storm which carried her ashore was doubtless the one which so filled up the mouth of the bay that no craft could enter it. The trouble of getting at her would have more than offset the salvage. Deserted by her crew long years before, she lay there on the rocks doomed to slow decay. She stood too high for the bears and foxes to get aboard, and if any wandering native had set foot on her decks he had taken nothing away.

There were plenty of provisions left aboard by the crew, but we found very little which we dared eat. The pemmican was all right, but the canned meats and fruits had frozen and thawed until they were tasteless. There were 10 or 12 barrels of flour, about 20 of meat and 100 boxes of biscuit, but all were musty and unfit to eat. Such clothing and bedding as had been left behind were little better than dust. We spent

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[76] This does not match the timeline given by the 1902 version of the article, which claims the Emily Benson's final voyage was in 1850, and states that: "Twenty years previously [to the events recorded] the whaler had been driven into the bay during a gale." Benson, C. B. (1902. August 24). Twenty Years After. *The Democrat and Chronicle*, p. 14.

the day aboard the derelict, giving her a thorough overhauling, but we took away only a few small articles as souvenirs of our discovery. The mate would have set fire to her but for our vigorous protests. We went away casting many a backward glance, and she may rest there today as she did then, though the chances are that lapse of time has reduced her to a heap of rubbish.

As for the McLaren, we found no further trace of her, though parties were sent out almost every week during the winter. Had she gone ashore as did the brig, it is hardly probable that every soul would have been lost, and very likely that her battered hull would have been discovered sooner or later. That no word has ever come from her may be taken as proof conclusive that she went down with all hands to a grave in the city waters of the dreaded seas.

"Without banks, without currency, without credit"[77] (1895)

The bank crash of December, 1894 (detailed elsewhere in this text) had a severe impact on the economic life of Newfoundlanders.

Newfoundland to-day is a country without banks, without currency, without credit. Its commerce and trade are shattered. Its population is reduced to hopeless misery.

The country was devastated by a financial cyclone in December, and the mischief then done cannot be repaired for the next ten years. Words fail to do justice to the appalling conditions of stagnation and destitution that exist, and every day the colony settles deeper in the quagmire of commercial and national disaster.

Not often does one man's death bring about such fearful consequences as the pauperization – for that is what it virtually means – of a whole country. Yet the immediate visible cause of Newfoundland's disaster was the death of a London merchant, Mr. Hall, who acted as financial agent for most of the fish exporting houses in Newfoundland. They shipped cargoes of fish and drew exchanges on the firm – Prowse, Hall & Morris – to cover the proceeds of the sales. When he died, the trustees of the estate decided to accept no more exchange until they familiarized themselves with the Newfoundland branch of the business, which Mr. Hall had control of.

When, therefore, they refused the exchanges, the holders demanded payment of the banks here which indorsed the paper, and these and their customers not having the funds to meet the demand had to close their doors, which, in many cases, will never reopen. But the real operating causes were far more serious, complex and far reaching.

Newfoundland is England's oldest colony. The extensive and valuable fisheries of the island attracted the hardy, daring mariners of Western Europe in the sixteenth century and down to recent years. When England annexed Newfoundland in 1684, she found her mastery disputed by rivals. France and England struggled for control

[77] From ITS HOPE IN CANADA. (1895, February 9). *The Windsor Star*, p. 2.

for many years, for both recognized in the cod-fishery an unequalled nursery for their seamen. England succeeded, but "lost by diplomacy what she gained by the sword."

The Treaty of Utrecht[78] in 1713 gave French fishermen a concurrent right to catch and dry fish along 1,500 miles of the west and northeast coasts of this island, and this is the keystone of Newfoundland's present decadence. France was also given possession of the small islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon, south of St. John's, and made them the base of a commercial war on England and her unfortunate colony.

The phrase "concurrent right" in the treaty is the kernel of the whole difficulty. The French contend it gives them a prior right and obliges the British to refrain from interfering with them.

This contention is repudiated by England; but the French contention nevertheless works to the disadvantage of the Newfoundland fisherman. Should the latter be meeting with a success in the fishery in a certain harbor and a Frenchman enters and desires the place, he simply takes it.

Newfoundland being small and having only 200,000 inhabitants, is powerless to resist such outrages and, though frequent attempts have been made to settle the question, they have been invariably frustrated. […]

The cod-fishery in this country is controlled by a dozen or fifteen merchants, who practically own and manipulate it.

The system under which it is pursued is a relic of ancient times, as in this and other respects Newfoundland is a hundred years behind the age. It is known as the supply or "truck" system. The merchant feeds and clothes the fisherman and his family, and takes the fruit of his labor in return.

This pernicious system is ingrained into the business of the whole country, and its overthrow now has paralyzed every branch of trade.

It had its origin a couple of centuries ago, when vessels sailed out here from England every spring, fished all summer and returned in the fall. It was a penal offence for a shipmaster to leave a man behind on the island when returning.

In those days the first admiral entering a harbor was admiral for the season, the second vice-admiral, and the third rear-admiral. They administered justice in summary fashion – always to their own advantage. A favorite pastime was to burn down the house of an unfortunate settler who had evaded the above-mentioned infamous enactment.

The merchant provided the fishermen with everything essential to the prosecution of the fishery, and when the season ended the fisherman placed his catch in the hands of the merchant, who, after recouping himself for his advances, with a very liberal allowance for the risk, paid the fisherman the remainder, or more frequently carried it on his books for "safekeeping" for the fisherman, and traded on it without allowing the owner a cent of interest.

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[78] Signed near the end of the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714). In the treaty, France agreed to leave the drainage basin of Hudson's Bay to Britain (and therefore to the Hudson's Bay Company, which had a royal monopoly on trading in the region) and to relinquish most of its claims to Newfoundland and its fisheries.

This practice, with but slight changes, obtains all over Newfoundland to this day. The fisherman, a hardy, brave, industrious fellow, resolves on acquiring a competence for himself and family. He comes to St. John's, arranges with a merchant, and obtains an outfit in the spring. Not unfrequently he builds his own fishing vessel, for he can cut the wood, build the craft, launch and rig her, then sail her himself with a sufficient crew and use her in his enterprise.

His outfit obtained, he endeavors to secure a full cargo of fish, which is "put off" at the merchant's wharf in St. John's, and, the prices having been previously settled by the mercantile body here, he is paid at the ruling rate and his account squared. But he is usually in the merchant's debt, and that 'cute person generally contrives to keep him there.

The condition of the fisherman is little better than one of servitude. He is under the merchant's control, and is compelled to obey his merest whim.

French bounty-fed competition forced down the price of fish abroad, and rendered the industry unproductive. This necessitated reduced prices for the product here, but when the merchants came to reduce they found it not so easy.

Politicians, to gain popular favor, declaimed against a reduction, declaring the merchants were robbing the fishermen of their just due and amassing fortunes for themselves. Merchants were painted as robbers, extortioners; glowing speeches were made of their conspiracies against the people, and soon "Down with the Merchants" became a powerful political battle cry. But the merchants controlled the banks, and used their opportunities to carry on their own business, obtaining astonishing overdrafts. […]

Had the crash of Dec. 10 been delayed two months later, two million dollars' worth of fish products, now stored in St. John's, would have been marketed.

Politics also helped to bring about the downfall and accentuate the bitterness of the present situation. The merchants formed a political party, and were at times successful in obtaining control.

Of work there is none, and no prospects of any. It is the hopelessness of future employment that makes the situation so distressing. Fully a third of the population of St. John's must be pinched with hunger.

In the outposts, or fishing settlements, the conditions are similar.

Silver Linings[79] (1895)

The crash of 1894 saw a temporary easing of the credit or truck system, and as of mid-1895 cod liver oil manufactured in Newfoundland using Norwegian methods seemed a promising export product.

Not for many years has there been such an excellent prospect for our fisheries. The season has opened nearly a month earlier than formerly, and from nearly all our great fishing centres the accounts are favorable. One way and another the fishermen

[79] From THE MISSED OPPORTUNITY. (1895, June 5). The Montreal Gazette, p. 6.

are getting something to start with. Sir Herbert Murray has assisted hundreds by small advances. The credit system is greatly curtailed, and already the benefits are apparent. The fishermen are in many places selling their fish "green," as it is caught, and the purchasers have a set of hands for curing it. No time is lost by the fishermen; and they work better and catch far more fish. […]

Another circumstances in our favor this year is that the common cod oil and the refined cod liver oil, which is used medicinally, are likely to be considerably enhanced in value this season. Norway largely supplies the markets with these articles, especially the latter; and this year there will be a serious deficiency in both. The Norwegian catch of cod at Lofloden this year has, in numbers, exceeded the highest previous record by 25 per cent. But the fish are small and the livers do not yield nearly the usual amount of oil. In consequence, the catch on the whole will not, in weight, exceed an average, and the export of cod oil will be comparatively small. Newfoundland will profit by this. The Norwegian refined oil has hitherto commanded the highest price in the market, nearly fifty per cent. over all others. But Mr. Nielsen, superintendent of our fisheries, has introduced here the Norwegian method of manufacturing the oil, by what is known as "the freezing process." The firm of John Munn & Co., Harbor Grace, took it in hand and produced an article which took the market as well, or even better, than the Norwegian oil.

A Hopeless Country[80] (1895)

One of the interesting visitors to Alberta just now is Mr. G. Makinson[81], for upwards of 30 years a prominent farmer, contractor and businessman of Newfoundland. Mr. Makinson is here in a private capacity, not as the representative of any government or railway, to look over the country with a view of improving the condition of his unfortunate neighbours. From facts mentioned by Mr. Makinson during a chat with THE HERALD we gathered an even gloomier estimate of the condition of Newfoundland than we had before. According to Mr. Makinson, the future of the colony is almost

WITHOUT A RAY OF HOPE.

It is over-governed, its money exhausted, its credit gone, it is cursed by politicians, and there is certain to be a general collapse in the spring, when the island must either enter Confederation or become a Crown colony. The fisheries being practically controlled by the large men, the season has been a disastrous one. The small fishermen have averaged only $60 a head[82] per season for the last 20 years. The majority are unable to get employment out of the fishing season. The public treasury has been almost depleted by relief works. This year a third of the educational grant has been stopped, and many schools have had to be closed. In Mr. Makinson's district the people have had a school only three years out of 25. The politicians are

[80] From A HOPELESS COUNTRY. (1895, September 18). *The Calgary Herald*, p. 1.

[81] Possibly the same G. Makinson who is listed as vice-president of the Harbor Grace Agricultural and Horticultural Society in the Newfoundland Almanac of 1869.

[82] $60 in 1895 would be about $1,850 in 2020, adjusting for U.S. inflation.

opposed to emigration, knowing that a decrease of the population will make the credit of the government even worse than it is. The railway is being extended this year by money raised on debentures. This gives employment to about 2,000 people, but when work stops, as it soon must, the people will be as badly off as before. The wages paid on the railway are $1 a day[83], and 20 days is an average month's work. The railway contractor practically has the island

IN HIS VEST POCKET.

He is paid $15,500[84] a mile for building the railway, which runs mainly through a rocky country, not more than 3 per cent of which is fit for agriculture. The railway is used mainly for political purposes. The politicians get control of mineral lands and then divert the railway so as to run near them. When finished, the railway cannot support itself and it will cost the colony tens of thousands of dollars yearly to keep it running. Crowds are walking the streets and the only thing that has kept starvation from thousands is the relief money spent by the imperial and local governments, and this is almost at an end and will not be repeated. Freight rates are

OUTRAGEOUSLY HIGH,

not a single mine in the colony is paying expenses, all the mercantile houses with two exceptions have become bankrupt, it is almost impossible to obtain credit, and if ever the case of a people was hopeless, Newfoundland's is.

The people of Newfoundland would make good settlers for Alberta, thinks Mr. Makinson. After being accustomed to working for low wages and being pinched in Newfoundland, they could certainly make a good living here. The ordinary food of a fisherman there the year round is flour, tea and molasses.

"We can spare 50,000 people," said Mr. Makinson, "and it seems to me they are just the people who would make good settlers for the North West. Why, when I want to hire a man, I have always over 50 applicants. My mission is altogether on behalf of my unfortunate neighbours, and if I can succeed in bettering their condition I shall be more than repaid."

The Diet of a Newfoundland Fisher[85] (1899)

During the season the industrious coast fisherman is afloat in his boat almost before it is daylight, and sails or rows, according as the wind is, to his fishing ground. Unless the cod are uncommonly plentiful, the shore sees him no more until nightfall. On his small craft he possesses the means of making a fire, and there he cooks himself one of the fish he has caught, brews a cup of tea, and eats his doughboy. His consumption of tea is enormous, and that, with the leaden qualities of the doughboy, which is nothing but a round lump of cooked dough, no doubt tends to produce the dyspepsia which is so common among the population.

Even during the season there are a great many days when gales prevent him from going to sea. It is fortunate if these are fair days, for then he can busy himself

[83] About $30.75 in 2020, adjusting for U.S. inflation, making twenty day's income about $615.
[84] About $475,000 in 2020, adjusting for U.S. inflation.
[85] From NEWFOUNDLAND'S FISHERS. (1899, November 26). *The New York Sun*, p. 28.

helping the women to "make" the fish. If wet, however, there is nothing usually to be done but sit around in ignoble inaction.

His fare is of the simplest kind. I have more than once seen the preparation of the evening meal of a man who had been away since dawn, and who might be expected to have a rare appetite against his return. The good wife half filled a small pan with flour, among which she poured sufficient molasses to knead it into a dough. After rolling this into two cakes she placed one on a plate and strewed a little of the preserves of wild raspberry on it. The other "bannock" was placed on top, and, after a judicious firing in the oven, behold, a pie[86]. And oh, such a pie! Guiltless of yeast or rising of any sort, it was truly unleavened bread. I had the opportunity of indulging in this satisfying fare subsequently, and my respect for the Newfoundland man rose as I considered how many generations he has endured this and yet refrained from homicide. This, however, was but a confection – the solid food consisted of a generous share of turnips and potatoes mashed together. Pots and pots of tea, sweetened with molasses and milkless, and bread, without butter, completed the repast. It cannot be said that the Newfoundland fisherman keeps himself poor with riotous living.

When he is in a situation to earn wages and board himself, his expenditures on housekeeping are of a most parsimonious description. On Belle Island the wage is 10 cents[87] an hour, and as in the long summer days the hours are many, the earnings of the men are considered handsome. Their families are not on the island, and the workmen erect little hovels in the neighboring woods where as many of them sleep as can be packed under its roof. The great concern is to send as much money back to the good wife and little one as possible, so that there may be a full larder all winter when the work closes down. For this purpose these poor fellows live on about $4 a month[88]. Indeed, $4 is considered the maximum. There is no baker on the island, and they have, accordingly, to enlist the services of the resident fisherwomen to bake bread for them, the charge for this service being 10 cents a stone. On week days no flesh passes the lips of the great majority of them, but on Sunday, it is usual to have a feast – namely, pork and cabbage. This is considered a banquet that even an American millionaire might think himself lucky in sharing.

Fishing is notoriously an uncertain calling. The motions of fish are past all understanding. One season they will visit every part of these shores, and those of Labrador, in their countless shoals. The next season bays or even a whole shore will be almost deserted. The herring are especially fickle, and there are places that were once good herring grounds that have scarcely seen a herring for years. All sorts of theories are advanced to account for this, some of them ridiculous enough. But the fact remains, and when the fish fail to turn up in numbers at the accustomed place, destitution follows. From a very early period the Government has granted relief in such cases. It is far easier to start doling out public funds than to stop, and it has now become a regular affair.

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[86] This may be an ancestor of the now-traditional Newfoundland "jam jam", a molasses cookie with a raspberry jam filling.

[87] About $3.10 in 2020, adjusting for U.S. inflation.

[88] About $125 in 2020, adjusting for U.S. inflation.

MIGRATION

Pressing Irish Sailors[89] (1777)

In the 18th century, Britain often found herself at war and in need of experienced sailors for her navy. These were often *pressed* into military service from the ranks of commercial sailors, including Irish fishers who would otherwise sail to Newfoundland for the cod-fishing season. Being pressed was somewhat like being drafted for military service in modern times, with the *press gang* taking the part of the recruiter.

The press for seamen still continues here, to the great injury of the trade of this city and the fishery of Newfoundland; several have been picked up lately.

Last Wednesday evening the press gang was very roughly treated on the Quay, in consequence of their endeavouring to press a man who frequents the fishery of Newfoundland; he (assisted by some female auxiliaries) defended himself with a stick against the attack of the gang, armed with swords, and notwithstanding their utmost efforts he got off. By this time a party of resolute fellows assembled, and by pelting of stones soon made the gang disappear. But their resentment did not stop there, for they [have] done considerable damage to the house of Mr. Shannaghan, publican, on the Quay, where the press gang rendezvous; and had not a party of the army been ordered out to disperse them and prevent further mischief, it is probable some fatal consequences would have happened.

Irish Sailors and the Newfoundland Cod Fishery[90] (1786)

In 1779, the British government amended the Navigation Acts to allow for free trade between England and Ireland. One result of this amendment was to make it easier for Irish sailors to participate in the Newfoundland cod fishery. Prior to 1779, the Navigation Acts required that Newfoundland cod be transported only on British ships, and placed restrictions on what materials Irish sailors could take with them to the colony.

Laudable as is the active attention now given to the cultivation of the Irish fisheries, yet are there no adventurers in Ireland, (save the merchants of Derry) who have sufficient spirit to engage either in the Greenland, or Newfoundland fishery? Do the merchants at our respective sea ports throughout the Kingdom, properly consider, what an inexhaustible fund of wealth those fisheries produce, and what fortunes are yearly made in England, France, &c. by an assiduous pursuit of them? As to the Newfoundland fishery, it abounds with such plenty of cod, and is so profitable, from their being scarce a port in the universe where a ship's cargo of that provision meets

[89] From The press. (1777, April 1). *The Waterford Chronicle* (Ireland), p. 2.
[90] From DUBLIN. (1786, December 21). *The Belfast Evening Post*, p. 2

not a welcome reception, that every success and encouragement is held out to adventurers to engage in it. Of what use is it to adventurers to have the full freedom of the above fisheries, if we make no efforts to profit from the possession?

A correspondent speaking on the foregoing subject, says, that for several years previous to our extension of trade in 1779, the reasons assigned for Ireland's not engaging in the Newfoundland and Greenland fisheries, were, because the act of 15 Geo. III. c. 31. Ordained, that "we should trade in those fisheries in *British built ships only* – that we should transport to Newfoundland only hooks, lines, netting, and other tools necessary for the fishing – and that, in respect to the Greenland fishery, we should be obliged, on our return, to enter British ports, and land on her quays, though duty free, our oil and cargoes." – These were restrictions, at that time insisted on, and not without reason, as incompatible with freedom, as they would prove injurious and obstacles to the advantages that might otherwise be made by Ireland of those fisheries. But all these objections being now done away with, Ireland participating at present [in] every privilege with England of the Newfoundland and Greenland fishery, no solid argument can surely be now adduced why we should not spiritedly engage in them[91]. Even the hackneyed argument – of England being able to undersell us in the above business, will not avail on this occasion.

From Ireland to the United States, via Newfoundland[92] (1817)

The English author of this piece complains that the Newfoundland fishery is siphoning experienced sailors from the British navy. Irish sailors, he writes, emigrate to Newfoundland with an eye to permanently settling in the United States.

I bear no personal enmity to the Newfoundland Fisheries; and am, at the same time, persuaded that one Domestic Fishery, a fishery upon our own coasts, employing our own people, not half so large as the Newfoundland fisheries, would do this country more real service than they ever can do. They never can provide employment for our own poor; and they are not, exclusively, nurseries for British seamen. So far, indeed, from their being exclusively so, it is more than doubtful whether their effects are not inimical and injurious to the interests of this country, whilst they are very favourable to those of the American States, especially if it should appear that a considerable portion of the persons employed in those fisheries are emigrants from our sister island; men in the prime and most valuable part of life, who, instead of supplying our army and navy with sailors and soldiers, fly to a distant quarter of the globe, leaving the helpless and the aged to be provided for at the cost and by the labour of those who

[91] By 1792 Ireland participated in the Newfoundland fishery not only by supplying sailors, but also by provisioning the fishing vessels on their outward journeys: "Very considerable orders have arrived in this city, in the course of the last week, for supplying the ships employed in the Newfoundland fishery with provisions. It is determined to victual the Newfoundland vessels with pork in preference to beef." DUBLIN. (1792, October 23). *The Waterford Herald*, p. 3.

[92] From Bernard, T. (1817, June 16). AGRICULTURE. *The Freeman's Journal* (Dublin), p. 4. Written by Sir Thomas Bernard, 3rd Baronet (1750 – 1818).

continue at home: young men, who, at the expiration of three years' service, generally settle for life in America; and in the event of war, are much more likely to assist in manning the fleets of America and France, than to enter into the British navy.

Migrant Sailors, Settlement and Religious Conflict[93] (1838)

The state of Newfoundland is peculiar; the mass of the population are not in any sense colonists; they neither owe their birth to the country, till the soil, nor calculate upon making the island their permanent residence; they are adventurers who proceed from the United Kingdom, chiefly from the south of Ireland (in many instances fugitives for crimes committed in that fertile garden of lawless outrage, the O'Connell province); they take their passage to Newfoundland in order to find a year or two's employment in the fishery, and its concomitant labours of salting, drying, coopering[94], &c.: and as soon as they have in this way earned a few pounds, they push forward to the United States. The country of Newfoundland is wild, and almost wholly uncultivated, and, as such, suits well enough with the half, or more than half, savage habits which the emigrants in question carry.

So long as the settlement enjoyed the advantages of a rational and strong government, composed of a governor and a council selected from the respectable permanent inhabitants – men whose station gave a hostage of respect for the law, zeal for the good of the colony, and attachment to England – its affairs proceeded well. The emigrants found employment, earned money, disappeared – were replaced by other emigrants, and allowed the settlement to accumulate capital and to extend commerce; but five or six years ago "some demon whispered" to the Whigs, "give Newfoundland a parliament," and a parliament was given – a parliament to be elected by the transition semi-savages of whom we have spoken – men who had prospectively renounced the British dominion while earning the means of withdrawing from it, and already considered themselves in the light of American citizens.

Instantly the priests assumed the sovereignty of the colony; the permanent settlers were marked for persecution, not only as rivals of the priestly power, but as general Protestants, or as Roman Catholics[95] humanized and rendered liberal by a long intercourse with Protestants; murders, assaults, and mutilations became frequent; in short, the depraving process of concession, and its correlative, arrogant pretension, which has occupied Ireland for 45 years, was, in Newfoundland, completed in less than the same number of months, and Newfoundland is already a transatlantic Tipperary[96].

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[93] From NEWS FROM NEWFOUNDLAND. (1838, September 24). *The London Standard*, p. 3, quoting the *Newfoundland Public Ledger* of August 31, 1838.

[94] Barrel-making.

[95] The Irish were predominantly Roman Catholic, while the English were Protestant. During this time period, Catholics were discriminated against by the English and the British government. It was not uncommon for disagreements between the two factions to turn violent.

[96] The name of a town and county in the Irish province of Munster.

Such are the consequences of prodigal liberalism and promiscuous reform. Already the more wealthy and respectable permanent settlers are withdrawing from the place; and nothing can save it from becoming a desert but a recurrence to some more reasonable and less liberal system.

An Island of Women[97] (1884)

In the mid-1880s, so many men left the Isle of Jersey for the Newfoundland fishery, that during the fishing season women had to perform most of the work on the island – including traditionally male jobs. This exodus was in part a result of successful anti-smuggling measures on the part of the British government.

The Channel Islands, and particularly Jersey, possess much of interest for the stranger, but the crowning glory of Jersey is the beauty of her women. […] The toil that brings with it the active, healthy body is due to causes which will enlist on the side of these women the sympathies of true manhood. It is because of the woeful dearth of men in Jersey that the women do all the work. Where you meet one man in the tortuous streets of St. Helier's[98], you meet ten women. Out among the green farms this disproportion of the sexes is even more painfully apparent. The heavy, ungainly carts on the country roads are almost without exception driven by women, and handsome women, too. Groups of cherry-cheeked girls may be seen in the way-side orchards, some picking apples from the trees, others straining at the rude cider-presses. The little fields, with their luxuriant growth of turnips, cabbages and rutabagas, are all tended by women, while the blooming flowers in the home-yards show in their rich variety the evidence of woman's care and attention. None but women are to be seen in the big public market of St. Helier's – women buying and women selling. What men you see are either too young or too old and decrepit – boys who have not started out in life, or old sea captains who have come home to end their days, smelling of salt cod and full of reminiscences of stormy voyages to Buenos Ayres, to Australia, or through the China Seas.

ABSENT BROTHERS

If you ask where all the men are, the reply, with a shake of the head, is that Jersey was too small for them; that there was not room enough on the island, hardly thirty miles around, for the ambition of its youth, so they left it and went to seek their fortunes in foreign lands, leaving their sisters at home to till the soil and look after the Jersey cows. Some of them man the fishing smacks that go to Newfoundland. Every year they go to the Great Banks in March, and return in October. When they come back, with their little vessels laden with bales of salt cod, barrels of codfish-roe, and boxes of codfish tongues and codfish heads, there is great rejoicing among the women that they have escaped the perils of the sea.

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[97] AN ISLAND OF PRETTY WOMEN. (1884, January 6). *The New York Tribune*, p. 4.
[98] The capital of the Island of Jersey.

When the first of these smacks appear in St. Helen's harbor, the entire female population leave off their work, desert their fields, and go down to the quays to hear the news from Newfoundland. Should the ships, after dropping anchors, slant their spars, the excitement among the watchers on the quays is intense. It means that a man is dead; or perhaps more than one. A volley of questions will greet the fishermen when they land. Mothers will inquire for absent sons, and sisters for their brothers. There is wailing and extravagant expressions of grief should the tidings be had. All through October and November these groups of women waiting on the quays of St. Helier's are a common sight, and rarely does it happen that the joy over the good news from absent ones does not mingle with sobs for those that have been lost. Three years ago the season was frightfully stormy along the Banks, and widows were thick in Jersey. So general was the grief that a song commemorative of the lost fishermen was forbidden from the pulpit to be sung on the island, as its touching refrain kept the memory of the dead too fresh in the public mind.

OLD SMUGGLING TIMES

But the time was not always thus that Jersey was peopled only with pretty women and with decrepit old men and children. She had a population of stalwart men who plied a vigorous and profitable business, which brought not alone prosperity to St. Helier's, but made matters lively for the Governments of France and England as well. Twenty years ago a prodigious amount of smuggling was carried on along the English, Irish, French and Holland coats, in small, fast craft, that were fitted out in St. Helier's, and made the Channel Islands their base of operations. […] The small size of these smuggling ships enabled them to glide in and out among the dangerous reefs and rocks that beset these coats, and thus escape easily when pursued by the heavy ships which England and France at first set out to look after them.

For years this illegal traffic went on, despite the strenuous efforts made to break it up. It was then that Jersey flourished and St. Helier's grew from a moderate-sized town to a city with 35,000 inhabitants, more than one-half the number of people on the island. Jersey's maidens were given a chance, and marriages were many, while there was nothing for them to do but cultivate their flower-gardens and knit socks and jackets for their husbands and brothers and lovers.

Finally, the two Governments built each a small, swift steamer, and detailed them to cruise among the islands day and night, and so break up the wholesale smuggling. […] The law-breakers found they could escape no longer among the rocks, and in a short time smuggling, as it flourished twenty years ago, was a thing of the past.

The hardy islanders who had been engaged in it found their business broken up and themselves serving out sentences in British prison ships. When set at freedom they nearly all found lawful and honest occupations in distant countries, and Jersey was left literally in charge of the women.

From Newfoundland to the United States[99] (1893)

Poor living conditions in the 1890s made emigration to the United States tempting to Newfoundlanders.

The Newfoundlander makes such a use of his limited opportunities as stamps him at once as a man to succeed beyond exception […] whenever the means of success are placed within his reach. […] He builds his own schooner or fishing boat from keelson to topmast. He builds his own house, makes his trap, his barrels, and makes his own tools in many cases. He goes in the winter often ten or fifteen miles to the hills to cut his scanty stock of firewood, and is found by the sun on rising busy at work. He and his noble dog haul the wood over cliffs and through ravines that would affright a denizen of the plains to approach; and his sole sustenance is often a few slices of bread and the indispensable tea, on which, by the way, he is taxed 100 per cent.

To show how largely the Newfoundlander draws on his barren soil for a livelihood we have only to know that the average earnings of a fisherman for the season from his boat and traps is less than $80 per annum, and this is a country where all the necessities of life are from 25 to 100 per cent dearer than in Canada. […] The rates of wages are distressingly low for both sexes. The laborer gets from 60 to 80 cents per day[100]. The skilled blacksmith, wheelwright, carpenter and cooper can earn from $1 to $1.25 per day[101], but in a country where now flour retails at $6 per barrel, beef at 15 to 20 cents per lb., sugar of the same grade as is sold in Canada at 4 to 5 cents per lb., […] and family tea at 60 to 70 cents per lb[102]. It will be seen how little of life's comforts can be secured for $1. Good capable girls are glad to get from $2 to $3 per month[103], and get much more generally the former than the latter figure, while sewing and shop girls get 20 to 30 cents per day[104] and board themselves. […]

Now, it is a fact patent to all knowing anything about the island that fifty thousand of the two hundred and thirty thousand people who live in Newfoundland are here because they cannot get away. What chance has a man earning 60 cents a day[105] to gather means to pay for a passage for his family to the far west; and how

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[99] From Carlyle, C. C. (1893, October 19). Newfoundland as A Field for Immigration. *The Regina Leader*, p. 4. Written by Charles C. Carlyle (1867-1950). "The Canadian government actively recruited Newfoundlanders, although the emphasis was on recruitment to the Canadian west, and in 1894 the federal government hired an agent, Charles Carlyle, to carry out its promotional work from St. John's." Crawley, C. (1988). Off to Sydney: Newfoundlanders Emigrate to Industrial Cape Breton, 1890-1914. *Acadiensis*, *17*(2), 27-51.

[100] About $17 to $24 in 2020 dollars, adjusting for U.S. inflation.

[101] About $29 to $36 in 2020, adjusting for U.S. inflation.

[102] Adjusting for U.S. inflation, in 2020 this would be about $172 per barrel for flour, $4.30 to $5.75 a pound for beef, $1.15 to $1.45 a pound for sugar and $17.20 to $20.10 a pound for tea.

[103] About $57 to $86 in 2020, adjusting for U.S. inflation.

[104] About $5.75 to $8.60 in 2020, adjusting for U.S. inflation.

[105] About $17.20 in 2020, adjusting for U.S. inflation.

can a girl earning $2 a month get together enough to take her to a place where she can better her condition without help?

Hence it comes that while these people are intensely British in their sympathies and prefer Canada to any country in the world as a place to live in, they yet are drifting by thousands every year into the States. Their friends who possess some means go first, they write and send assistance to the others, these again soon are able to send for others, and there it goes on. Americans who know what admirable domestics the young women of Newfoundland make send the ticket for Boston, and the girl goes, and soon her whole family follow.

THE END OF THE BEOTHUK WORLD[106]

The Beothuk of Newfoundland[107] (1888)

The Beothuk are believed to be the original human inhabitants of Newfoundland. Conflict with European settlers drove them to extinction. The last known Beothuk died in 1829. The following account is written by Lady Edith Blake, whose husband was governor of Newfoundland from 1887 to 1888.

The first description we have of the Indians of Newfoundland is from Jacques Cartier, who, in 1534, states that the natives were "of indifferent good stature and bigness, but wild and unruly. They wear their hair tied on the top like a wreath of hay, and put a wooden pin in it, or any other such thing instead of a nail, and with them they bind certain birds' feathers. They are clothed with beast's skins, as well the men as the women; but the women go somewhat straighter and closer than the men do, with their waists girded."

In 1536 a disastrous expedition to Newfoundland was undertaken by Master [Richard] Hore and a party of 120 persons, "whereof were thirty gentlemen." […] The details we have of this expedition are from Master Richard Hakluyt of Oxford, who, as he tells us, rode two hundred miles to ascertain the circumstances connected with the voyage, from the only man then alive who had participated in it. This man was Master Oliver Dawbeney, who informed Hakluyt that after they had been at anchor some days, he (Dawbeney) "saw a boat with savages, rowing towards them, to gaze upon the ship and our people. They manned their ship's boat in order to have taken them, but they fled to an island in the bay and escaped our men. They found a fire and a side of a bear on a wooden spit, also a boot, garnished on the calf as it were with raw silk, also a great warm mitten." […]

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[106] This section's title is inspired by the title of a classic article on the Beothuk: Pastore, R. (1989). The Collapse of the Beothuk World. *Acadiensis*, *19*(1), 52-71.

[107] From Blake, E. (1888). The Beothuks of Newfoundland. *The Nineteenth Century*, *XXIV* (142), 899-918. Written by Lady Edith Blake (1846 – 1926), an Irish writer and illustrator. I have silently corrected some dates which were wrong in the original (e.g. the year of Richard Hore's journey).

The next notice, with any details, that we find of the natives of Newfoundland is in the time of Sir Humphrey Gilbert[108], who, on the 5th of August, 1583, landed in the harbor of St. John's, where lay several fishing vessels of other nations, and took possession of Newfoundland in the name of Queen Elizabeth. The royal arms cut in lead were affixed to a wooden pillar near the water's edge, and the flag of England was hoisted and unfurled, Sir Humphrey afterwards explaining to all foreigners not conversant with the English language the meaning of the proclamation. Two eye-witnesses of the ceremony, Captain Hayes of the 'Golden Hind' and Captain Richard Whitbourne[109] of Exmouth, have left descriptions of the aborigines as they found them. The latter had during a period of forty years made numerous voyages to Newfoundland, and from his "chamber at the sign of the gilded cocke in Paternoster Row in London" in 1620 wrote a discourse to prove how "worthy and beneficiall a plantation may there be made."

He says:-

"The natural inhabitants of the country, as they are but few in number, so are they something rude and savage people, having neither knowledge of God nor living under any kind of civil government. In their habits, customs, and manners they resemble the Indians of the continent, from whence (I suppose) they come. They live altogether in the north and west part of the country, which is seldom frequented by the English. But the French and Biscaines (who resort thither yearly for the whale-fishing, and also for the cod-fish) report them to be an ingenious and tractable people (being well used): they are ready to assist them with great labour and patience in the killing, cutting, and boiling of whales, and making of train oil, without expectation of other reward than a little bread or some such small hire."

Further on, the same writer says:-

"It (Trinity Harbour) is near unto a great bay lying on the north side of it, called the Bay of Flowers, to which place no ships repair to fish, partly in regard of sundry rocks and ledges lying even with the water and full of danger, but chiefly (as I conjecture) because the savage people of that country do there inhabit; many of them secretly every year come into Trinity Bay and harbor in the night-time purposely to steal sails, lines, hatchets, hooks, knives, and such-like. And this bay is not three English miles over land from Trinity Bay in many places, which people, if they might be reduced to the knowledge of the true Trinity indeed, no doubt but it would be a most sweet and acceptable sacrifice to God, an everlasting honour to your Majesty, and the heavenliest blessing to those poor creatures, who are buried in their own superstitious ignorance. The task thereof would prove easy, if it were but well begun and constantly seconded by industrious spirits, and no doubt but God Himself would set his hand to rear up and advance so noble, so pious, and so Christian a building.

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[108] Sir Humphrey Gilbert (1539 – 1583) died at sea during what was to be his return voyage from Newfoundland. His claiming of the island for Queen Elizabeth is considered by some to have been the first step in the founding of the British Empire.

[109] Sir Richard Whitbourne (1561 – 1635) published one of the earliest books on Newfoundland: Whitbourne, R. (1620). *A discourse and discovery of New-Found-Land, with many reasons to prove how worthy and beneficiall a Plantation may there be made, after a far better manner than now it is*. London: Felix Kyngston, for William Barrett.

[…] If therefore near the harbor of Trinity it were inhabited by some of your Majesty's subjects, I see no reason to the contrary but that a speedy and more certain knowledge might be had of the country, by reason those savage people are so near, who, being politely[110] and gently handled, much good might be wrought upon them, for I have had apparent proofs of their ingenuous and subtile dispositions, and that they are a people full of quick and lively apprehensions."[111]

I have quoted at length from Whitbourne, as his testimony is valuable as showing the apparently tractable and docile disposition of the native Indians previous to intercourse with the British! Later on we shall see how the "pious work" of redeeming them from barbarism was effected.

Captain Hayes bears similar evidence as to the natives; he says, "The savages are altogether harmless."

John Guy[112], afterwards Mayor of Bristol in 1618, established a plantation or colony at Cupid's Cove in Conception Bay. One of the patentees of Guy's grant was the famous Sir Francis Bacon[113]. Guy met with the natives, whom he found friendly and with whom he established a trade in furs. For two years he persevered in the attempt to colonise, when scurvy – the scourge of many of the early attempts at colonizing – broke out, and several of his company died, which induced Guy to abandon his purpose[114] and return to England, only a few individuals, who thought they might make some profit by continuing there, remaining in the country.

Well would it have been for the unhappy natives if men like John Guy and Whitbourne had established permanent hold on the country, but before long the short-sighted policy that too often rules in England induced the British Government to discourage and even to forbid colonization in Newfoundland. Prompted by a handful of interested merchants, England endeavoured to keep the island as a mere fishing station, which she believed would prove a nursery for her navy.

In spite, however, of stringent rules to that effect, it proved impossible altogether to prevent settlers from establishing themselves on so large an island, but instead of the advent of respectable and energetic colonists, it became "a sanctuary for men that broke in England." Deserters from the navy, refugees from Ireland, reckless and unruly characters of all kinds who dare not return to their own country, sought an asylum in Newfoundland.

There was no government; ever man could do what seemed good in his own eyes, provided it did not interfere with the fishery regulations laid down by the 'fishing admiral,' as the master of the first fishing vessel from England, Wales or Berwick that entered a harbor on the opening of the fishing season was termed. The English statute-book was then disgraced by the sanguinary code which decreed that

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[110] Blake's term. The original reads "politikely".

[111] I've compared Blake's transcription of this passage to the 1620 original and silently restored omissions and corrected minor errors, while trying to keep to Blake's transcription style (among other things, she modernized spellings, omitted capitals and italics and replaced semicolons with commas).

[112] John Guy (1568 – 1629) was "proprietary governor" of Newfoundland from 1610 to 1614.

[113] Sir Francis Bacon (1561 – 1626), 1st Viscount St. Alban, was an early advocate of the scientific method.

[114] Frequent harassment of the colony by pirates, especially Peter Easton, also played a role.

a man's life paid the penalty of the theft of a sheep, or the stealing of a cow; and no doubt to rough and ignorant men, as were for the most part these skippers of fishing vessels, it appeared simple justice, while invested with the brief authority of a fishing season, to punish petty larceny on the part of the natives with death.

We know that the Red Indians, hitherto only acquainted with implements of stone or bone, did not resist the temptation of occasionally purloining such inestimable treasures as a steel knife, or iron hatchet and fishhooks. Probably if any trifling article were missed, the first Indian seen was shot in revenge. After a time it became the habit on the part of the fishermen to shoot an Indian whenever they got the chance. Cupidity added to the zest for shooting Indians, as they often wore rich furs, and the French and English furriers deliberately shot the natives to obtain possession of their deer and fox skin robes. Not many years ago persons were still living on the north-western coast who had been in the habit of boasting of the number of 'head' of Indians they killed, the record of such murders being scored on their gun-stocks.

The Newfoundland Indians were distinguished as Red Indians from their habit of daubing their garments, weapons and all their possessions with red ochre mixed with grease. […] 'Beothuk' is believed to be the name by which these Indians distinguished their nation; it is said to be the generic expression for Indian, equivalent to our 'men.' […]

Whence, then, came the Beothuks to Newfoundland? […] Sir William Dawson[115], F.R.S.[116], informs us, in his interesting work on 'Fossil Men,'[117] that the Mic-macs of Nova Scotia have traditions of a primitive people whom their ancestors had driven from Nova Scotia into Cape Breton, and pursued into Newfoundland across the comparatively narrow sea separating the two islands. In 1768 Mr. John Cartwright[118] made an expedition into the interior of Newfoundland. He had been told by a Red Indian boy, named 'June,' that a people called by the boy 'Canadians' possessed the western shores of the Great Lake, over sixty miles long, which is now known as Red Indian Lake. On the eastern shores of this lake a great part of the Beothuk tribe had their headquarters. 'June' also said that his people held no intercourse with the Canadians, and that they saw no signs of each other during whole winters. Cartwright did not explore the western shores of the lake, so that we know nothing of the tribe to which these 'Canadians' belonged. […]

Sir Richard Bonnycastle[119] mentions being, in 1831, in the Bay of the Seven Islands in Labrador, when the inhabitants were greatly alarmed by "the sudden appearance amongst them of a fierce-looking people of whom they had neither knowledge nor tradition," and who were different from the Montagnais with whom they sometimes traded. […]

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[115] Sir John William Dawson (1820 – 1899) was born in Nova Scotia.

[116] Fellow of the Royal Society.

[117] Dawson, J. W. (1880). *Fossil men and their modern representatives*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.

[118] John Cartwright (1740 – 1824). Cartwright Sound, in British Columbia, is named after him.

[119] Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Richard Henry Bonnycastle (1791 – 1847) was knighted for his actions as a royal engineer in the Canadian rebellion of 1837-1839.

The Beothuks, it is said, were on friendly terms with a tribe of Indians from Labrador, whom they named 'Shaunamuncs.' […] The Shaunamuncs, like the Beothucs, dressed in deerskins, but did not redden them with ochre. Most probably they were Nasquapee or Montagnais Indians, both of which tribes still inhabit Labrador. With this friendly tribe some kind of trade was carried on, and they are said to have mutually visited each other's countries in former days. The stone hatches and celts used by the Beothuks are supposed to have been supplied by the Shaunamuncs. The art of making stone implements was generally known and practiced amongst Indian tribes, though some were much more skillful than others in the manufacture. To shape and polish a celt or arrow out of stone, to people unacquainted with metals, was a tedious and lengthy process; to perfect a fine hatchet or tomahawk was sometimes the work of a lifetime. The art was not universal, some tribes being specially famous for the skill of their arrow and hatchet makers. The productions of these skilled artificers were eagerly sought by warriors and hunters of other nations, and traders of stone weapons seem to have been privileged persons, often permitted to journey from tribe to tribe unmolested. This fact accounts for green stone and flint celts, &c., being found in far distant countries, where no such stone as that of which they are made is to be found. Such was not the case with the Beothuks; they had plenty of material, but their skill may not have been so great as that of the Shaunamuncs. That they manufactured steatite or soapstone utensils for themselves is certain, as the quarry may still be seen whence they obtained it, some half-cut vessels being *in statu quo*. The soapstone pots, however, were a rough manufacture, and the material soft and easily worked.

After Europeans began to settle in Newfoundland the intercourse between the Shaunamuncs and the Red Indians must have become more and more difficult to maintain, and as the latter were now able to purloin the metal axes and knives of the invaders, it would be of less importance to them to maintain a trade for stone ones. As their white enemies gained a greater extent of the coast, the Beothuks were hemmed more and more into the interior, till at length their position became one of complete isolation.

We are wont to shudder over the barbarities inflicted on the Indians by their Spanish conquerors, and to deplore the cruelty with which the native races are still too frequently treated by our American cousins; but no Spanish freebooter or Yankee could show more utter disregard for the life of an Indian than did Britishers in Newfoundland.

Cartwright says:-

"The Red Indians have no intercourse with Europeans, except a hostile one, which there is great reason to think is founded on their part upon a just, and to an uncivilized people, a noble resentment of wrongs. On the part of the English fishers, it is an inhumanity that sinks them far below the level of savages. The wantonness of their cruelties toward these poor wretches has frequently been almost incredible."

In illustration of his assertion he relates the following incident.

One day a small family of Beothuks was surprised in their wigwam by a party of fishermen. On the appearance of their foes, the Indians fled in consternation, all

except one woman on the eve of becoming a mother, who, being unable to follow her companions, gave herself up as a prisoner, endeavouring by signs to implore mercy from her captors. Her gesticulations and entreaties were in vain; one of the wretches with a well-directed blow ripped open the body of the unhappy woman, and in a few minutes she expired in agony at their feet. Not content with murder, the monsters proceeded to mutilate the body in a barbarous manner, and on their return boasted of what they had done, exhibiting in triumph the hands of their victim, which they had cut off and retained as a trophy.

Such shocking barbarities were not confined to the last century, as the following anecdote, related to me by a gentleman who heard it from one of the party present, will show. Some fifty years ago a small party set out from one of the settlements to "look for Indians," as it was termed. Before long some tracks were discovered, and on rounding a point of rock, three or four Indians came in view, all of whom they forthwith shot, save one who was taken alive and brought up to the leader of the band. The Indian made gestures beseeching for mercy, then tore open the breast of her robe to show them she was a woman, whereupon the leader (whose name it is unnecessary to give) fired and shot her dead.

There is no object in quoting further stories all of the same terrible nature; these two will sufficiently prove the sort of treatment the Beothuks experienced from the settlers. It cannot be wondered at if, when opportunity offered, they avenged their wrongs, though, as they possessed no weapons except arrows and spears, the odds were all against them.

When at length a government was established, which was not till 1728, when the first governor was appointed by the Crown, it must not be supposed that such proceedings were approved; probably the Government was altogether ignorant of what was going on, for when Mr. Cartwright, in 1768, brought the cruel treatment of the Red Indians under the notice of governor Sir Hugh Palliser[120], he issued a proclamation to the effect that, it having come to the knowledge of the King that his subjects in Newfoundland "do treat the said savages with the greatest inhumanity, and frequently destroy them without the least provocation or remorse: in order, therefore, to put a stop to such inhuman barbarity, and that the perpetrators of such atrocious crimes may be brought to due punishment, it is his Majesty's royal will and pleasure that I do express his abhorrence of such inhuman barbarity, and I do strictly enjoin and require all his Majesty's subjects to live in amity and brotherly kindness with the native savages in the said island of Newfoundland. I do also require and command all officers and magistrates to use their utmost diligence to discover and apprehend all persons who may be guilty of murdering any of the said native Indians, in order that such offenders may be sent over to England to be tried for such capital crimes as by the statute of 10 & 11 William III. for encouraging the trade to Newfoundland is directed."

After Sir Hugh Palliser's time a similar proclamation was issued by succeeding governors for many years, but to no effect. There were no means of enforcing in the

[120] Admiral Sir Hugh Palliser (1723 – 1796), 1st Baronet, was governor and commander-in-chief of Newfoundland from 1764 to 1768.

interior, or at any considerable distance along the coasts, the provisions of a proclamation issued at St. John's. So persecution and slaughter of the Red Indians continued, till at the present day the race is generally regarded as extinct.

According to Whitbourne, the French were first on friendly terms with the Beothuks, who assisted them in fishing and preparing oil. What led to a rupture of friendly relations is not very clear, but about the middle of the last century the French offered a reward for the heads of Red Indians.

After the English had made themselves masters of Nova Scotia and Cape Breton, the governor of Newfoundland was alarmed at receiving information that parties of Mic-mac Indians were coming over from Cape Breton and establishing themselves in Newfoundland. All through the war these Indians had been efficient and faithful allies of the French, and it was supposed that the latter were now using them to further their designs upon Newfoundland. Accordingly, the governor issued orders to the Mic-macs to withdraw from the island, which seems to have met with little attention, for the Mic-macs, instead of retiring, effected a permanent settlement in the colony, maintained their friendly relations with the French, and before long availed themselves of every opportunity of obtaining the offered reward for the heads of Beothuks.

At first the Mic-macs and the native Indians are said to have been on friendly terms. […] Unhappily some of the Mic-macs, tempted by the hope of reward from the French, privately shot two of the Red Indians, and were descending a river near St. George's Bay with the heads hidden in their canoe, when they chanced to fall in with a party of Beothuks. The latter, with the usual hospitality of Indians, ignorant of the treachery of which the Mic-macs had been guilty, invited them to a feast. The Mic-macs accepted the invitation. Whilst preparations were in progress for the entertainment, some of the children of the tribe examined the canoe of the visitors, discovered the concealed heads, and confided the secret to their people. No notice was taken of the discovery till each Mic-mac had taken his place at the feast, seated between two of the Beothuks, who at a given signal turned on their guests and slew them. After this the two tribes fought whenever opportunity offered; the Mic-macs, being supplied by the French with firearms, of course had the advantage. […]

John Cartwright is the first European with whom we are acquainted who succeeded in reaching Red Indian Lake by way of the Exploits river. […] Mr. Cartwright undertook […] "to explore the unknown interior parts of Newfoundland, […] and to acquire a more certain knowledge of the settlements of the Red Indians, as well as to surprise, if possible, one or more of the savages, for the purpose of effecting in time a friendly intercourse with them" – a tribe, as he observes, with whom, though the original native inhabitants of a country so long in our possession, we held no intercourse whatever, "except indeed the unfriendly one of reciprocal injuries and murders." […] He and his brother, […] with a party of thirteen others, started on the 24th of August, 1768. […] Before long they came upon wigwams recently erected and "other apparatus," which, indeed, were so numerous that the party were in high spirits, as they expected soon to "find parties of the savages."

Their attention was particularly struck by the great scale of the preparations made by the Beothuks for taking deer. Vast herds of cariboo deer range throughout the interior of Newfoundland. On the approach of winter they migrate southwards, crossing the river Exploits in thousands; and in order to capture the deer on these migrations the Indians made fences so high and strong that the deer could neither jump over, nor force a way through them, but were obliged to avail themselves of purposely left openings, at which the hunters stationed themselves and slaughtered abundance of deer with comparative ease.

These fences were made by partially cutting through the trunk of a tree and causing it to fall in the desired direction, parallel with the river, each tree being guided so as to fall on the one next to it. The fences were from six to ten feet high; the weak parts were filled up and strengthened with branches. In places where the trees grew too stunted, or were too scattered to be available for fences, the Indians placed 'sewels.' These were thin sticks about six feet long, which were stuck into the ground, tassels of birch bark being fastened to the end so as to wave to and fro with the least breath of air. The sewels were pricked into the ground at a distance of ten or a dozen yards apart, and were effectual in frightening and turning back the deer.

Deer fences skirted the banks of the river for thirty or forty miles. At certain places there were half-moon breastworks erected, behind which the hunters crowded and shot the passing deer with arrows, though sometimes they killed their game with spears, and would follow in their canoes when deer took to the water. […]

At that time the number of Beothuks was estimated at from two to three hundred souls, but from the numerous wigwams he saw on his journey, Cartwright was inclined to believe the tribe must amount to at least 500 individuals. As it is probable that they had residences in other localities, the computation does not appear excessive.

Although numerous dwellings and traces of Red Indians were found, none of the natives were met with on this journey. The adroitness of the Beothuks in hiding themselves, learnt no doubt from sad necessity, was extreme. Any of the people occupying the country through which Cartwright passed could probably easily have concealed themselves, but as it was summer, the greater number would then have left the lake and their wigwams by the river. It was the habit of the Beothuks to go inland during the winter and to return to the coasts and adjacent islands during the summer months. It was when resorting to the seashore that they were so cruelly exposed to the attacks of the fishermen, but the reason for their running the risk was obvious.

During autumn they were able to supply themselves abundantly with venison, which was kept in large storehouses forty or fifty feet long, for use during winter, the frost preserving the meat. In January [1808 or 1809][121] a party who, at the instance

[121] Blake has '1810' here, but this cannot be the case if Admiral Holloway was governor. Holloway was appointed governor in April of 1807, issued a proclamation against mistreatment of the Beothuk in July of 1807, and left Newfoundland in October of 1809. If the expedition was in January, the only two options are 1808 or 1809.

of Governor Holloway[122], set out up the Exploits river, then frozen over, in quest of Red Indians, came upon one of these storehouses, in which they found about a hundred carcasses of venison. The Beothuk cuisine must have been a good one, for in these storehouses they also preserved dried salmon, dried eggs, lobster-tails, seal-oil, and deer's paunches filled with fat. A kind of sausage made of seal's fat, livers, and eggs was one of the dainties.

The wigwams were conical in shape, formed of long poles with deer-skins or sheets of birch-rind laid sheet upon sheet in the manner of tiles. In these wigwams they made oblong hollows in the earth, and lined them with young branches of fir and pine, for sleeping places. […]

The Beothuk canoe is said to be different in shape to that of all other Indians. It was about seventeen feet long and seven wide, and made of birch-bark, and was shaped something like an elongated crescent coming to a point at the centre of each side of the vessel. A slight rod served as a keel, and the seams were sewn with fine spruce-root, and caulked with a preparation of turpentine, oil, and ochre. A thwart was introduced in the centre and at each end of the canoe, to keep the sides apart, and the inside of the frail structure was lined throughout with thin, flat sticks. These canoes were ballasted with stones, over which was laid a covering of sods and moss, on which the Indians knelt while paddling. In fine weather they occasionally fixed a very slight mast to the middle thwart, and sailed these rickety craft, in which they must have ventured considerable distances, as Beothuk remains have been found on Funk Island, which is thirty miles from the main island. Funk Island was formerly covered with multitudes of the now extinct great auk, whose presence doubtless induced the Beothuks to visit an island on which landing is impossible unless the weather be exceptionally calm.

Until recent times the walrus frequented Newfoundland seas, and the Beothuks must have been in the bait of securing these huge visitors from arctic regions, as some of the Red Indian ornaments and counters for games, are carved out of walrus-tusk. Cartwright supposed some which he found to have been worn as armlets or charms, from the fact of a slender thong being attached to them. The recent discovery of a grave containing the body of a child enveloped in a deer-skin robe, has shown that the supposed armlets were worn as ornaments attached to a fringe into which the edges of the deer-skin were sliced. Some are triangular in shape, but many of the ornaments resemble two- or three-pronged forks with a wide handle. They vary form an inch to five inches or so in length, and are made of deer-bone. Usually on both faces are scratched or engraved notches and lines, forming designs, some of which are intricate and show considerable ingenuity and fertility of invention.

The common Indian vapour bath was in frequent use amongst the Beothuks. It was made by heating stones red hot, which were then introduced under a small birch-bark hut somewhat resembling a large beehive, the patient or bather – as the case might be – pouring water on the stones, by which a dense steam was produced. […]

[122] Admiral John Holloway (1744 – 1826) was governor of Newfoundland from 1807 to 1809.

The recent discovery, in Notre Dame Bay, on a small island, of the child's grave already alluded to, throws some light on the hopes and beliefs of the Red Indians regarding a future state. The body lay on the left side as if in sleep, the legs drawn up, and the arms lying along the sides, as if the child slept. […] The 'happy hunting grounds' to which nearly all Indian people looked forward after death, lay to the westward, far beyond the setting sun. The Beothuk parents believed that their child's journey to that distant country would be a toilsome and tedious one, so with the little corpse they had buried all things needful by the way: packets of dried meat and fish, drinking cups of birch-bark, tiny canoes lest there should be rivers or lakes over which the soil must cross, and bows and arrows to bring down game when the supply of food which was provided should be exhausted. Several pairs of moccasins were ready, so that the youthful feet might not be bruised on the long, long journey. Beside the body was a curious little wooden figure. […] The boy had been buried in his finest clothes, the deer-skin robe being fringed, and many carved ornaments decorated the border. […]

The chief obstacle in deciding to what branch of the great Indian family the Beothuks belonged, is the difficulty of tracing their language to a common root. The vocabularies extant are principally derived from one taken in 1820 by the Rev. J. Leigh[123] from a Red Indian woman called 'Demasduit,' by the whites named Mary March; and another obtained by Mr. Cormack[124], who traversed the country in 1828. Cormack seems to have taken a lively interest in everything concerning the native Indians, and had a good opportunity for studying them, as while he resided in Newfoundland, an Indian girl called Shannandithit was captured and lived for some time in St. John's, a year of which she spent in Cormack's house. She learned a little English, but […] we must allow for grave errors in a vocabulary acquired from an Indian whose language probably had no term to convey the word she was called upon to translate. […]

No Red Indian appears to have been seen in St. John's till the time of Governor Gambier[125], when, in 1803, a woman was captured as she was paddling in a canoe to one of the small islands to take birds' eggs. Her captor, in hopes of obtaining a reward, took her to the capital city. The following account is given by the Rev. Mr. Anspach.

"She appeared to be about fifty years of age, very docile, and evidently different from all the tribes of Indians or savages of which we have any knowledge. She was of a copper colour, with black eyes and hair like the hair of a European. She showed a passionate fondness for children. Being introduced into a large assembly by Governor Gambier, never was astonishment and pleasure more strongly depicted in a human countenance than hers exhibited. After having walked through the room between the Governor and the General, whose gold ornaments and feathers seemed to attract her attention in a particular manner, she squatted on the floor, holding fast a bundle, in which were her fur clothes, which she would not suffer to be taken away from her. She was then placed in a situation from which she had a full view of the whole room,

[123] According to the Christian Observer, as of 1819 he was a missionary at Twillingate, Newfoundland.
[124] William Epps Cormack (1796 – 1868). A detailed account of his expedition is found below.
[125] James Gambier (1756 – 1833) was governor of Newfoundland from 1802 to 1804.

and on the instant lost her usual serious or melancholy deportment. She looked at the musicians as if she wished to be near them. A gentleman took her to the band, pointing to them at the same time; she perfectly understood his meaning, went through the crowd, sat with them for a short time, and then expressed, in her way, a wish for retiring. She was everywhere treated with the greatest kindness, and appeared to be sensible of it. Being allowed to take in the shops whatever took her fancy, she showed a decided preference for bright colours, accepted what she was given, but she would not for a moment leave hold of her bundle, keenly resenting any attempt to take it from her."

The authorities decided to send the woman back to her people, provided with presents which it was hoped might conciliate them. The presents consisted of nails, fishing-lines, hand-saws, blankets, clasp knives and such articles. It is melancholy to know that the man who captured and brought the woman to ST. John's – who for his trouble in the matter had already received fifty pounds – is supposed to have murdered his captive on the return journey to the interior, the crime being inspired by the desire of possessing himself of the trifling articles given by the Governor to the unfortunate woman. […]

Demasduit, or Mary March, was taken by some men from Twillingate in 1819. These men surprised a party of Indians on the ice, and succeeded in capturing one of them, the rest taking to flight. The captive was Demasduit; her husband – a tall, fine-looking Indian, seeing his wife a prisoner, turned back to come to her rescue, and was forthwith shot dead, and the men returned homewards with their prisoner. The poor woman, it afterwards appeared, left behind her an infant, which died a couple of days after the capture of its mother, who only survived her husband and child one year.

The last Beothuks seen alive were taken prisoners in 1823. The account of their capture and arrival in St. John's, I extract from the journal of the Rev. W. Wilson[126], a Wesleyan missionary.

"June 23, 1823. – Last week there were brought to this town three Red Indians, so-called, who are the original inhabitants of this island. They are all females, and their capture was accomplished in the following manner.

"In the month of March last, a party of men from the neighbourhood of Twillingate were in the country hunting for fur. The party went, two and two, in different directions. After a while one of these small parties, saw, on a distant hill, a man coming towards them. Supposing him, while at a distance, to be one of their own party, they fired a powder gun to let their friends know their whereabouts. The Red Indian generally runs at the report of a musket; not so in the present instance. This man quickened his pace towards them. They now, from his gait and dress, discovered that he was an Indian, but thought he was a Mic-mac, and therefore felt no anxiety.

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[126] "The Reverend William Wilson was […] unorthodox to the verge of eccentricity. After all, how many of Newfoundland's clergy […] were ever formally accused of practicing astrology, fortune telling, black magic or witchcraft? That happened to Wilson in 1833 and nearly got him expelled from the church." Smith, P. E. L. (1997). The Greatest Fishing Station in the World [Review]. *Newfoundland Studies*, *13*(1), 110-113.

"Soon they found their mistake, and ascertained that the stranger was one of the Red Indians. He was approaching in a threatening attitude, with a large club in his hand. They now put themselves in a posture of defence, and beckoned the Indian to surrender. This was of no use; he came on with double fury, and when nearly at the muzzle of their guns, one of the men fired, and the Indian fell dead at their feet.

"As they had killed a man without any design or intention, they felt deeply concerned, and resolved at once to leave the hunting-ground and return home. In passing through a droke[127] of woods, they came up with a wigwam, which they entered, and took three Indian females, which have since been found to be a mother and her two daughters. These women they brought to their own house, where they kept them until they could carry them to St. John's, and receive the Government reward for bringing a Red captive Indian. The parties were brought to trial for shooting a man, but as there was no evidence against them they were acquitted.

"The women were first taken to Government House, and by order of his Excellency the Governor, a comfortable room in the court-house was assigned to them as a place of residence, where they were treated with every possible kindness. The mother is far advanced in life, but seems in good health. Beds were provided for them, but they did not understand their use, and slept on their deer-skins in the corner of the room. One of the daughters was ill, yet she would take no medicine. The doctor recommended phlebotomy, and a gentleman allowed a vein to be opened in his arm, to show her that there was no intention to kill her; but this was to no purpose, for when she saw the lancet brought near her own arm, both she and her companions got into a state of fury, so that the doctor had to desist.

"Her sister was in good health. She seemed about twenty-two years of age. If she had ever used red ochre about her person, there was no sign of it in her face. Her complexion was swarthy, not unlike the Mic-macs; her features were handsome; she had a tall, fine figure, and stood nearly six feet high; and such a beautiful set of teeth I do not know that I ever saw in a human head.

"In her manner she was bland, affable, and affectionate. I showed her my watch; she put it to her ear, and was amused with its tick. A gentleman put a looking-glass before her, and her grimaces were most extraordinary; but when a black-lead pencil was put into her hand, and a piece of paper laid upon the table, she was in raptures. She made a few marks on the paper, apparently to try the pencil; then in one flourish she drew a deer perfectly, and, what is most surprising, she began at the tip of the tail. One person pointed to his fingers and counted ten, which she repeated in good English; but when she had numbered all her fingers, her English was exhausted, and her numeration, if numeration it were, was in the Boethic tongue.

"This person, whose Indian name is Shanandithit, is thought to be the wife of the man who was shot. The old woman was morose, and had the look and action of a savage. She would sit all day with a deer-skin shawl on, and looked with dread or hatred upon everyone that entered the court-house. When we came away Shanandithit kissed all the company, shook hands with us, and distinctly repeated 'good-bye.'"

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[127] A thicket.

After a few weeks the women were sent back to where they had been taken, but when the boat landed them on the beach and was about to leave them, they screamed, and rushed into the water after the boat, so they were taken to Twillingate till the pleasure of the Government concerning them could be known. Before long the sick girl died, and the mother did not live long after her, but Shannandithit survived some years, and died in the hospital at St. John's. From her it was understood that the reason she and her mother and sister had been so unwilling to return to their own people was that, having been some time amongst the white men regarded by their tribe as deadly enemies, they would be put to death as traitors.

The man supposed to have been Shannandithit's husband was in reality her uncle. The family had been driven by want of food to the sea-coast to look for shell-fish. At that time the tribe had dwindled down to a very few individuals, and the fate of the remnant of the race is wrapped in mystery.

No doubt the Red Indians retaliated on the fishermen and settlers in many instances. Driven from his fishing grounds, robbed of his lands, his kinsmen shot down like wild beasts, what wonder that the despairing Beothuk, lurking amid the surrounding bushes, when he got the chance stealthily let fly his arrows at the encroaching white man, who possibly, in cold blood, had murdered the Indian's wife or child?

"The interesting stranger"[128] (1819)

On Sunday last, the curiosity of the good people of this town [St. John's] was gratified by an unexpected visit from one of the Red Indians, a native tribe, so called from the pigment of red earth with which they colour their bodies. The interesting stranger is a young woman, apparently about twenty; and she is only the second of her tribe which has been seen among the Anglo-American people of the island for the last half century. It is well known that the Red Indians are an aboriginal race of men, who were found along the coasts of the island, at the time of its discovery by Europeans; but, from the ill usage they received on all sides, they have long been compelled to retire into the interior, and to fly from the face of every animal in human form, as their certain and most deadly enemy. In the north of the island, they are frequently visited by predatory parties of Esquimaux from the Labrador, and murdered wherever they are met; in the south, they are literally hunted like wild deer by the Micmacs, from the neighbouring provinces, and slain for the skins in which they are clothed[129]; and we may form a probable estimate of the treatment they have been led to experience from our own people upon the seashores, from the fact that they fly their approach with the utmost precipitation and horror, and the knowledge that, until very lately, it was not generally understood in this island to be a punishable offence to shoot an Indian.

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[128] From THE RED INDIANS. (1819, August 2). *The Caledonian Mercury*, p. 4., quoting the *Newfoundland Mercantile Journal* of May 27, 1819.

[129] Possibly a tall tale. I've been unable to find a specific, documented instance of this.

In consequence of this habitual persecution and cruelty, which every well-informed person in this island knows are not exaggerated in the relation, we could not but believe that the Red Indians were the most ferocious and intractable of the savage tribes, impelled by no motives but those of hunger and hostility. And it is with no less astonishment than pleasure, that we find, in the young woman who has been brought amongst us, a gentle being, sensibly alive to every mild impression and delicate propriety of her sex. Indeed, her appearance and manners are so different from any thing which we could be led to anticipate, that many persons were induced to believe the whole story to be an imposture, and that the woman was in reality one of the friendly tribes of Indians, who had volunteered a visit to St. John's. The following facts will, however, place the truth of the matter out of the reach of doubt.

In the summer of last year, a party of Indians descended the River of Exploits, in the night, and finding a boat there belonging to a Mr. John Payton[130], who carries on a fishery on that part of the island, they possessed themselves of every thing they could remove from the boat, and then cut it adrift. We learn that among other things which Mr. Payton lost was a chest containing his clothes, his watch, and various other articles of value. His son, the younger Payton[131], soon after came to St. John's, where he deposed as to the above facts, and communicated his intention of seeking the settlement of the Indians in the winter, in the hope of recovering his lost property, and of coming to an amicable understanding with the depredators in future. Accordingly, the two Paytons, with a party of eight men, set forward in March last, and, after travelling about eighty miles into the interior, they surprised a company of the natives, who were living in wigwams erected on a large frozen lake. The Indians at first fled with alarm, but Payton's party having overtaken and detained one woman, three men took courage and came up to them; at first they seemed friendly, but finding the woman was not released, one of the Indians boldly took hold of the elder Payton, who is a very old man, and endeavoured to drag him into the woods. Payton several times disengaged himself from the Indian, and was as often seized again, and in endeavouring to wrest his gun from him, the other[132] was unfortunately shot dead.

After this unfortunate catastrophe, the two other Indians, who had been holding an intercourse with the tribe in the woods, and apparently with a view of collecting a force, ran off, and Payton's party proceeded with their captive to the wigwams, where they found the chief part of the articles which had been lost, and, among the rest, the case of the watch. It was resolved, upon deliberation, that the young woman[133] should accompany them to their establishment, in order to acquire sufficient knowledge to act as a future interpreter and mediator; and with this view, partly, she has been brought to St. John's, but principally to obtain the means of

[130] John Peyton Sr. (1749 – 1829).
[131] John Peyton Jr. (c. 1791 – 1849) would be appointed the first stipendiary magistrate for Fogo and Twillingate, Newfoundland, in 1836. He held that post until his death.
[132] Nonosbawsut, husband of Demasduit.
[133] Demasduit, called Mary March by her captors.

finishing the laudable work which has been thus auspiciously commenced, of opening a friendly intercourse with our unfortunate countrymen in the woods.

By judicious management we have now the means, which have been long desired by the more humane inhabitants of this island, of communicating to the native Indians the friendly dispositions of our people towards them, and their desire to punish all those people who shall violate their rights. If the present opportunity be lost, it may never occur again, under circumstances equally favourable. The young woman is tractable to a degree, and seems to acquire English words with great facility, and thus promises to furnish the first means of intercourse, as interpreter, and one who can testify, from her own experience, the kind treatment she has experienced among us.

We cannot but conclude with a fervent hope that Government and the people will take a decided part in this really national affair; and endeavour to extend the blessings of peace and protection to a class of his Majesty's subjects in this island who, we are willing to believe, have been hitherto neglected, only because they have been forgotten.

A British Sailor's Impression of Demasduit[134] (1819)

The following extract from a letter of an Officer of his Majesty's ship *Drake*, gives an account of an unsuccessful but meritorious effort, to establish a communication with the original inhabitants of the Island of Newfoundland:

Early in June we sailed to Tullingate[135], for the purpose of taking on board one of the Aborigines (commonly called Red Indians) of Newfoundland. – She was taken last winter, in the Bay of Exploits, by Mr. Payton, and a party of nine or ten men, who had a kind of skirmish with two or three of her tribe, in which one of the Indians was unfortunately killed. – From Tullingate we proceeded with our new female acquaintance to Fortune Harbour, situated in the Bay of Exploit. The object of the expedition was to endeavour to open a friendly intercourse between the unfortunate natives and his Majesty's subjects. Strong hopes were entertained that the female, from the great attention and kind treatment she received, would have been of considerable service in opening the desired communication; she, however, proved of no use; but, whether from stupidity, or from entertaining some suspicion that our intentions were not friendly, it is difficult to determine.

This much I can say, that to me and some others, she appeared remarkably dull and stupid, her face being utterly devoid of expression. – It is said, in some of the English papers, that she acquired the English language with facility; but this I beg to deny. She could, indeed, apply *yes* and *no* pretty correctly, but no other words did she fully comprehend. 'Tis true she could pronounce almost any word, and say "pretty, very pretty," just as a parrot would say "poll, pretty poll." She was five weeks on board the *Drake*, and was never once observed to endeavour to make herself understood,

[134] From GUILDHALL, LONDON. (1819, November 22). *The Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle and General Advertiser*, p. 4.

[135] Twillingate, Newfoundland.

either in her own, or in any other language. She has a strong resemblance to the Malays; and [is], I believe, possessed of a considerable share of their cunning, but destitute of their vindictive spirit.

When taken, she was dressed in a large cassock that reached to her ankles, made from the skins of deer and martins; but afterwards she assumed the English garb. – The boats of the *Drake* fell in with several Wigwams, pitched close to the beach; however, the Indians, on discovering them approach to the land, scampered into the woods and were no more seen. – They are represented to be as cautious and watchful as beasts of prey. The few articles necessary for their mode of living are uncouthly rude – their clothing is entirely made from the skins of deers, bears, foxes, &c. They are supposed to have no settled place of abode; but roam where they are most likely to fall in with fish and game; the latter they are said to kill very dexterously with a clumsy bow and arrow.

The death of Demasduit[136] (1820)

We learn by letters just received here from Newfoundland, dated June the 5th, that the expedition which left St. John's in the autumn of last year, under the direction of Captain Buchan[137], of his Majesty's ship Grasshopper, having for its object to open a communication with the Aborigines of the island, by way of the Bay of Exploits, had failed. […] It appears that the Grasshopper having reached the river, from St. John's, in December last, was housed over and made secure, to enable the persons left on board to encounter the inclemency of a Newfoundland winter. Mary March[138], the female native Indian prisoner, who was to have been the medium of communication with her native friends, died on board[139] the Grasshopper before the expedition could set out from the Bay of Exploits.

About the middle of January, Capt. Buchan, Mr. C. C. Walker, Midshipman, the Boatswain, and about 60 men, proceeded with sleights on the ice, containing their provisions, &c., as also the body of the female Indian; and the spot having been pointed out by Mr. Peyton (a merchant who accompanied the expedition), where the rencontre took place between his party and the Indians, when the husband of Mary

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136 From LONDON. (1820, July 17). *The Glasgow Herald*, p. 4.

137 David Buchan (1780 – c.1838). This was not his first encounter with the Beothuk. "Captain David Buchan, who was employed under the direction of Sir John Duckworth, governor of Newfoundland, in 1810 and 1811, to endeavour to open a communication with the Aborigines of that colony, stated, that at that time there could not be fewer than 400 or 500 then in existence. In January 1811, he fell in with a party of fifteen on the Great Lake, which is directly in the centre of Newfoundland, and four of them volunteered to go with him, on which two of his own party were desirous to remain with the natives. They did so, and were murdered by arrows. He believed this tribe was now wholly extirpated by the Micmac Indians, who came over from the coast of Nova Scotia, and had now got fixed establishments in Newfoundland." ABORIGINES OF BRITISH AND OTHER SETTLEMENTS. (1836, December 28). *The London Guardian*, p. 4.

138 Demasduit.

139 Demasduit's death is attributed to tuberculosis.

March was killed, her body, ornamented with trinkets, &c., was deposited alongside that of her husband.

Capt. Buchan continued a research of 40 days, but was not able to discover the slightest trace of the native Indians. Whether they had fled to some other part of the island, or had been exterminated by the Esquimaux Indians, who, to obtain the furs with which they are covered, are known invariably to murder them at every opportunity, could not be ascertained; but it appears useless to proceed any farther in the search.

The Death of Shawnawdithit, last of the Beothuk[140] (1829)

Died, at St. John's, Newfoundland, on the 6th of June last, in the 29th year of her age, Shawnawdithit, supposed to be the last of the Red Indians or Boeothicks. This interesting female lived six years a captive among the English[141], and when taken notice of latterly, exhibited extraordinary strong natural talents. She was niece to Mary March's husband, a chief of the tribe, who was accidentally killed in 1819, at the Red Indian's Lake, in the interior, while endeavouring to rescue his wife from the party of English who took her, the view being to open a friendly intercourse with the tribe.

This tribe, the aborigines of Newfoundland, represents an anomaly in the history of man. Excepting a few families of them soon after the discovery of America, they never held intercourse with Europeans, by whom they have been ever since surrounded, nor with the other tribes of Indians since the introduction of fire-arms among them. […]In Newfoundland […] there has been a primitive nation, once claiming rank as a portion of the human race, who have lived, flourished, and become extinct in their own orbit. They have been dislodged, and disappeared from the earth in their native independence, in 1829, in as primitive a condition as they were before the discovery of the new world; and that too on the nearest point of America to England, in one of our oldest and most important colonies.

In Search of the Beothuk[142] (1829)

I will now only lay before you a brief outline of my expedition to search of the Boeothicks or Red Indians. […] My party consisted of three Indians, whom I procured from among the different tribes, viz. an intelligent and able man from the Abenakie[143]

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[140] From Died. (1829, September 14). *The London Standard*, p. 1.

[141] Five of those years were spent as a servant in the Peyton residence.

[142] From Cormack, W. E. (1829, June 1). Report of W. E. Cormack's Journey in search of the Red Indians in Newfoundland. *The National Gazette*, p. 1. Written by William Epps Cormack (1796 – 1868).

[143] The Abenaki First Nation, part of the Wabanaki Confederacy. Their traditional territory includes part of Quebec.

tribe, from Canada; an elderly Mountaineer[144] from Labrador; and an adventurous young Micmack[145], a native of this island, together with myself. […] On the 31st of October, 1828, we entered the country at the mouth of the river Exploits, on the north side, at what is called the Northern Arm. […]

On the fourth day after our departure, at the east end of Badger Bay Great Lake, at a portage known by the name of the Indian Path, we found traces made by the Red Indians, evidently in the spring or summer of the preceding year. Their party had had two canoes; and here was a *canoe-rest*, on which the daubs of red-ochre, and the roots of trees used to fasten or tie it together appeared fresh.

A canoe-rest is simply a few beams supported horizontally, about five feet from the ground, by perpendicular posts. A party with two canoes, when descending from the interior to the sea coast, through such a part of the country as this, where there are troublesome portages, leave one canoe resting, bottom up, on this kind of frame, to protect it from injury by the weather, until their return. Among other things which lay strewed about here, were a spear-shaft, eight feet in length, recently made and ochred; parts of old canoes; fragments of their skin dresses, &c.

For some distance around, the trunks of many of the birch, and of that species of spruce pine called here the Var (*Pinus Balsamifera*[146]) had been rinded; these people using the inner part of the bark of that kind of tree for food. Some of the cuts in the trees with the axe, were evidently made the preceding year. Besides these, we were elated by other encouraging signs. The traces left by the Red Indians are so peculiar, that we were confident those we saw here were made by them.

This spot has been a favourite place of settlement with these people. […] Here are the remains of one of their villages, where the vestiges of eight or ten winter *nanateeks* or wigwams, each intended to contain from six to eighteen or twenty people, are distinctly seen close together. Besides these, there are the remains of a number of summer wigwams. Every winter wigwam has close by it a small square-mouthed or oblong pit, dug into the earth, about four feet deep, to preserve their stores, &c. in. Some of these pits were lined with birch rind.

We discovered also in this village, the remains of a vapour bath. The method used by the Boeothicks to raise the steam, was by pouring water on large stones made very hot for the purpose, in the open air, by burning a quantity of wood around them; after this process, the ashes were removed, and a hemispherical frame work closely covered with skins, to exclude the external air, was fixed over the stones. The patient then crept in under the skins, taking with him a birth-rind bucket of water, and a small bark dish to dip it out, which, by pouring on the stones, enabled him to raise the steam at pleasure[147].

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[144] Probably a member of the Innu First Nation, also called the Montagnais First Nation. Their traditional territory includes parts of Quebec and Labrador.

[145] The Mi'kmaq First Nation.

[146] Probably the balsam fir, now called Abies balsamea var. balsamea.

[147] Since my return, I learn from the captive Red Indian woman *Shawnawdithit*, that the vapour bath is chiefly used by old people, and for rheumatic affections. *Shawnawdithit* is the survivor of three Red Indian females, who were taken by, or rather who gave themselves up, exhausted with hunger, to some English furriers, about five years ago, in Notre Dame Bay. She is the only one of that tribe in the hands

At Hall's Bay we got no useful information, from the three (and the only) English families settled there. Indeed, we could hardly have expected any; for these, and such people, have been the unchecked and ruthless destroyers of the tribe, the remnant of which we were in search of. After sleeping one night in a *house*, we again struck into the country to the westward.

In five days we were on the high lands south of White Bay. […] It was now near the middle of November, and the winter had commenced pretty severely in the interior. […] We inferred, that if any of the Red Indians had been at White Bay during the past summer, they might be at that time stationed about the borders of the low tract of country before us, at the *deer passes*, or were employed somewhere else in the interior, killing deer for winter provisions. At these passes, which are particular places in the migration lines, […] the Indians kill great numbers of deer with very little trouble, during their migrations. […]

We now determined to proceed towards the Red Indians' Lake. […] In about ten days we got a glimpse of this beautifully majestic and splendid sheet of water. […] We approached the lake with hope and caution; but found to our mortification that the Red Indians had deserted it for some years past. […] There were every where indications, that this had long been the central and undisturbed rendezvous of the tribe, when they had enjoyed peace and security. But these primitive people had abandoned it, after having been tormented by parties of Europeans during the last 18 years. Fatal encounters had on these occasions unfortunately taken place.

We spent several melancholy days wandering on the borders of the east end of the lake. […] At several places, by the margin of the lake, are small clusters of winter and summer wigwams in ruins. One difference, among others, between the Boeothick wigwams, and those of the other Indians, is, that in most of the former there are small hollows, like nests, dug into the earth around the fire-place, one for each person to sit in. These hollows are generally so close together, and also so close to the fire place, and to the sides of the wigwam, that I think it probable these people have been accustomed to sleep in a sitting position. There was one wooden building, constructed for drying and smoking venison in, still perfect, also a small log house, in a dilapidated condition, which we took to have been once a storehouse. The wreck of a large, handsome birch-rind canoe, about twenty-two feet in length, comparatively new, and certainly very little used, lay thrown up among the bushes at the beach. We supposed that the violence of a storm had rent it in the way it was found, and that the people who were in it had perished; for the iron nails, of which there was no want, all remained in it. Had there been any survivors, nails being much prized by these people, they never having held intercourse with the Europeans, such an article would most likely have been taken out for use again. All the birch trees in the vicinity had been rinded, and many of them of the spruce fir or var (*Pinus Balsamifera*, Canadian balsam tree) had the bark taken off, to use the inner part for food, as noticed before.

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of the English, and the only one that has ever lived so long among them. It appears extraordinary, and it is to be regretted, that this woman has not been taken care of, nor noticed before, in a manner which the peculiar and interesting circumstances connected with her tribe and herself would have led us to expect. -W.E.C.

Their wooden repositories for the dead are what are in the most perfect state of preservation. These are of different constructions, it would appear, according to the rank of the persons entombed. In one of them, which resembled a hut ten feet by eight or nine, and four or five het high in the centre, floored with square poles, the roof covered with rinds of trees, and in every way well secured against the weather inside, and the intrusion of wild beasts, there were two grown persons laid out at full length on the floor, the bodies wrapped round with bear-skins. One of these bodies appeared to have been placed here no longer than five or six years. […] What added to our surprise was the discovery of a white deal coffin, containing a skeleton neatly shrouded in white muslin. After a long pause of conjecture how such a thing existed here, the idea of *Mary March* occurred to one of the party, and the whole mystery was at once explained.

It should be remarked here, that Mary March, so called from the name of the month in which she was taken, was the Red Indian female who was captured and taken away by force from this place by an armed party of English people, nine or ten in number, who came up here in the month of March 1819. The local government authorities at that time did not foresee the result of offering a reward to *bring a Red Indian to them*. Her husband was cruelly shot after nobly making several attempts, single-handed, to rescue her from the captors, in defiance of their fire arms and fixed bayonets. His tribe built this cemetery for him, on the foundation of his own wigwam, and his body is one of those now in it. The following winter, Captain Buchan was sent to the River Exploits, by order of the local government of Newfoundland, to take back this woman to the lake, where she was captured, and if possible, at the same time, to open a friendly intercourse with her tribe. But she died on board Captain B.'s vessel, at the mouth of the river. Captain B., however, took up her body to the lake; and not meeting with any of her people, left it where they were afterwards likely to meet with it. It appears the Indians were this winter encamped on the banks of the River Exploits, and observed Captain B.'s party passing up the river on the ice. They retired from their encampments in consequence; and, some weeks afterwards, went by a circuitous route to the lake, to ascertain what the party had been doing there. They found *Mary March's* body, and removed it from where Captain B. had left it to where it now lies, by the side of her husband

With the exception of Captain Buchan's first expedition, by order of the local government of Newfoundland in the winter of 1810, to endeavour to open a friendly intercourse with the Red Indians, the two parties just mentioned are the only two we know of that had ever before been up to the Red Indian Lake. Captain B. at that time succeeded in forcing an interview with the principal encampment of these people. All of the tribe that remained at that period were then at the Great Lake, divided into parties, and in their winter encampments, at different places in the woods on the margin of the lake. Hostages were exchanged; but Captain B. had not been absent from the Indians two hours, in his return to a depot left by him at a short distance down the river, to take up additional presents for them, when the want of confidence of these people in the whites evinced itself. A suspicion spread among them that he had gone down to bring up a reinforcement of men, to take them all prisoners to the

sea coats; and they resolved immediately to break up their encampment and retire farther into the country, and alarm and join the rest of their tribe, who were all at the western parts of the lake. To prevent their proceedings being known, they killed and then cut off the heads of the two English hostages; and, on the same afternoon on which Captain B. had left them, they were in full retreat across the lake, with baggage, children, &c. The whole of them afterwards spent the remainder of the winter together, at a place twenty to thirty miles to the south-west, on the south-east side of the lake. On Captain B..'s return to the lake the next day or the day after; the cause of the scene was inexplicable; and it remained a mystery until now, when we can gather some facts relating to these people from the Red Indian woman *Shawnawdithit*.

[Returning now to our exploration,] in this cemetery were deposited a variety of articles, in some instances the property, in others the representations of the property and utensils, and of the achievements, of the deceased. There were two small wooden images of a man and woman, no doubt meant to represent husband and wife; a small doll, which we supposed to represent a child (for *Mary March* had to leave her only child here, which died two days after she was taken); several small models of their canoes; two small models of boats; an iron axe; a bow and quiver of arrows were placed by the side of *Mary March's* husband; and two fire stones (radiated iron pyrites, from which they produce fire, by striking them together) lay at his head; there were also various kinds of culinary utensils, neatly made, of birch rind, and ornamented; and many other things, of some of which we did not know the use or meaning.

Another mode of sepulture which we saw here was, when the body of the deceased had been wrapped in birch rind, and with his property, placed on a sort of scaffold about four feet and a half from the ground. The scaffold was formed of four posts, about seven feet high, fixed perpendicularly in the ground, to sustain a kind of crib, five feet and a half in length by four in breadth, with a floor made of small squared beams, laid close together horizontally, and on which the body and property rested.

A third mode was, when the body, bent together, and wrapped in birch rind, was enclosed in a kind of box on the ground. The box was made of small squared posts, laid on each other horizontally, and notched at the corners, to make them meet close; it was about four feet by three, and two and a half feet deep, and well lined with birch rind, to exclude the weather from the inside. The body lay on its right side.

A fourth, and the most common mode of burying among these people, has been to wrap the body in birch rind, and cover it over with a heap of stones, on the surface of the earth, in some retired spot; sometimes the body, thus wrapped up, is put a foot or two under the surface, and the spot covered with stones; in one place, where the ground was sandy and soft, they appeared to have been buried deeper, and no stones placed over the graves.

These people appear to have always shewn great respect for their dead; and the most remarkable remains of them commonly observed by Europeans at the sea coast, are their burying places. These are at particular chosen spots; and it is well

known that they have been in the habit of bringing their dead from a distance to them. With their women they bury only their clothes.

On the north side of the Lake, opposite the River Exploits, are the extremities of two deer fences, about half a mile apart, where they lead to the water. It is understood that they diverge many miles in north westerly directions. The Red Indian makes these fences to lead and scare the deer to the lake during the periodical migration of these animals; the Indians being stationed looking out, when the deer get in the water to swim across, the lake being narrow at this end, they attack and kill the animals with spears out of their canoes. In this way they secure their winter provisions before the severity of that season sets in. There were other old remains of different kinds peculiar to these people, met with about the lake. […]

Our only and frail hope now left of seeing the Red Indians, lay on the banks of the River Exploits, on our return to the sea coast. […] What arrests the attention most, while gliding down the stream, is the extent of the Indian fences to entrap the deer. They extend from the lake downwards, continuous, on the banks of the river, at least thirty miles. There are openings left here and there, for the animals to go through and swim across the river, and at these places the Indians are stationed, and kill them in the water with spears, out of their canoes, as at the lake. Here, then, connecting these fences with those on the north-west side of the lake, is at least forty miles of country, easterly and westerly, prepared to intercept all the deer that pass that way in their periodical migrations. It was melancholy to contemplate the gigantic, yet feeble, efforts of a whole primitive nation, in their anxiety to provide subsistence, forsaken and going to decay.

There must have been hundreds of the Red Indians, and that not many years ago, to have kept up these fences and pounds. As their numbers were lessened, so was their ability to keep them up for the purposes intended; and now the deer pass the whole time unmolested.

CONFLICT WITH THE FRENCH

The Early Cod Fishery[148] (1791)

Within twenty years after the supposed discovery of Newfoundland, by the Cabots, we find that the abundance of fish on its banks, had already drawn the attention of the people of Europe. For, as early as 1517, or 1519, we are told of fifty ships being seen there at one time. The first adventurers in that fishery, were the Biscayans of Spain, the Basques and Bas-Bretons of France, all united anciently in one language, and still in habits and in extreme poverty. The last circumstance enabled them long to retain a considerable share of the fishery. In 1577, the French had one hundred and fifty vessels there; the Spaniards had still one hundred; and the Portuguese fifty, when the English had only fifteen. The Spaniards and Portuguese seem, at length, to have retired silently, the French and English claiming the fishery exclusively, as an appurtance to their adjacent colonies, and the profits being too small for nations surcharged with the precious metals proceeding from their mines.

"Our most dangerous rivals"[149] (1759)

From the time that Queen Anne's[150] ministry reached out a compassionate hand to France, bade her rise from her forlorn, abject state, and be once more a mighty nation, the French set themselves to improve their fisheries: In this capital article of commerce the French increased very fast after the treaty of Utrecht, and became our most dangerous rivals herein. They had a considerable whale fishery, and their fishermen of St. John de Luze, Bayonne, and other ports in that part of the bay of Biscay, became the most expert harponneers [sic.] in the world, not excepting the Dutch, and the Hamburghers.

Besides the whale fishery, the French took another step, of far more consequence to Great-Britain: They exceedingly increased their fishery to Newfoundland, as well on the coast as on the Great Bank. This increase of their fishery we too sensibly felt many years. Nor did they fish only on the Great Bank of Newfoundland for that kind of fish which is cured without drying, but they had the address to wheedle us out of the Island of Cape Breton; with liberty to fortify and do what they pleased there, by which means they erected, in America, a second *Dunkirk*, which obliged us to keep large garrisons at Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, to guard against a surprise from Louisbourg. Before the breaking out of the present war[151], they were become so much our rivals in this trade and had increased it so

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[148] From United States Secretary of State. (1791, May 4). Report of the Secretary of State on the subject of the Cod and Whale FIsheries. *Gazette of the United States*, p. 1.

[149] From PROBUS. (1759, January 11). To the PRINTER, &c. *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, p. 2.

[150] Anne (1665 – 1714), Queen of England, Scotland and Ireland. She reigned from 1704 to 1714 and signed the Treaty of Utrecht, which saw the French withdraw from the drainage basin of the Hudson's Bay, and relinquish many of their claims to Newfoundland and its fisheries.

[151] The Seven Years' War of 1756-1763.

prodigiously, that they employed yearly above five hundred sail of shipping from St. Malo, Granville, Rochelle, St. Martin's, Isle of Rea; Bayonne, St. John de Luze, Sibour, &c. to carry on their North American fisheries; whereby they not only supplied themselves with the fish they formerly had from us, but furnished many parts of Spain and Italy therewith, to our exceeding great loss.

Some have computed that the French usually employ at least a thousand sail in this fishery, from 200 to 400 tons, and 20,000 men. In the year 1730, a computation was made of 220,000 quintals of fish at Marseilles only, for a market; and, *communibus annis*[152], they cured above five millions of quintals. […]

The history of both France and England show us, that since the former procured leave to fish at Newfoundland, and had Cape Breton ceded to her[153], she revived her power at sea, and her royal navy augmented in proportion to the number of ships employed in those fisheries; but as we have at length happily dispossessed them, it will be absolutely incumbent on us not to let them creep in there any more, that we may not have the same trouble and expence to run through again.

France and Newfoundland, after Napoleon[154] (1814)

By the 13th and 14th articles of the treaty of peace concluded at Paris[155] on the 30th of May last, it is stipulated that the right of fishing on the banks of Newfoundland shall be placed in the state in which it was in 1792; and that the forts and factories then belonging to the French shall be restored by us within the space of three months from the signing of the treaty, that is, by the 30th of the present month; but it appears that the British merchants engaged in the Newfoundland fishery have found this time too short in duration, or at least terminating at a crisis, when the fish already taken are in the midst of the process of curing, the interruption of which would spoil the fish, and of course be attended with incalculable loss to the owners.

A committee of merchants, interested in the Newfoundland fishery, have in consequence addressed a memorial to the Commissioners of the Board of Trade, requiring a longer time for the removal of their property and the restitution of the forts than that allowed by the treaty.

It is said to be recommended to the attention of this government, to urge that the British and French subjects be permitted as heretofore to fish jointly on the banks of Newfoundland, and to cure their fish together. We see no reason at present for either approving or condemning this proposal, which must of course depend upon the consent of the other party, and the policy of their respective governments. But the

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[152] Latin for "in common years," the phrase can be taken to mean "in an average year".

[153] By the Treaty of Utrecht. Cape Breton would be returned to the British at the conclusion of the Seven Years' War in 1763.

[154] From London Papers. (1814, October 12). *The United States Gazette*, p. 6.

[155] Not to be confused with the 1763 Treaty of Paris, the Treaty of Paris of 1814 ended the War of the Sixth Coalition, between Napoleon's France and an alliance of various nations including Austria, Portugal, Russia, Spain and the United Kingdom, among others.

French, it is urged, ought to be withheld from cutting down timber in the neighbourhood of the fisheries.

The American commissioners, it is supposed, will endeavour strongly at the meeting in Ghent, to obtain the *right* of fishing at Newfoundland. We think it will be difficult for them to show why any new right of any kind should be conceded to them. The Americans before possessed the liberty of fishing on the coast of Newfoundland, and in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, but the liberty to dry or cure their fish in any of his majesty's American dominions was not allowed them; and what has America done, either to wrest from us by force, or allure by kindness, greater rights or privileges than those which she before enjoyed?

The Evolution of the Cod Fishery to 1831[156] (1839)

The cod fishery on the coast of Labrador and banks of Newfoundland is a great business, and upwards of 50,000 persons are employed in it. Before the discovery of Newfoundland in the year 1497, by the brothers Cabot, cod were caught in large quantities by the English and Danish in the seas of Iceland, but since the discovery of North America they have been abandoned for the better fishing grounds of Newfoundland and Labrador. Anterior to the revolution, the Anglo-Americans, English and French mixed indiscriminately, and fished any where and every where, the former assisting the English. On the breaking out of the revolutionary war they of course divided, and a treaty as made respecting the conduction of the business. […]

After the revolution, the British swarmed the coast of Labrador with their fishing smacks, they having secured the greatest share by the treaty of 1783. At an average of three years, ending in 1789, they had 402 vessels, 1,911 boats and 16,856 men engaged in the business.

In the last war, the French were excluded from the "grounds," and the English increased rapidly – so much so, that in 1814, the value of the "catch" reached £2,800,000. Since the year 1815, however, the British fishery has sensibly declined, and the value of the "catch" in 1831 was only £857,210. During the fishing season, from two to three hundred schooners sail from Newfoundland for the different stations on the coast, and 20,000 British subjects are employed in the business, two-thirds of whom are engaged in the vessels.

A Brief Legal History of France's Newfoundland Fisheries[157] (1857)

The Fisheries of Newfoundland have been from the first discovery of the island mainly in the hands of the French. Before an English colony had settled in the place, a French establishment at Placentia was already working the Newfoundland coast,

[156] From The Cod Fishery. (1839, June 26). *The New York Daily Herald*, p. 2.

[157] From The Newfoundland Legislature. (1857, April 16). *The London Times*, p. 8.

and, on the principle of the right of the first comer, was already in rightful possession of the Fisheries of Newfoundland.

The two great wars between this country and France which terminated in the Peace of Utrecht deprived the French of all right to the territory of the island, but they still clung to their Fisheries, and that peace guaranteed them the exclusive privilege over the larger part of the coast. The Peace of 1763 continued the same privilege. By the Peace of 1783 the French exclusive right of fishing on the coast of Newfoundland was to commence on the east coast at Cape St. John, and thence to extend round the Strait of Belle Isle, including all the western shore as far as Cape Ray. That is to say, the exclusive fishing over more than one-half of the Newfoundland coast was secured to them. The revolutionary war, of course, deprived them for the time of the privilege, but it was regained at the Peace of 1814.

The sovereignty, however, over the Newfoundland waters had not been enjoyed all this time by the English colonist without producing some feelings of proprietorship. […] It was thought best a short time ago to review the whole question, and the result of this discussion between the French and English Governments was the Convention which is exciting, just now, so much indignation in Newfoundland.

This Convention confirms the French privilege of exclusive fishing secured by the Peace of 1814, and to the extent laid down in the Treaty of 1783, which the Peace of 1814 recognized, [but] a modification is made, by which the French give up a certain part of the west coast, *i.e.* the part between the Humber and Cape Ray, about 150 miles, to English fishing exclusively, in exchange for 80 miles' fishing on the coast of Labrador, to be enjoyed by them in common with the English. […] From the line of coast given up to exclusive English fishing, five fishing ports, with a neighbourhood of three miles, coast attaching to each, is excepted, and retained exclusively by the French.

A longer legal history of the French at Newfoundland[158] (1890)

The anomalous state of things, unfortunately, created by the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, and therefore now 176 years in existence, whereby a foreign nation enjoys territorial and inshore rights in a portion of the British dominions, and the ships of war of that nation exercise jurisdiction over British subjects within the limits referred to, could hardly fail to cause constant bitterness of contention when the industrial interests of the French and the colonists clashed with each other. […] The gist of the Treaties is that the French have a right of fishing on that portion of the Newfoundland coast from Cape St. John to Cape Ray, during the fishing season only, and that in the enjoyment of this right they are not to be interrupted in any manner by the competition of the inhabitants of the colony. […]

Article 13 of the Treaty of Utrecht, 1713, ceded Newfoundland and the adjacent islands to Britain, but stipulated that French subjects should be allowed "to catch fish, and to dry them on land," in a specified part of the island, and in that part only.

[158] From THE FRENCH AT NEWFOUNDLAND. (1890, January 22). *The London Morning Post*, p. 8.

Article 5 of the Treaty of Paris, 1763, renewed and confirmed the foregoing right, and Article 6 ceded to the French, "to serve as a shelter to French fishermen," the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon. The Treaty of Versailles, 1783, changed the treaty limits assigned to the French for fishery purposes, and defined them to extend from Cape St. John, passing to the north, and descending, by the western coast, to Cape Ray. With reference to the coasts comprised in this limitation, it is expressly declared that the French are given exactly the same rights as they had under the Treaty of Utrecht, namely, "to catch fish and to dry them on land," and to erect on the shores, during the season, such huts as were "necessary and usual for drying of fish;" and they were not to resort to the island "beyond the time necessary for fishing and drying of fish." [..] The declaration of the King of England which accompanied the Treaty of Versailles, afterwards raised questions of respective rights which continued to cause trouble. […] The important portions of it are as follow:-

"In order that the fishermen of the two nations will not give cause for daily quarrels, his Britannic Majesty will take the most positive measures for preventing his subjects from interrupting in any manner, by their competition, the fishery of the French during the temporary exercise of it which is granted to them upon the coasts of the island of Newfoundland; and he will, for this purpose, cause the fixed settlements which shall be formed there to be removed. His Britannic Majesty will give orders that the French fishermen be not incommoded in cutting the wood necessary for the repair of their scaffolds, huts, and fishing vessels."

"The 13th Article of the Treaty of Utrecht […] shall not be deviated from by either party; the French fishermen building only their scaffolds, confining themselves to the repair of their fishing vessels, and not wintering there; the subjects of his Britannic Majesty, on their part, not molesting in any manner the French fishermen during their fishing nor injuring their scaffolds during their absence." […]

The "fixed settlements" mentioned in the Royal Declaration were fishing settlements, and […] the undertaking to remove them was in accordance exclusively with the guarantee that the fishing operations of the French should in no way be interrupted by the competition of the British fishermen. The Treaty of Paris of 1814 restored the French right of fishing to the footing upon which it stood in 1792.

On these Treaties the French have maintained (1) that they enjoyed an "exclusive" right of fishery on the coast between Cape St. John, round the island by the north to Cape Ray; and (2) that all British "fixed settlements" of every nature on that part of the coast were contrary to treaty. In regard to these claims the British Government have held that British subjects have the right to fish concurrently with the French on the coasts in question, and that fixed settlements, except fishery settlements, are not contrary to the Declaration of 1783.

French fishermen extended their operations from the sea into the rivers, barring them with nets and weirs, and interrupting the free circulation of salmon [sic.], and doing great injury to the salmon fishery. As the French Government have employed ships of war every season to superintend the fisheries, it was inevitable that serious questions of jurisdiction should frequently arise. No less than nine Commissions have, since the year of 1846, endeavoured to negotiate a settlement of

the disputes which have arisen from the divergent interpreations of the Treaties. The points to which the attention of those Commissions were chiefly directed were, firstly, whether the fishery rights were exclusive or concurrent; secondly, the question of fixed settlements on the treaty coasts; thirdly, the right to take and purchase bait, and the right of the French to fish in the rivers. […]

In regard to "fixed establishments," the Convention of 1857 stipulated that no British buildings or enclosures should be erected or maintained on the strand reserved for French exclusive use. The French naval officers were also granted jurisdiction against British subjects in respect of their fishery rights. Owing to the objections raised by the Government of Newfoundland, this Convention did not come into force.

From time to time the negotiations were continued, until, in 1884, an arrangement was concluded between the two Governments, the main provisions of which were:-

1. That British fixed settlements of every kind, except fishery settlements, were to be allowed on the greater part of the treaty coast between Cape St. John and Cape Ray. The excluded parts of the coast were those assigned for the use of the French.

2. The "exclusive" right of the French to fishing was withdrawn all over the coast, and the "concurrent" right of British subjects admitted, provided the latter did not interfere with French fishermen while engaged in fishing.

3. The claim of the French to fish in rivers, except so far as the water remains salt, was withdrawn.

4. That existing settlements on the treaty coast, whether fishery or otherwise, should not be disturbed.

French cruisers were, in the absence of British vessels, given the right to exercise supervision necessary to ensure French fishery rights; French fishermen were given the right to purchase herring and capelin (bait) during the fishing season; and the employment of French subjects "in the proportion of one family to each establishment" was authorized for the guardianship of the French establishments out of the fishing season. […]

The contention of the French was that the establishment of a fixed British population on any part of the coast where they enjoyed treaty rights would eventually result in their exclusion from such parts, owing to the interference with their fishery rights. But the exclusion claimed by them in those places deprived the inhabitants of Newfoundland of the mineral and agricultural resources of the land. The Newfoundland Government, therefore, insisted that, as valuable mineral deposits existed in the vicinity of some of the harbours thus exclusively reserved for the French, the right of erecting wharves and buildings necessary for working and shipping purposes should be secured to British subjects. […]

In 1885 Lord Salisbury's Government secured substantially the points desired by the Newfoundland Government, and, with these modifications, the arrangement of the preceding year was signed. The Convention, however, had to be assented to by the Legislature of Newfoundland, [which] refused to ratify it on account of the

provision for the sale of bait. This refusal was followed by the passing of the Bait Act, forbidding the sale of bait fishes by British subjects. The Imperial Government at first, on grounds of policy, declined to assent to the Act, but it eventually went into operation, and has since been enforced by an expensive protective service.

The French fishermen, who require the bait for the deep-sea fishery on the banks, now resort to their treaty limits on the coast to catch bait, and take it away to use or sell on the high seas. They also fit out vessels from St. Pierre for the special business of taking bait for purposes of sale. […] "To catch fish, and to dry them on land," are the words of the Treaty of Utrecht, on which all subsequent treaties have been based. The French have, therefore, no right to take bait in coast waters except for use in coastal fishery, and their taking it for the purpose of selling it on the banks is an act of trade, and as such is not within the rights allowed to them by treaty.

The reason of the Newfoundlanders' strenuous resistance to the exercise of this right by the French, as also of their refusal to sell bait (a refusal which presses severely on large numbers of the poor people who had gained their living by the sale of bait) is to be found in the bounties given by the French Government to the Cherbourg and St. Malo fishermen who go yearly to the Banks to prosecute the cod-fishery. Without this bounty (which amounts to about three-fourths of the cost of their outfit) they could not afford to go such a distance; and by means of it they are enabled to deprive the Newfoundland fishermen of the custom of the foreign markets, on which they depend for the sale of their catch. The Bait Act is an attempt to retaliate on the bounty by starving the French fisheries on the banks. […]

Besides the bait question, another question that has arisen of late years […] is in connection with the lobster fishery, and the right to establish lobster factories on the coast. The industry is a remunerative one, and the points in contention are, whether the French have (as they claim) a right […] to fish for lobsters and establish tinning factories on the coast, and also to object to the fishermen of Newfoundland carrying on that industry on the portions of the coast occupied by French fishermen. The lobster culture is new, and has been resorted to because of the failure of the cod fishery on the coast.

As to the objection of the French to the erection by British subjects of lobster factories on the coast, the language of the Royal Declaration of 1783 which bears upon this point is very clear, and its meaning undoubted. The French fishermen, in pursuit of their business of catching cod on the coast, are not to be interrupted or molested in any manner by the competition of the British. If, then, British subjects erect lobster factories in such places and in such manner as not to interfere with the cod fishery of the French, the latter have no right to object.

Again, the Treaties were framed in exclusive reference to the coastal cod fishery, and declare it unlawful for the French to erect any buildings on the shore except those "necessary and usual for drying of fish.' Lobster factories are certainly not such erections.

The French Shore Question as of 1890, in verse[159] (1890)

It's no use to say I'm tired –
And sick of the fuss they make,
Of "Treaties" and "Rights and humbug,"
When they have only a right to a flake –
And a shed and a stage, for the workers,
Till their codfish are dry and white;
But sustained by a Royal bounty,
They outstrip our fishermen quite.

Yes, I say it – and feel it sorely –
The French look after their own;
They are bounty-fed and well cared for,
While we have to run alone.
They reinforce their big navy,
From their hardy Bankers here
And won't yield without a struggle
What they've held for many a year.

And now they mean to defy us!
And have all their bait at their ease;
And salmon and lobsters and herring,
And turbot and cod if they please.
Our people must leave them the shoreway,
No longer "concurrent" the right;
I say we can stand it no longer,
Whether able or not, we must fight.

I suppose we belong to Old England –
Leastways our fathers said so –
And since we must appeal to our mother,
To Old England, I say, let us go!
We are neither paupers nor weaklings
But brave, strong, fearless men;
At home amid storm and tempest –
In icefield, or forest or fen.

With hook or net, hatchet or rifle,
Expert upon sea or on shore,
We beg for no bounty, but give us
Our "Rights" and we ask for no more.

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[159] From Uncle George. (1890, March 11). A FISHERMAN'S VIEW. *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 7.

We have not enough of the Indian
To be bought by a "ribbon" or "star,"
We don't care a "cod's-tail" for titles
"Uncle George," "Uncle Bill" that we are.

We look out pretty well for the loved ones,
Count life light, in case of distress,
And THOSE who would slight us or scorn us,
Esteem THEM than savages less.
But we're trammeled to death with your "Treaties"
That a ship or a fleet can sail thro',
And you will not deny, Mother England,
We owe all these "Treaties" to you.

You made them when we were but minors,
And we look to you now for redress,
Please remember that we are your children,
And you owe us some care, more or less.
If Frenchmen will bully and bluster,
And threaten and say what they choose,
I suppose you, at least, can stand firmly,
And firmly protest and refuse.

And if you believe that you owe them –
'Tis nothing but right that you pay,
And if they won't take that – 'tis certain,
You only have one other way.
And the French know too much to provoke you,
If you fully exhibit your power,
With your heroes, like Raleigh and Nelson,
Who await but the place and the hour.

Your brave jack-tars are tired of grumbling,
And wait but the order to go,
Then settle this vexatious question,
With gold, or a brave open foe.

"An illicit traffic" in Bait[160] (1844)

The issue of bait and bait smuggling would long be an important issue for Newfoundland and France.

An illicit traffic has of late years been opened between some of your Majesty's subjects in this island [of Newfoundland] and the French settlers at St. Pierre and Miquelon, which we have no power to prevent, and by means of which the vessels of the latter are abundantly supplied with bait to the prejudice of the fishermen on our shores, who for want of it are unable to prosecute their fisheries, or even to procure a sufficiency of food for their daily consumption. Payment for this bait is made partly in cash, but chiefly in spirits, and other articles of French manufacture, which the large bounties given by the French government to encourage their fisheries enable the settlers to give liberally in return for so essential an accommodation. These articles are smuggled into our ports, to the serious damage of our revenues, and to the demoralization of your Majesty's subjects.

A few years ago the French fisheries at St. Pierre were seriously diminished by the exhaustion of bait within their boundaries, and the French authorities were constrained to forbid the taking of any caplin or herrings around their islands, except for the use of small open boats. The necessity stimulated the illicit traffic with the British, whereby their wants have become supplied at our expense, and in consequence of the preservation of their bait, codfish now swarm int heir waters, whilst they desert the opposite shores of Newfoundland.

We beg to remark that the French fishery is limited only by the supply of bait, and since the supply from our shores has been obtained it has greatly increased; already nearly 300 square-rigged vessels, varying from 100 to 400 tons burthen, besides a multitude of open boats, carry on the cod fishery from St. Pierre and Miquelon. These obtained last year from the shores of Newfoundland upwards of 70,000 barrels of fresh caplin, and about 28,000 barrels of fresh herring; and so intent are the French upon this fishery, and so anxious are they to extend it, that owing to the facilities above referred to, fifty additional square-rigged vessels were last summer sent to St. Pierre from France.

The consequence is, that while the British fisheries in the Bays of Placentia and Fortune, and on the banks, are annually diminishing, those of the French are progressively increasing; in proof whereof, we state that last year the French caught nearly one million four hundred thousand quintals of codfish, whilst your Majesty's subjects all over this island have not taken more than one million quintals. The number of French fishermen annually employed in these fisheries already amounts to nearly 20,000.

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[160] From House of Assembly of Newfoundland. (1844, July 16). NEWFOUNDLAND FISHERY. *The London Morning Chronicle*, p. 5, quoting the *Quebec Gazette* of June 14, 1844.

The Bait Act Disallowed[161] (1887)

Newfoundland's colonial government would occasionally try to control the trade in bait (and its impact on French competition) by passing laws restricting the practice. These were sometimes overruled by the British government, as in 1887.

The British government have disallowed the bait act passed by the Newfoundland Legislature a year ago. The object of the bait act was to empower the colonial government to forbid the export or ale of bait to French or other foreign fishermen. The disallowance is supposed to be in deference to French interests. Much disappointment and indignation are felt here [in St. John's,] especially as the Canadian act, having similar objects directed against American fishermen, received the imperial assent. The colony is powerless to prevent the export of French bait to supply French Bankers.

Reaction to the Disallowance[162] (1887)

Our Bait act […] empowered the Government to prohibit the export of bait, should they consider it desirable, and also to regulate the taking of bait fishes. This has long been felt to be an indispensable enactment in order to enable us to protect our fisheries. Our cod fisheries are dependent on the proper preservation of our bait fishes, not merely because the latter supply our fishermen with the necessary bait, but because if the bait fishes were seriously reduced in numbers, the cod, which are drawn shorewards in pursuit of them, would go elsewhere in search of food, and our great staple industry would soon become a thing of the past. Now the enormous drafts on our bait fishes, for the supply of the French bank fishery, and also of American bankers, in addition to what is required by our own fishermen, awaken serious apprehensions in regard to the future, and render the extermination of the caplin and squids a strong possibility in the near future. […]

The French are dependent on the supply of bait from our shores in prosecuting the Bank fishery. A number of our fishermen are in the habit of carrying bait to St. Pierre, where it is purchased by the French at very low prices generally. The supply is carried on in the most wasteful and destructive fashion – most injurious to our bait fishes, and demoralizing to those of our fishermen who are engaged in this traffic. As a measure of self preservation, we want the control, so that we can forbid the export of bait, if we see fit.

But there is another and more urgent consideration. Of late years, the French, encouraged by the enormous bounties given by their Government, have immensely extended their bank fishery and are now cutting us out and underselling us in European markets. Were their compensation a fair one, we would not complain; but their bounties enable them to deluge the markets of Europe with French fish, which

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[161] NEWFOUNDLAND BAIT ACT. (1887, February 7). *The Boston Globe*, p. 2.
[162] From NEWFOUNDLAND'S BAIT ACT. (1887, February 21). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 2.

have been selling wholesale by the cargo, at 12s 6d sterling per quintal – equal to three dollars per cwt., or something less than a penny halfpenny per pound sterling. This price is far below the legitimate cost of production.

Of course, this artificial state of affairs is caused by the application of the French bounty system, which enables their fishermen to draw from the French Imperial treasury a bounty of two dollars per quintal for codfish exported to countries outside of France and her colonies, which are besides separately protected from foreign competition. Thus the French fisherman realizes for his hundred weight of fish $3 in the open market, and a further $2 in bounty – altogether a handsome sum of $5 per quintal. On the other hand, the Newfoundland fisherman has to subsist on what price can be obtained for his unprotected article in a market thus demoralized by unfair competition. […]

Now, as long as France continues these heavy bounties, of course we cannot presume to interfere with her internal policy. […] Are we to be prevented from using such a self protective measure as refusing to allow supplies of bait to those who are unfairly undoing us in foreign markets? We simply claim the right of saying to the French, "Since you deal thus unfairly with us, we decline any longer to permit you to make our coasts a base of operations for your bountified fishing industries."

This is all we claim by passing our Bait act. The British Government, influenced by considerations for French interests, and the capital invested in their fisheries, have refused to sanction this act. […] There is but one course open to us. […] Our Legislature will unanimously re-enact the rejected act and send it again for Imperial assent, backed by the united voice of the colony.

Enforcing the Bait Act[163] (1888)

The Bait Act was finally allowed by the British government in late 1887, after amendments that made it clear that its restrictions on bait did not apply to Canadian fishers. Newfoundland lost no time in enforcing its hard-won law.

Predictions were freely indulged in, when our Bait act became law, that its provisions would never be enforced, and that the French at St. Pierre would obtain their bait as abundantly as before. It was asserted that the bait-catchers of Fortune bay could not be prevented from running cargoes of bait to St. Pierre, in spite of the utmost vigilance, and that they would defy the law and engage in bait smuggling on an extensive scale. The law, it was declared, would be practically a dead letter.

Our Government wisely determined to spare no efforts or expense in enforcing the provisions of an act which had cost us so much labor to have placed on our statute book. Accordingly, two steamers were chartered in good time; energetic captains and crews were put on board; a stipendiary magistrate, Judge Prowse, a man of great decision of character, was placed in charge of the preventive service. A number of police were also put on board, and at a later date a third steamer (a small one) was

[163] From THE BAIT ACT. (1888, May 5). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 7.

added to the fleet. These steamers were placed at different points around the shores of Fortune bay; and proclamations were everywhere posted, warning the people of the consequences of enforcing the law which prohibited the exportation of bait.

These measures have been completely successful. So far as known, only two small cargoes of herrings have escaped the vigilance of the cruisers. Those who may have cherished designs of carrying on the smuggling trade, soon became convinced that it was impracticable and abandoned the attempt. What effect the cutting off of supplies of bait to the French may have had on their fishery, time will tell.

The latest accounts represent that bait at St. Pierre was very scarce, and that high prices failed to secure it. They had been boasting[164] beforehand that the act would make no difference to them; that they could secure abundant supplies of herring from Bay St. George, or, failing that, could get along with salted herrings. They are convinced of their mistake by this time. St. George's bay was not accessible, owing to ice. Nothing can compensate them for the loss of supplies of fresh herrings, in the early part of the season, from Fortune bay. When the caplin appear in the latter part of May, they can get fair supplies of these in the seas around St. Pierre or on the Banks, but the expense of procuring them will be much greater than when the market was glutted with cargoes of them from Fortune and Placentia bays. […]

The enforcement of the Bait act will secure for us indirectly another great benefit. Carrying bait to the French at St. Pierre proved to be a most demoralizing business. It trained numbers of our people in smuggling dutiable goods from St. Pierre, thus defrauding the revenue and injuring honest traders, and at the same time debauching the public conscience, so that smuggling was not regarded as either wrong or disreputable. Bait catchers were invariably the poorest and least industrious of our fishermen. They will now have to cease smuggling and take to other ways of fishing which, in the long run, will greatly improve their condition, though some immediate suffering during the transition will be the result.

GOOD EFFECTS ON THE HERRING FISHERY

This is not all. Bait catching for the French was a most wasteful and injurious mode of carrying on the herring fishery, and if persevered in would probably have led to the extermination of the herring in those splendid bays. It is admitted on all hands that for every ten barrels of herring sold, one hundred barrels were wantonly destroyed. The large seines used by the bait catchers enclose thousands upon thousands of immature herring, some only three or four inches long. All are killed, and out of five hundred barrels hauled, four hundred and fifty are thrown overboard. Besides the destruction of fish, the dead herrings spoil the ground, and they often abandon the locality for years or for ever. Some thirty years ago it is on record that a tremendous haul of herring was made at Bay de Nord by two hundred schooners. At least ten thousand barrels of herring were thrown overboard, and for ten years after

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[164] "We can get all the bait we want – squid in July on the Banks themselves; capelin in June off our own islands, and herring in Bay St. George for the spring fishing from April 18. We shall be a little delayed by the ice in the latter place, it is true, but 'first fish' is merely a matter of pride and a few days make no difference." The French Consul, M. Riballier des Isles, as quoted in Norman, H. (1887, December 15). IMPERIAL INTERVIEWS V. *The Pall Mall Gazette*, p. 1.

not a herring would enter Bay de Nord. Numerous instances of a similar character might be cited. […]

The Bait act will have the effect of putting an end to one of the most ruinous and destructive methods of taking these valuable fish that was ever witnessed in a civilized country. The Fortune bay people are now getting their eyes opened to these evils, and are convinced that to prolong such wanton waste of the gifts of Providence would, in the end, bring ruin on themselves, and inflict great injury on the whole colony. For the prosecution of our staple industry bait is indispensable, and its protection and preservation should be our first care. […] When we consider our rapidly growing bank fishery, and the consequent demand for bait, and the great number of foreigners engaged in the business, the importance of protecting our bait becomes apparent.

Details of the French Cod Subsidy[165] (1890)

Some particulars of the working of the bounty[166] system in the Newfoundland fishery may not, writes our Paris correspondent, be uninteresting just now. The bounties are said to be of two kinds – those given to the ship-owners, and those granted as a premium on the fish caught. The first-mentioned are calculated at the rate of 50f. to each member of the crew for the fish caught and dried off the coast of Newfoundland on the Great Bank, and at St. Pierre and Miquelon; and 30f. per man for fish caught, but not dried, on the Great Bank.

The bounties on the produce of the fishery are as follows:- (1) 20f. per metric quintal (about 200lb.) for dried cod caught by French fishermen, and sent direct from the fishing-ground or from dépots in France to the French colonies in America and India, as well as that sent to the establishments on the West Coast of Africa and other Transatlantic countries, provided there is a French Consul at the port of destination: (2) [18f.][167] per metric quintal for dried cod caught by French fishermen, send either direct from the fishing-ground or from depots in France to European countries (Sardinia excepted); (3) 16f. per metric quintal for importation to the French colonies in America and India and other Transatlantic countries of dried cod taken by French fishermen, provided they are exported from French ports, but not previously stored there; (4) 12f. per metric quintal for dried cod caught by French fishermen, and sent either direct from the fishing-ground or from French ports to Algeria and Sardinia. French fishing vessels returning to France are also entitled to a bounty of 20f. per metric quintal for salt cod roe, provided it is certified as fit for human consumption.

[165] From POLITICS AND SOCIETY. (1890, June 16). *The Leeds Mercury*, p. 4.
[166] Subsidy.
[167] This figure may be incorrect, as my source text is damaged at this point.

"Bounty versus Bait"[168] (1890)

The commercial and social welfare of Newfoundland is so indissolubly bound up with the result of her fishing industries, that any injury sustained by these is felt, and that most keenly, by every class in the community. Up to a recent date those great firms in whose hands the bulk of the commercial capital of the country is centred, and who are summed up in local parlance as "the south side of Water street," were able to hold their own even in the teeth of the gradual depreciation in the market value of such staple products as seal and cod oils. The cod fish caught by the French, though representing a large proportion of the produce of the banks, was transported to France and consumed there. But now the French, profiting by their bounty system, have entered into competition with the Newfoundlanders in the all-important markets of Southern Europe, and notably those of Spain and Italy. Their system of treatment has facilitated this.

Newfoundland fish, after undergoing a lengthy process of curing on the stages, or "flakes" as they are locally termed, erected round the shores of almost every bay of the island, is delivered to the merchant, and by him consigned in bulk to Spanish and Italian ports, as is the product of the Labrador fishery. The French send their fish home simply in salt to Bordeaux or other ports, and there cure it as required for consumption. Hence, not only can the Spanish or Italian dealer be supplied by them with a succession of small parcels that he can readily work off amongst his customers without having any need of locking up capital in a large purchase, but he can, thanks to the bounty, obtain these at a far cheaper rate than he would have to pay for Newfoundland fish. Figures given me show that with a bounty of from ten to twelve francs per quintal, or hundredweight, fish can be sold at 2dols. 40c.[169] – or 12s. per quintal, Newfoundland fish being quoted at from 4dols. 50c. to 6dols[170]. Moreover, the consumer is beginning strongly to appreciate the fish thus treated in France. It will not keep like that sent direct from Newfoundland, but it appears to be hailed as more palatable. It is the familiar case of the slightly-cured and tasty bloater as against the red herring.

"The value of the Bait act"[171] (1891)

The value of the Bait act as a lever in connection with defensive measures against the French has been strikingly illustrated this year. The act was strictly enforced. Supplies of bait were cut off from the French, and over one hundred of their vessels were lying in St. Pierre without bait. Five and six dollars were offered for herring. Our Fortune bay fishermen soon learned this. It is said that French emissaries were at work stirring them up. The result was that meetings of fishermen were held, and a combination formed to "burst the cursed Bait act."

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[168] From BOUNTY VERSUS BAIT. (1890, July 23). *The Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, p. 5.
[169] About $68 in 2020, adjusting for U.S. inflation.
[170] About $128 to $170 in 2020, adjusting for U.S. inflation.
[171] From NEWFOUNDLAND'S FINANCES. (1891, May 8). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 7.

Herring were plentiful at Bay d'Este and Bay L'Argent – arms of Fortune bay. About 100 craft collected here, and the men openly declared they intended to defy the law, break the blockade and load up with herring for St. Piere. There were three government cruisers on the spot – the Fiona, Lady Glover and Hercules. The fishing vessels filled up with herring and prepared to sail.

In vain did the commander of the protective steamers warn and threaten. Armed police in considerable numbers were on board, but, in spite of all, the fleet of fishing vessels, it is said over seventy in number, sailed in a body, keeping close together, ready to defend themselves if assailed. If one fell behind, the others shortened sail till it came up. Thus defiantly they sailed, and with a fair wind reached St. Pierre in a few hours, the distance being only 45 miles, and no doubt reaped a rich harvest.

The occurrence is greatly to be deplored. It is a serious blow to the best interests of the country, and gives a temporary triumph to the French. But the Government are determined to enforce the law. Reinforcements of police and another steamer have been sent. Many of the bold smugglers are known and will be heavily punished. A little wholesome severity and firmness in upholding the law will prevent such outbreaks in the future. Meantime, however, the French have got abundance of bait and will be off to the banks.

The end of the Bait act[172] (1893)

The much discussed and long fought for Bait act has been practically repealed by the Newfoundland Legislature at the instance of the Government. Any foreign fishing vessel can now obtain supplies of the main essential to the prosecution of its business off the Newfoundland coasts by paying a license fee of $1.50 a ton.

The reversal of policy implied by this step is complete. The Bait act was the main weapon relied on by the colony to defend its fishermen against the encroachments on their markets by their French rivals. The large bounty paid by France to its fishermen enabled them to compete at an advantage with those of Newfoundland, notwithstanding the greater distance they had to cover in their voyages to the fishing grounds. This competition was felt not only in France, but in Spain, Italy and other countries of Europe where Newfoundland's dried fish found a large market.

By all accounts the enforcement of the Bait act greatly inconvenienced the French fishermen, and, so far, tended to benefit those of Newfoundland. The act might also have been used with some advantage in the French shore negotiations, as exemption from its provisions would be a consideration for which France should be willing to give something in return.

The enforcement of the act, however, was not popular among the island fishermen themselves. The sale of bait was a source of ready revenue, which they appreciated more than the greater ultimate advantages to be secured by retaining it

[172] NEWFOUNDLAND'S BAIT ACT. (1893, March 24). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 4.

and crippling their rivals. These facts, no doubt, are behind the Government's new policy. The elections are coming on in the colony, and fishermen's votes count.

CONFLICT WITH THE UNITED STATES

United States fishing rights in Newfoundland[173] (1814)

Like the French, the Americans had been granted limited rights to the Newfoundland fisheries as early as the Second Treaty of Paris of 1783, which marked the end of the American Revolution. These rights made them important competitors to British fishers and merchants.

To the Right Hon. the Lords of his Majesty's most Hon. Privy Council for Trade, the Memorial of the Committee of Merchants interested in the Trade, Navigation, and Fisheries, of the Island of Newfoundland, the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and on the Coast of Labradore, humbly showeth, that your Lordship's Memorialists presented to the Right Hon. the Earls of Liverpool and Bathurst, early in the present year, […] a Statement in regard to those Fisheries, and most earnestly entreating them, in the event of any Treatie of Peace[174] being made, to preserve to British subjects, on their own coasts and shores, the valuable *exclusive* Fishery which they then enjoyed.

Anxious once more to draw the attention of his Majesty's Government to the Fisheries in question, particularly since those carried on by the French are replaced on the advantageous footing of 1792[175], your Lordship's Memorialists humbly submit the following observations, to shew the injustice and impolicy of re-admitting the Citizens of the United States to any participation in the Fisheries of Newfoundland, of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and along the Labradore Shore.

Your Memorialists feel that the re-admission of the French must materially affect the British Fisheries; but if the Americans are permitted to regain the advantages they have heretofore enjoyed, your Memorialists have no hesitation in asserting to your Lordships, that the British Trade and Fisheries of those places mentioned must, in no remote period, be inevitably lost to this country.

The Inhabitants of the United States possessed great advantages over the British. The third article of the Treaty of Peace of 1783[176] gave them the right of

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[173] From Hunt, H. et al. (1819, April 7). Memorial presented by the committee of merchants interested in the trade, navigation, and fisheries of Newfoundland, in 1814, before the peace with America. *The London Morning Post*, p. 2.

[174] The Treaty of Ghent, which ended the War of 1812, would be signed by Britain and the United States on December 24, 1814. It made no mention of the Newfoundland fishery, but the Commercial Treaty of 1815 would ease restrictions on trade between the United States and Britain.

[175] As mentioned elsewhere in this text, the Treaty of Paris of 1814 restored France's Newfoundland fishery to the status it had enjoyed in 1792.

[176] "It is agreed that the people of the United States shall continue to enjoy unmolested the right to take fish of every kind on the Grand Bank and on all the other Banks of Newfoundland, also in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and at all other places in the sea, where the inhabitants of both countries used at any time heretofore to fish. And also that the inhabitants of the United States shall have liberty to

fishing not only on the Grand Bank, on all other Banks of Newfoundland, and in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, but at *all other places in the Sea, where the Inhabitants of both Countries used, at any time heretofore, to fish,* and even the liberty *to take Fish on the Coasts, Bays, and Creeks,* of his Britannic Majesty's Dominions in America, including *Newfoundland and the Coast of Labradore, wherever British Fishermen shall use;* and to dry and cure Fish in any of the unsettled bays, harbours, and creeks of Labradore, Nova Scotia, and the Magdalen Islands. The advantages possessed by the French were enjoyed in a tenfold degree by the Americans; for it may be safely affirmed that the outfit of their vessels, and their whole equipment, did not amount to one half of the expense incurred in British shipping, more particularly in the article of provisions: they have not only open to them, equally with British subjects, the Ports of Spain, Portugal, and Italy, but they have been even afforded markets for nearly two hundred thousand quintals of fish in the British Islands and Settlements in the West Indies; added to which, they possess the still more important advantage, that of proximity to their fisheries, which, in 1791, Mr. Jefferson[177] brought forward measures to render more extensively useful, and to which, in 1812, the State of Massachusetts, in their Address to Congress, ascribe the principal source of wealth to the United States.

To enter somewhat more into detail of the American Fisheries, your Memorialists beg to state, that from the causes above mentioned, they have increased with a rapidity beyond example.

That in 1791, according to the official statement, the American export of dry and green fish amounted to about 390,000 quintals, and its value, including oil, to One Million Six Hundred and Fifty-Six Thousand Four Hundred and Eighty dollars[178].

That in 1803 the same official document gives the export of 490,000 quintals, and the value to have exceeded Two Million Six Hundred Thousand dollars[179].

That in 1807 the export was stated to have reached 520,000 quintals, and the value above three million four hundred thousand dollars[180]; and, from the best information your Memorialists have been able to obtain of the state of the American Fishery since that year, they believe they are fully warranted in stating, that above 2000 sail of schooners were of late put into the Gulf of St. Lawrence, 1400 of which caught and cured their fish on the coast of Labradore, employing above 15,000

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take fish of every kind on such part of the coast of Newfoundland as British fishermen shall use (but not to dry or cure the same on that island) and also on the coasts, bays & creeks of all other of his Britannic Majesty's dominions in America; and that the American fishermen shall have liberty to dry and cure fish in any of the unsettled bays, harbors and creeks of Nova Scotia, the Magdalen Islands, and Labrador, so long as the same shall remain unsettled, but so soon as the same or either of them shall be settled, it shall not be lawful for the said fishermen to dry or cure fish at such settlement without a previous agreement for the purpose with the inhabitants, proprietors, or possessors of the ground." From the Treaty of Paris, 1783; International Treaties and Related Records, 1778-1974; General Records of the United States Government, Record Group 11; National Archives.

[177] Thomas Jefferson (1743 – 1826), president of the United States from 1801 to 1809.

[178] About $45,485,355 in 2020, adjusting for U.S. inflation.

[179] About $59,389,290 in 2020, adjusting for U.S. inflation.

[180] About $75,654,400 in 2020, adjusting for U.S. inflation.

seamen and fishermen therein, and returning to the United States about six millions of dollars[181].

That the increase of shipping in seven of the principal ports of the New England States would seem to confirm the above, the official documents stating the increase at above one hundred thousand tons in ten years, from 1794 to 1804 – from 158,964 tons to 259,180 tons: and that it has continued to increase in an equal proportion, on a comparison with the whole of the shipping of the United States.

That the American Government has ever been particularly jealous of their own waters, from which British shipping were always excluded; and as the present war has annulled the Treaty of Peace of 1783, that it will neither be just nor politic to grant to the subjects of the United States, in any future Treaty, a renewal of the right to catch or cure fish on or near the coasts of any of the possessions of his Britannic Majesty in North America; that they ought not, on any account, hereafter be permitted to enter or pass through the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and be excluded altogether from the British Islands and Colonies in the West Indies.

Your Memorialists have no need to mention the vexatious conduct which has too often characterized the Americans in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and along the Labradore Shore, as they believe such has already been ably exposed to your Lordships; but they beg to state, that they must expect a continuance thereof, unless the Americans are entirely precluded from all interference in the Fisheries bordering on the British possession, and are confined to their own extensive and valuable shores.

When your Memorialists addressed themselves to Lord Liverpool, in January last, submitting to his Lordship, from the information they had been able to collect, their ideas of the value of the British fisheries, they had had no opportunity of seeing the official statement of last year's trade; they now find they had considerably under-rated the same, and beg to state their opinion, that the actual value of the exports exceeded two millions seven hundred thousand pounds[182], all taken from the sea; that the quantity of shipping employed amounted to nearly eighty thousand tons, and the number of seamen and fishermen above sixteen thousand, being an increase beyond all expectation, and arising entirely from the exclusion of the Americans from any participation therein.

That in 1809 the number of British vessels was 438, amounting to [missing] tons; that the quantity of fish exported was 540,050 quintals, and about 2400 tons of oil. That in 1813 the number of ships had increased to 566, equal to 77,768 tons. The export of fish amounted to 863,097 quintals, and that the shipment of oil was above 5900 tons, exclusive of nearly eighty thousand quintals of fish, an adequate proportion of oil, and a requisite quantity of tonnage for the export thereof from the district of Fortune Bay and the coast of Labradore, from which no returns for last year appear to have been received: increasing the total export of fish to near one million of quintals, and employing above eighty thousand tons of shipping.

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[181] $6,000,000 in 1814 is about $87,993,750 in 2020, adjusting for U.S. inflation.

[182] £2,700,000 in 1813 is about £188,039,070 in 2019, adjusting for United Kingdom inflation. The same figure, adjusting instead for United States inflation, would be about £43,142,200.

That from the increased exertions made during the present season, there is every reason to believe that the fishery will be very considerably extended, above three thousand youngsters, or fresh men, having been sent from Waterford alone to Newfoundland, and a great increase from this country.

That your Memorialists have every right to expect this rapid improvement will continue, and that a favourable turn will also be given to the settlers in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, provided the Americans are confined in their fisheries, *to their own coasts and shores;* while, on the contrary, if the subjects of the United States are permitted to resume their fishery, by virtue of any Treaty containing an Article as disgraceful as the third Article of the Treaty of 1783, your Memorialists have no hesitation in assuring your Lordships, that the decrease of the British fisheries, and the ruin of those persons engaged therein, will be more rapid than has been the increase and the benefits this country has derived from them.

Your Memorialists therefore humbly pray your Lordships will be pleased to take their case into your early consideration; and they hope that your Lordships, sensible of the great advantages which are derived from British fisheries, will strenuously recommend to his Majesty's Government the entire exclusion of the Americans from fishing on or near the British coasts and shores of his Majesty's possessions in North America and Labradore, as being absolutely necessary for preserving the trade and fisheries thereof to this Country.

And your Memorialists, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

Signed by HENRY HUNT, Chairman,

London, 29th July, 1814. And the others of the Committee.

Competition and the Convention of 1818[183] (1819)

The treaty that established the 49th parallel as the boundary between the United States and Canada also granted fishing rights in Newfoundland to the United States[184].

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[183] From Committee of Merchants trading from London and the different Ports of the Kingdom with the Island of Newfoundland and its Dependencies. (1819, April 7). Memorial Presented by the Merchants Trading to Newfoundland, before the conclusion of peace with France and America. *The London Morning Post*, p. 2.

[184] Article I reads in part: "[T]he inhabitants of the said United States shall have, forever, in common with the Subjects of His Britannic Majesty, the Liberty to take Fish of every kind on that part of the Southern coast of Newfoundland which extends from Cape Ray to the Rameau Islands, on the Western and Northern coast of Newfoundland, from the said Cape Ray to the Quirpon Islands[,] on the Shores of the Magdalen Islands, and also on the Coasts, Bays, Harbours and Creeks from Mount Joly on the Southern Coast of Labrador, to and through the Streights [sic.] of Belleisle and thence Northwardly indefinitely along the Coast, without prejudice however, to any of the exclusive Rights of the Hudson [sic.] Bay Company: and that the American Fishermen shall also have liberty forever, to dry and cure Fish in any of the unsettled Bays, Harbours and Creeks of the Southern part of the Coast of Newfoundland hereabove described, and of the Coast of Labrador; but so soon as the same, or any Portion thereof, shall be settled, it shall not be lawful for the said Fishermen to dry or cure Fish at such Portion so settled, without previous agreement for such purpose with the Inhabitants, Proprietors

The Memorial of the Committee of Merchants trading from London and the different Ports of the Kingdom with the Island of Newfoundland and its Dependencies, humbly showeth, that your Lordship's Memorialists, in consequence of a prevalent idea that a negociation for a peace is now pending, beg leave to submit to your Lordship their views of the vast importance of the Fisheries carried on at Newfoundland, the Islands adjacent, along the Coast of Labradore, and in the Gulf of St. Lawrence – Fisheries which have very considerably increased since the exclusions by war, of other nations from a participation therein, and which, it is fair to believe, are only now in a state of comparative infancy, if such exclusion be continued.

In the first instance, your Memorialists beg to point out the immense extent of the American Fisheries, when the existing dispute with the United States commenced a trade, as Lord Sheffield very justly observes, which has been computed at one-third, or nearly one-half of the amount of value of the remittances from the New England States, and which they will continue to enjoy, in proportion to the neglect or encouragement of our own Fisheries. To this part of their commerce the Government of the United States has given the greatest encouragement, by bounties on the tonnage of vessels employed therein, and by a heavy duty on all fish not of their own catch, imported even for exportation. They have to state, that in the year 1811, the Americans employed 1500 sail of vessels, from 50 to 100 tons burthen each, in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and along the Coast of Labradore only, navigated on an average by ten men – a nursery, in that part of their Fisheries alone, equal to the increase of three thousand new seamen annually[185], the whole number of men so employed, being estimated at the least at fifteen thousand. That the quantity of fish exported from the American States exceeded the British export during the preceding years of 1810 and 1811, full one-third each year, the American export being above 900,000 quintals; the principal part of which was transhipped for the European markets and West-India islands, on board of vessels of a much larger class than those employed in the catch thereof, thereby adding to the number of seamen employed in that trade. That the Fishery of America, fostered and encouraged as it has been by the Government, has increased since the Commercial Treaty with that country from an export of about 800,000 quintals, to nearly 1,000,000, with fish oil, and other produce of the sea, in proportion.

In fine, your Memorialists are firmly convinced, that the Fishery of the Americans carried on along the coast and shores of the British dominions in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and at Labradore, is of more importance to the United States than any other trade or fishery they possess, or even than the annexation to America of Canada would prove to them – a fishery which, if renewed and carried on as it was before the existing hostilities commenced, must and will gradually destroy the British Fisheries, now in a state of rapid and certain improvement. That in addition to the

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or Possessors of the Ground." *Convention of Commerce Between Great Britain and the United States of America*, signed at London, 20 October 1818.

[185] A common argument made for the importance of the cod fishery was that it was a training ground, or nursery, for sailors that could be used by the navy in the event of war.

advantages above stated to be enjoyed by the Americans, your Memorialists beg to represent the serious injury this country has sustained by the facility afforded to the emigration of persons employed in the British Fisheries, and of which the Americans too successfully availed themselves whenever they had an opportunity, and also by their interference, contrary to the express terms of the Commercial Treaty, with the Planters settled and carrying on the fishery along the coasts hereinbefore-mentioned.

Your Memorialists, in the next place, beg to solicit your Lordship's attention to the Fisheries carried on by the French. […] That the catch by the French was generally estimated at the least at 300,000 quintals; but from the exertions making in France, subsequent to the peace of Amiens, it clearly appeared, that the French Fisheries would soon be superior to those carried on by his Majesty's subjects.

Your Memorialists having thus submitted to your Lordship's consideration the foregoing observations, relative to the French and American Fisheries, are naturally led to a statement of their own, which (in consequence of the war this country has been and still continues engaged in with France and the United States of America), have increased equal to the most sanguine expectations which had been formed. The export of dried cod fish alone, for the year ending the 5th day of November last, amounted to 946,102 quintals, exceeding the shipment of the preceding year by 300,000 quintals, or one-third of the catch of the whole Fishery; with a proportionate increase in cod oil, seal skins, seal oil, salmon, &c. &c. amounting in value to above one million five hundred thousand pounds sterling, employing in its transport to different markets, at least 75,000 tons of British shipping and five thousand seamen, independent of the persons actually employed in catching and curing the fish, and returning to England upwards of two millions sterling, contributing thereby very considerably to promote the balance of trade in favour of this country.

Your Memorialists have stated to your Lordship, that the catch of fish by the Americans amounted to 900,000 quintals, of the French to 300,000 quintals, and the Fishery of his Majesty's subjects to 600,000 quintals, making a total of 1,800,000 quintals, exclusive of oil and other produce, for the whole of which it is evident there are foreign markets open to the British merchant; they feel themselves, therefore, fully justified in representing to your Lordship, that if the French are excluded from Newfoundland, and the French and Americans from catching fish on the shores of that island, the islands adjacent, from the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and thence northward from the coast of Labradore, the Newfoundland trade must continue rapidly to increase, as that portion of the fishery which has hitherto been carried on by foreigners will become the exclusive privilege of British subjects, and consequently the advantages which this country at present derives from the above trade will be doubled, without the aid of any bounty, requiring only a sufficient number of ships of war on the station, to prevent the Americans or French from disturbing, in any way, the persons employed in carrying it on. The quantity of British shipping, which at present amounts to 75,000 tons, would be increased to 200,000 tons, and augment, at the same time, the valuable nursery this Fishery has always proved for British seamen: and the consumption of British manufactures, of Irish provisions, and the produce from the West India islands, would be increased in equal proportion.

Your Memorialists therefore most earnestly entreat your Lordship's attention to this statement; and in the event of any negociation for peace, they hope that the fishery carried on along the coast of Newfoundland, on the shores of the adjacent islands, in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and at Labradore, may be exclusively secured to British subjects, as the only means of securing to them a continuation of those fisheries, an increased vent for British manufactures, a valuable nursery for seamen, and prove the only meaas of putting an end to those disagreements which have constantly occurred, by the unjust interference of those persons employed in the French and American fisheries.

And your Memorialists, as in duty bound, will ever pray, &c., to the Right Hon. the Earl of Liverpool, &c., Fife House.

London, Jan. 11, 1819.

A Subsidy for Newfoundland Fish[186] (1819)

For a considerable length of time, persons interested in the Newfoundland fishery have sent memorials to the government, complaining of the unfavourable state of their trade, and pointing out the impolicy of allowing the citizens of the U. States any further privileges on this subject, which, it is stated, would totally ruin the Newfoundland Fishery. To these representations, Ministers, it is said, replied, that if in the Commercial Treaty which was then about to be arranged with America such privilege should be granted, Government, by way of bounty, would allow 3s. per quintal on all fish cured at Newfoundland, which would produce about 250,000l.[187] a year. The Treaty having been concluded, a deputation waited on the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who, in conformity with what was before promised, agreed to allow the sum above mentioned.

The "Newfoundland Outrage"[188] (1878)

I, Charles Dagle, master of the American schooner Lizzie and Namari, of Rockport, do on oath depose and say that I sailed from Gloucester on the 6th day of December, 1877, for Fortune Bay, Newfoundland, for a load of herring. In the last year (1877) I had sold a seine and a boat to parties in Newfoundland, and they were to supply me with herring in payment for the seine and boat. I arrived at Fortune Bay about the 18th of December. I was at Long Harbor, N. F., with my vessel on the 6th of January. [There I] saw the seines of the American schooners New England and Ontario destroyed by the fishermen of Newfoundland.

There is a decided objection to using netted or gill net herring for freezing purposes, as these herring die in a short time after being taken in gill nets. When

[186] From Latest from Europe. (1819, May 14). *The Lancaster Intelligencer*, p. 2.

[187] About £20,893,230 in 2019, adjusting for United Kingdom inflation. The same figure, adjusting instead for United States inflation, would be about £5,032,630.

[188] From Dagle, C. (1878, February 26). THE NEWFOUNDLAND OUTRAGE. *The New York Daily Herald*, p. 4. Written by Charles Dagle (1832 – 1883).

they are seined, they can be kept alive on the radius of the seine and taken out alive when the weather is suitable for freezing, while the netted herring, being dead, must be salted or spoil; consequently the seined herring are the best for our purposes and are what the American vessels want for our market.

Knowing this fact, the Newfoundland fishermen had endeavoured to obstruct in every way the taking of herring with seines, as they use principally gill nets; they placed their nets, which are set permanently, so as to hinder the using of seines.

On the 6th of January, 1878, the herring had come inshore, so that they were inside the gill nets, thus giving our people an opportunity to seine them without interfering with the gill nets.

On the Americans attempting to put their seines in the water, the Newfoundland fishermen threatened to destroy them, and when our fishermen had taken their seines full of herring, the Newfoundlanders came down to the number of two hundred, seized and destroyed the seines, letting out the fish, and afterward stole and carried off the remnants of the seines.

Another Account of the Attack[189] (1878)

I, James McDonald, [am] master of the American schooner F. A. Smith, […] chartered by George W. Plumer and others, of Gloucester, for a voyage to Newfoundland for herring. I sailed from Gloucester on the 29th of November, 1877, and arrived at Long Harbor, N. F., on or about the 15th of December, 1877. I carried a large purse seine, such as is used to take mackerel. The seine will take 4,000 barrels of fish. I employed Newfoundland fishermen to operate the seine. I set my seine twice, but without catching anything, as my seine was torn by rocks that had been left off the beach.

On the 6th of January the herring made their appearance in great numbers, and the opportunity to take a large haul was improved [sic.] by my men, and we took at least one thousand barrels – enough to load my vessel and one other.

The Newfoundland fishermen came off in their boats and told me to take my seine up or they would take it up for me, and that they would cut it up. There were about two hundred men engaged in this violence, and my own crew consisting of six men I could not resist, but was obliged to take up my seine. I saw the seines of the schooners New England and Ontario destroyed and knew that mine would also be destroyed if I did not take it up.

My seine was not attached to the shore when they came off, and the attack on me was made in boats. After destroying the other seines they all made for me, and my only safety was to gather up my seine. I lost all my fish, and the Newfoundland fishermen put all the obstructions they could in the way to prevent the use of our seines after that.

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[189] From McDonald, J. (1878, February 26). THE NEWFOUNDLAND OUTRAGE. *The New York Daily Herald*, p. 4. Written by James McDonald (d. 1886).

American Ships and the Bait Act[190] (1888)

Authorities at St. John's, N. F., have seized the American schooner Ambrose H. Knight, of Boothbay, Me., a Grand Banks Fisherman, on a charge of violating the terms of the license under which she was allowed to buy bait. […] The act under which the Knight has been seized is known as the Bait act, and was passed by the [Newfoundland] Legislature of 1887. […] The act was intended to drive away from Newfoundland fisheries the French fishermen, who, given a bounty of nearly fifty per cent by the French Government on all the fish they catch in Newfoundland, are enabled to sell the Newfoundland fish at less than cost of catching, relying upon the bounty for profit, which is a very handsome one.

All the fish sold in the Spanish, Portuguese and Italian markets have been caught by the Frenchmen and disposed of far under the prices asked by the Newfoundlanders and Nova Scotians, and the former, thinking that if the Frenchmen were prohibited from buying bait they would be driven from the fisheries, had the act passed.

The Home Government withheld its approval of the Bait act in 1887, but the act was passed again during the present spring, and despite the frantic protests of the French fishermen and the French Government, the Home Government approved it. No foreigners can buy bait in Newfoundland except Americans, who […] are allowed to do so after paying the license fee of $1.50 per ton. Thus the Americans, who can buy bait by paying a license, are better off than the French, who cannot buy bait under any circumstance. […]

The captain of the Ambrose H. Knight, a Nova Scotian, bought twice as much bait as any fisherman of his size ordinarily needs, cleared at the Custom House, and went directly to St. Pierre, where, amid the rejoicings of the Frenchmen and accompanied by two Nova Scotian fishing vessels, which had also bought twice as much as they needed, he sold more than half of his cargo of bait for more than he paid for the whole of it. The Nova Scotia men did likewise.

While they were at work transferring the bait from one vessel to another a Government vessel sailed into the harbor. The American and Nova Scotia men immediately weighed anchor and left. The case was reported to Newfoundland, and a week later, when the Knight, under command of Captain Diggins, came into port for a harbor, she was seized. An examination of her hold showed that she had on board only half the amount of bait she had bought at Fortune Bay, and no fish. She had gone alongside a wharf, and it was here that Captain Diggins was notified that he could consider himself and crew under arrest.

[190] From THE BAIT ACT VIOLATED. (1888, June 8). *The Camden Daily Telegram*, p. 1.

"A question of bait"[191] (1890)

The question of procuring a supply of bait for the Gloucester fishing fleet is one of importance, and it is more or less threatened by the complications in Newfoundland. The bait consists chiefly of fresh herring, and is procured all along the coast from Cape Cod to and beyond the coast of Newfoundland. The action of the Newfoundland Government in adopting the present stringent bait act, and its determination to enforce it, as seen in the seizures of the Gloucester fishing schooners Rapid Transit and Howard Holbrook, has been brought about by various causes. Ever since the American fisheries attained to considerable importance, the American fishing schooners have secured supplies of herring in Newfoundland, where these fish are to be had in abundance. The business of running cargoes of Newfoundland frozen herring to the markets of the large cities in the United States during the winter has assumed large proportions. Later in the season the great Bank fleet, that fishes off the Grand and other banks, starts. As Nova Scotia and Newfoundland are the nearest and best sources of supply, these points are made the headquarters for this fleet. The appearance of the American fleet, both in winter and summer, has been a godsend to the Newfoundland fishermen, who have no other way of disposing of their catch of fresh herring.

THE FRENCH FISHERMEN

The French fishermen, still protected by a bounty, have gradually dispossessed the Newfoundland merchants of their markets. This competition could be overcome only in one way – by dispossessing the French of bait. Measures were taken by the Newfoundland Government to do this, but some of the American and Nova Scotia schooners began to run bait to the French fishermen, thereby enabling them to secure a fare of codfish. Last year, under the provision of the modus vivendi, American fishermen, by paying $1 a ton, could secure all the bait they wanted for the season. This season, by the stringent bait act of Newfoundland, an outside vessel is limited to one barrel of bait for every ton of her measurement, and the license, costing $1 per ton, is good only for twenty-one days. Frew fishing schooner bait less than four or five times a trip, the costs making this bait act prohibitive.

WITHOUT RESTRICTIONS

There are two points, however, where the American fishermen are allowed by existing treaties to secure a supply of bait without restrictions. These are in the Magdalen Islands and on the west coast of Newfoundland. The bank codfishing fleet have availed themselves of the privilege of baiting in the Magdalen Islands, and some very large fares of codfish have been secured off the coast this season. Others have secured bait on the west coast of Newfoundland, but in Placentia Bay, which is much more convenient to the fleet, they are debarred by the present bait act. The feeling among the fishing owners there is that the cupidity of a few captains in smuggling bait to the French has resulted in a serious set-back to the American fisheries, and it is likely that an effort will be made to restore the old order of things. The

[191] From A QUESTION OF BAIT. (1890, June 11). *The Nashville Banner*, p. 1.

Newfoundland people are perfectly willing to supply Americans with bait, but they object to the latter selling it to the French.

The Bait Act Weakened[192] (1890)

GLOUCESTER, June 20. – The following despatch was received here by President George Steele of the Fishing Insurance Company: "St. John's, N. F., June 20, 1890. To George Steele: Licenses reduced $1 per barrel for quantity as required, limit for 40 barrels, $40 per baiting. (Signed) U. S. Consul."

This is quite an important reduction and concession from the rigid requirements of the Newfoundland bait act, which has been enforced this season under its provisions. If an outside vessel wanted to purchase bait, a fee of $1 a ton besides local dues was exacted. This license was good for only three weeks from date of issuance, and only one barrel of bait for every ton of the vessel could be purchased.

As a fishing schooner will average between 80 and 90 tons, and as fresh bait is required four or five times during a trip, this act was practically prohibitive in operation.

As a result, the Newfoundland fishermen, who relied almost entirely on the American fleet for a subsistence, found their means of gaining a livelihood shut off. They have therefore run by their own revenue cutters and smuggled bait into the French stations at St. Pierre [and] Michelon, where they have disposed of their cargoes to the French and American fishermen. Thus the needs of the native fishermen have defeated the objects of the bait act.

The action of the Newfoundland authorities is regarded as of much importance among the fishing interest here, and an evidence of weakening on the part of the officials as regards the enforcement of the bait act.

The despatch as construed here means that the fees may be reduced to as low a figure as the necessity of the case requires. If a vessel requires only one barrel of bait, the fees would be only $1 and local dues. As regards the restriction to 40 barrels, it may be said that the sellers of bait always give liberal measure.

[192] From THEY ARE WEAKENING. (1890, June 21). *The Boston Globe*, p. 4.

CONFLICT WITH CANADA

A Zealous Customs Official[193] (1890)

A serious complaint is made by Capt. Edgar Corriveau, of the schooner St. Marie, against the Newfoundland customs officials. He left Quebec on April 19th for a trading voyage along the coast of Labrador, and on 19th June crossed to Newfoundland to buy furs and collect some monies due him. The schooner was brought to anchor in Brick Bay and on the 22nd proceeded to French Island, where there is a custom house. The captain went ashore to enter and clear, but could find no resident collector.

In the afternoon a schooner arrived alongside, with one Kelly on board. This man said he was collector of customs, and gave Corriveau one hour to make his entry and clearance. Corriveau did this at once and said he had brought nothing for sale in Newfoundland with the exception of a herring net for one of the natives. He showed Kelly the clearance from Quebec, and the latter demanded to see the log. Then Kelly said the schooner would have to pay $70 duty or he would seize her.

Corriveau paid the money under protest, adding that Kelly was doing more than his duty, for no duty should be charged when no goods are brought for sale. Kelly said he knew his business better than Corriveau. He gave the clearance, but immediately afterwards came on board with his men and ransacked the ship from stem to stern, measuring the goods yard by yard. He came across some old stovepipe, writing paper, oil, etc., for the use of the ship, and these not being duly entered, as Kelly pretended to think should have been done, he put a water cask under seizure, accusing the captain of attempting to defraud the customs. The captain protested, with the result that Kelly seized the whole ship and put her in charge of a guardian. Then he told Corriveau that he would have to go to Bonne Bay or St. John's to arrange the matter. Corriveau offered security, but Kelly refused.

On June 24th Kelly came back and asked to see the clearance he had given, as there was a mistake in it. Corriveau handed it over, whereupon Kelly put it in his pocket without looking at it and went away. After waiting some days, the inhabitants of the place, seeing the trouble that Corriveau was being put to unjustifiably, took charge of the schooner and brought her back to Canadian waters. By this delay Capt. Corriveau claims that he was prevented from collecting codfish and furs for debts due him, and was otherwise put to serious loss.

[193] From FROM THE ANCIENT CAPITAL. (1890, September 25). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 1.

Canadians Caught in the Bait Act[194] (1891)

Law officers of the imperial government have declared the Newfoundland bait act to be unconstitutional. […] The obnoxious bait act was passed by the Newfoundland legislature in 1889. It prohibits the sale of fresh fish, which includes bait to foreign fishermen. The act was allowed by the imperial government, on the condition that its provisions would not apply to Canadians. Subsequently, however, the Newfoundland authorities rescinded this concession, and only gave the privilege to American fishermen.

Canada's influence in securing the prohibition of the reciprocity treaty, negotiated between the United States and the colony, is given as the reason for this hostile act. At present the extensive carrying trade in frozen herring, which under the bait act comes under the category of bait, is monopolized by American bottoms.

"Grievously in the wrong"[195] (1891)

Sir William Whiteway's[196] defence of these stringent measures is founded on the circumstance that the Canadian Government interfered last year to prevent the ratification of a treaty of commerce between Newfoundland and the United States. […] The only other reason advanced for the prohibitive measures […] is that Canadian and American vessels sell bait to the French. If this allegation were well-founded, the prohibition ought to be applied indiscriminately to American, as well as to Canadian, vessels. […]

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the Government of Newfoundland is grievously in the wrong. Canada is the nearest neighbor of Newfoundland, and has so far proved itself a very friendly, and even benevolent, neighbor. The lights on the coast of Newfoundland are maintained by the Canadian Government. The fishermen of Newfoundland have hitherto been allowed to fish without restriction on the coasts of Canada and Labrador, and to ship their fish into Canada free of all duty. In addition to all this, the only regular steam communication between Newfoundland and the mainland of North America is maintained by Canadian subsidies. […]

The exemption of Newfoundland fish from duty in Canada is an exceptional privilege, accorded from time to time by proclamation of the Governor-General. In default of the issue of such proclamation, Newfoundland produce becomes subject to the general Canadian tariff. The Government of the Dominion […] has now resolved to withhold the proclamation of immunity and to enforce its general tariff by the levy of the statutable duties on all Newfoundland produce. Newfoundland has retaliated

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[194] From NEWFOUNDLAND BAIT ACT. (1891, November 27). *The Evening Bulletin* (Maysville, Kentucky), p. 4.

[195] From It cannot be doubted. (1891, December 14). *The London Times*, p. 9.

[196] Sir William Vallance Whiteway (1828 – 1908), Premier of Newfoundland from 1878 to 1885, 1889 to 1894 and 1895 to 1897.

by largely raising[197] the duties leviable on certain Canadian commodities, including flour, pork, butter, tobacco, kerosene oil, and farm produce.

The Canada-Newfoundland Tariff War[198] (1891)

The tariff war […] was begun by Canada more than seven years ago. I have not papers for reference as to the exact year, but it was certainly before 1886. A Bill was passed that year introduced into the Canadian Parliament to levy a tax on Newfoundland herrings coming into the Dominion in Newfoundland barrels equivalent to 75 cents per barrel, while Canadians had, as they now, in common with all other British subjects, have, the right to catch or buy those same herrings in Newfoundland waters and take them into the Dominion. […] At that time great quantities of Newfoundland herring were consumed in Canada, and this proposed duty meant transferring the whole of this business to Canadians.

I made a suggestion then, as our Legislature was in session, which was unanimously adopted by both branches, that an addendum should be made to our tariff to this effect:-

"In addition to the duties hereinbefore provided to be levied on goods imported into this colony and its dependencies from countries the fishermen of which have the privilege of taking fish on all parts of the coast of Newfoundland, and in which duties are or shall hereafter be levied upon fish and the produce of the fisheries exported from this colony to such countries, the following duties – viz., flour, 75 cents per barrel," &c.

Canadian millers and exporters immediately then as they are now doing, petitioned and agitated against the Canadian legislation, and it was dropped. […]

This clause has been in every Newfoundland Tariff Act since 1886. […] Canada was fully aware of this fact, and, knowing it, passed a tariff in the spring of the present year imposing a duty on almost all the products of the Newfoundland fisheries, "unless Newfoundland reduced the duty on Canadian exports to Newfoundland." […]

No member of the [Newfoundland] Government ever heard of the alteration in the tariff of Canada until November last, [..] some little time before the new duties were levied, and in a friendly way acquainted the Canadian Government with the fact that their taxing our fishery produce would be automatically to practically exclude Canadian flour, pork, and many other articles from Newfoundland.

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[197] "Additional duties on certain articles imported from Canada – […] Flour, the barrel, 75c; pork, the barrel, 75c; butter, the 100 lbs, 75c; tobacco, the 100 lbs, $5; kerosene oil, the gallon, 5c; corn meal, the barrel, 25c; hay, the ton, $5; oats, the bushel, 10c; potatoes, the bushel, 25c; turnips, the bushel, 25c; cabbages the dozen heads, 40c; unenumerated vegetables, 30 per cent." THE STRAINED RELATIONS. (1891, December 26). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 2.

[198] From Harvey, A. W. (1891, December 25). CANADA AND NEWFOUNDLAND. *The London Times*, p. 10. Written by Augustus William Harvey (1839 – 1903), a member of Newfoundland's legislative council from 1870 to 1895.

Canada was the original aggressor, and now has, by her one act, imposed a prohibitive tariff on both herself and Newfoundland. […]

Now as to the Bait Act. […] The Bait Act was not intended to exclude Canadians, but only the French; but [Canada has] become purveyor in general of bait to the French – and continues so to the present time – thus to a considerable extent, just as far as she is able, frustrating the object of the Bait Act. When supplying the Canadians with bait became synonymous with supplying the French, it became a question of suspending the Act and letting our own poor fishermen get the benefit of the bait traffic, or suspending the Canadians. […]

The Canadian Government have long understood that a preliminary to their getting free access to Newfoundland bait supplies is the passing of a Bait Act similar to ours against the French, and there should not be the slightest hesitancy on their part in doing it; but instead of this, they go on supplying the French so far as they are able, cutting their own as well as our throats. […]

The Canadians are at present excluded from taking fish on all the coasts of Newfoundland, inasmuch as they are not given licenses for bait fishes. […] The Act was intended to give the Government just as much power to grant or refuse persons applying for a license as is the power of a magistrate for licensing, say, houses for dancing or the acting of plays. The magistrates have to take into account whether the person for whom the license is asked is a fit and proper person to be entrusted with such a license, and if not to refuse it. In the same way it was intended that the Government might grant licenses to one, two, three or a dozen men in a harbor and refuse one, two, three or a dozen others if they thought they were likely to violate the Act. If a Newfoundlander once transgresses the Act, no other license is again issued to him.

Will the Canadians have the same rights and no more than our own people? In practice it was found that if one of our vessels ran the blockade at St. Pierre – his vessel being registered in Newfoundland – the Government could confiscate her, and the master, returning to his family, could be arrested and imprisoned; but there being no such law in the Dominion, a Canadian vessel running the blockade with bait could not be prosecuted in Canada, and, as it was perfectly certain neither vessel nor master would return to Newfoundland during the same season, they went scot free. And the sorest complaint of our poor blockade-runners was, "Here we are, ruined, our vessels confiscated, ourselves in prison, our families starving, and a Nova Scotian committing the same offence against the law suffers no punishment and reaps a most handsome profit at our expense."

The licensing authority then said, "If these people will not make themselves amenable to our municipal law, by either registering their vessels in Newfoundland or passing an Act enabling us to follow any law-breakers into the Dominion, we will give them no licenses." The Canadians are thus placed in exactly the same position as our fishermen, and in this, as in the case of the tariff, the remedy is in their own hands.

Impact of the Duties[199] (1891)

The absolute topic of the hour is "the strained relations" between this Colony and the Dominion of Canada. Practically, we have a war of tariffs, which is injurious to both parties as it deranges trade. […] On the one hand, we have Canada imposing an almost prohibitory duty on our fish; and on the other, Newfoundland placing an import duty which is almost prohibitory on a large number of articles of consumption which we have been in the habit of receiving from Canada – such as flour, pork, butter, hay, oats and all kinds of vegetables. Whether Canada will suffer to any appreciable extent, in consequence, I am unable to say, but we must suffer heavily. A large number of our people, especially on the southern and western shores, found a profitable market for their fish in Canada; and they have now to find markets elsewhere, and will sustain very serious losses. This holds good especially in our herring trade.

EFFECT OF THE DUTIES

The greatest part of the vegetables we use – such as potatoes, turnips, etc., are brought from Canada; and the increased duties will proportionately increase the price, which will be felt heavily by our working classes. We can not obtain these articles elsewhere. Potatoes, for example, have risen in price one dollar per barrel since the new tariff took effect, and are two and a half dollars per barrel. Oats are 25 cents per bushel higher; butter has also increased in price. If the present increased rates were to continue, the entire flour, pork and butter trade would be monopolized by the United States, and the want of competition would of course tend to advance prices.

To adopt a policy which seriously increases the cost of living, especially to the working classes, may be very "spirited," but can hardly meet general approval, when there are no compensating advantages. It is the policy known as "cutting off your nose to spite your face." We may injure a number of our fellow-subjects in Canada, but to do so we must first injure ourselves to a far greater extent. […]

Mr. Nielsen, our superintendent of fisheries, having shown practically that our herring, properly cured and packed, will command remunerative prices in foreign markets, a number of our leading firms have taken up the matter and embarked largely in the cure and export of herring. At the present time quite a fleet of vessels are awaiting the striking in of the herring at Sound Island, Placentia bay, one of the best fishing grounds. There are also about forty American vessels waiting for cargoes of fresh herring, to be shipped in a frozen condition. The prices they give to our fishermen are from 50 to 70 cents per barrel, and they insist on using their own measures, which, it is reported, give one and a half instead of the true measure to the purchasers.

The frozen herring business is said to be enormously profitable to the Americans, but affords wretched remuneration to our poor fishermen. The new industry of curing will in due time alter this state of things. The exclusion of

[199] From THE STRAINED RELATIONS. (1891, December 26). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 2.

Canadian vessels from the trade gives a monopoly to the Americans, and, of course, tends to depress prices.

Grievances and Retaliation[200] (1892)

The list of grievances which Canada has against Newfoundland is a long one. The Newfoundland Bait Act was allowed by the Imperial Government only on the distinct written pledge of the Newfoundland Government that no license free would be exacted from Canadian fishermen, yet in 1889 this pledge was broken, and license fees were exacted from Canadian vessels.

While Canada maintains no less than nine lights on the Newfoundland coast, the Newfoundland Government charges Canadian fishing vessels 24 cents – twice the rate imposed on Newfoundland vessels – for looking at Canadian lights, and then orders them to leave the ports, under threat that the cruisers will be sent for and used. Moreover, while Newfoundland fishing vessels are allowed to visit and fish on the Canadian Labrador each season without any charge whatever, Canadian fishermen are not allowed to catch a single bait fish on that part of the coast of Labrador over which the Newfoundland Government exercises control. Though the Canadian Government charges trap fees to Canadian fishermen who prosecute this industry on the Canadian Labrador, yet at least 100 sail of Newfoundland vessels are allowed to take fish freely in these Canadian waters without the payment of a single dollar for license, or trap fees of any sort whatever, and so on.

Early in 1891, while allowing United States vessels their bait licenses free of charge, the Newfoundland Government issued regulations under the Bait Act, one of which was "No Canadian, whether he be a fisherman, trader, merchant, or other, can catch, take, purchase, sell, export, or in any way whatever trade or deal with any herring, caplin, squid, or other kind of fish coming under the description of 'bait fishes' for any purpose whatever, whether for bait, for consumption, or for any purpose." This regulation seriously interferes with, or rather, as far as Canadians are concerned, stops the frozen herring trade altogether, for in no other country in the world, as far as I know, can herring be caught and prepared in the manner which I am about to describe.

Frozen herring are herring caught in the winter season off the south coast of Newfoundland. The fishermen catch them by cutting a trench in the ice and sinking nets, in which nets the fish mesh. When caught, they are placed on an elevated platform, which is built of rough boards, carried with them for the purpose by the schooners engaged in the trade, over the deck of the vessel, or constructed on shore in an exposed place. The wind freezes the fish perfectly hard, when they are packed in bulk. The vessels, which range from 60 to 120 tons, remain until they obtain a load.

These herring supply the winter fresh-fish demand of the United States, and, until this present year, also of Canada. The men on board the schooners do not catch the fish themselves; they are caught by regular fishermen, who sell them to the

[200] From CANADIAN AFFAIRS. (1892, January 29). *The Glasgow Herald*, p. 9.

schooners. The prices paid in Newfoundland vary from 50c. to $1.00 per barrel, according to supply and demand. Fortune Bay has long been noted for the enormous fields of herring found in its waters. Until lately the herring fishery has been comparatively neglected, nor has it yet been so conducted as to yield proper commercial results.

In view of the conduct of the Newfoundland Government, and also that large quantities of Newfoundland fish were coming into Canada duty free, […] to the detriment of Canadian fishermen, […] on December 7 an order was issued that the duty should be collected on Newfoundland fish. To this the Newfoundland Government very promptly responded by imposing discriminating duties on Canadian goods. […] Mr. A. B. Merine, leader of the Newfoundland Opposition, […] says that the effect of retaliation upon the people of the colony will be twofold. First, it decreases the price of their fish in the local Canadian market; secondly, it greatly increases the price of the necessaries of life. Canada is the great outlet for two-thirds of the Newfoundland trade.

"The end is now in sight"[201] (1892)

The end is now in sight for the long standing dispute between Canada and Newfoundland. It is understood that the Government has received from the Newfoundland authorities an intimation that […] for this season at least the prohibitive duty upon Canadian flour and other products enforced by the Newfoundland Government early in the year, will be reduced to the previous rates under which Canada was able to compete successfully upon even terms with American products in the markets of Newfoundland. Besides, the onerous conditions laid upon our fishermen, amounting practically to complete restriction in the matter of the purchase of bait and supplies, are to be rescinded, and the fishermen of this country will be as free to fit out in Newfoundland for the bank fisheries, as the Newfoundland fishermen are, and always have been, to pursue their calling on the Canadian coasts. […]

EFFECT ON OUR TRADE

Canadian exporters were already beginning to view with some alarm the protraction of the difficulty, since a much longer delay in the conclusion of a modus vivendi would have rendered the renewal of a better arrangement to affect this season's trade with the sister colony. As it is, the agreement fortunately comes just in time. [The secretary of the Dominion Millers' Association had the following to say upon the matter:] "If within a reasonable time such arrangement is come to, the flour trade of Newfoundland will not be lost to the Montreal exporters. It so happens that we are able to sell flour in Newfoundland about 30 cents a barrel cheaper than it can be exported thither from the United States; mainly on account of considerable difference in freight rates in our favor. And, expecting some arrangement for the reduction of the 75 cents a barrel duty on our flour, Newfoundland merchants have

[201] From NEWFOUNDLAND COMES TO TERMS. (1892, May 23). *The Ottawa Daily Citizen*, p. 5.

withheld their orders for the season, in order to profit by this difference as they would if Canadian and American flour are admitted upon equal terms as to tariff duties."

The importance of this arrangement as regards our flour trade alone will be seen from the fact that last year we exported to Newfoundland 99,438 barrels of flour valued at about half a million dollars. Had the duty remained at 75 cents a barrel, the whole of this trade would have gone to the United States this year.

"He acts like a madman"[202] (1895)

ST. JOHN'S, Nfld., September 5. – There is great indignation here at the news received by the Labrador mail steamer of the conduct of Captain Howard[203] in having seized three Newfoundland fishing vessels on the plea that they have no Canadian coasting licenses. He acts like a madman, threatening people with revolvers. The matter is inexplicable, and such seizures unprecedented.

Complaints and Collector Howard[204] (1895)

The complaints regarding Collector Howard are loud and angry; and unless a sufficient explanation can be offered, a great deal of bitter feeling will be awakened throughout the whole community. The intelligence comes from thoroughly reliable sources to the heads of some of our mercantile establishments. It is to the effect that Collector A. L. Howard, who alleges he is a Canadian Customs official, on the 24th August entered Bradore harbor in an armed schooner with 25 armed men aboard and demanded the papers of the schooner Canford. Howard declared her clearances to be wrong, seized the vessel and sent for the Canadian cruiser Constance to tow her to Quebec. Meantime, he seized another vessel called the Telegram, Captain Udell, and a craft belonging to Capt. Soper.

The captains of these vessels declare their papers were the same as those of previous years, to which no objection was ever taken, and that they were unconscious

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[202] From SOMEWHAT EXCITED. (1895, September 6). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 1.

[203] Arthur L. "Gat." Howard (1846 – 1901), best known for his role in bringing Gatling guns into use in the North-West rebellion of 1885. He fought at the Battle of Batoche in May of 1885, and died in South Africa while fighting in the second Boer war as a machine gunner for the Canadian Mounted Rifles. He "was in the United States cavalry for five years prior to his being placed in command of the machine gun platoon of the Connecticut National Guard in 1884. When the Gatling guns were ordered for service in the Northwest, Dr. R. J. Gatling looked for a man acquainted with machine guns who could handle them in a way to add to their reputation. He pitched upon Lieut. Howard." NOTES IN GENERAL. (1885, May 20). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 1. Regarding his actions at Batoche: "There appears to be some difference of opinion as to the amount of damage done by Capt. or Lieutenant Howard and his Gatling gun at Batoche. Some of the soldiers and correspondents assert that only one Indian was killed by Gatling bullets during the entire engagement. Howard, relating his exploits, […] represents that he just mowed the Indians and half-breeds down. As the execution by the united artillery and small arms under Gen. Middleton was exceedingly limited, the Gatling must be credited more with the function of an intimidator than an executioner. In that respect the gun was a large factor in the results at Batoche." There appears. (1885, August 17). *The Victoria Daily Times*, p. 2.

[204] From HOWARD'S SEIZURES. (1895, September 12). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 2.

of any wrong-doing and had paid their license fees and complied with all demands. Howard alleges he is authorized to seize all vessels that have not coasting clearances – and that he will seize all that are without such papers.

The captains say their papers are the same as during the last fifteen years, and that they were not informed of any others being required. He refuses to accept duties, bonds or merchandise, and threatens to seize all the fishing premises on Canadian Labrador, and even our mail steamer, the Virgian [sic.] Lake. He is accused of terrorizing the whole coast and even threatening several persons with a revolver, using very violent language, so that the general impression is that he is crazy. He has done much mischief and seriously injured the summer fishery of those seized. […]

The St. John's *Daily News*, in reporting the case, says:- […]

"The Canford has been seized, her register taken, work done at Penney's fishing room at Bradore stopped, and the balance of the voyage tied up there. From 34 to 35 years ago, the Penneys fished at a place called Middle bay, Canadian Labrador. […] Mr. W. F. Penney, the junior partner in the firm of E. Penney & Son, affirms that so far as the firm are aware, the Canadian laws have been complied with in every respect. […] Up to the recent troubles, the Canadian officials did not interfere, but protected the Penneys in fishing their cod traps in accordance with Canadian laws. Recently a preventive officer, calling himself Captain Howard, pounced upon the Bradore rooms, demanding the papers. When he got them, he declared that the clearance would not permit them to be where they were. "You are not on Labrador, but in the province of Quebec." He seized the register of the Canford, and tied up all the property, forbidding Mr. Penney to move the fish. There are at the present time about 400 quintals of fish, and from three to four tuns of cod oil. Besides the gear, Howard has sent for a steam cruiser, upon the arrival of which he will take the Canford to Quebec and have her sold. The clearance taken by E. Penney & Son is exactly the same as the one upon which the 100 to 200 Newfoundland schooners have fished during the season, and all who have property on the coast are in the same box. Capt. Howard informed Mr. Penney that he should have reported at a Canadian Custom house and got a license to coast. Until then, Mr. Penney was unaware that there was a port of entry upon the coast. It appears there is one at Esquimaux Point, 300 miles west of Bradore."

"Captain" Howard's Business[205] (1895)

How Capt. Howard, until so very recently a citizen of the United States, came to be vested with the authority of an officer of Her Majesty's customs of Canada, was this: A month or two after he took out his naturalization papers in [Ottawa] last winter, […] Capt. Howard made application for exclusive fishing rights on the Canadian Labrador. He didn't want all the earth thereabouts, but he did ask for a monopoly of the lobster business on a considerable stretch of the coast line some seventy miles; and he wanted it all to himself for ten years.

[205] From TOLD TO LET THEM GO. (1895, September 7). *The Ottawa Daily Citizen*, p. 5.

BUSINESS PROSPECTS

He had reports to show that lobsters were not so very plentiful there that anybody else would likely want that particular strip of Her Majesty's domains. And he had a most excellent scheme besides for leaving the fishery as good as he got it. He proposed to divide his coast into ten mile sections and fish or trap over only one section each year. This would give the crustacean supply time to recuperate. Thus there was also an element of humanity in the scheme to commend it to the Minister of Marine and Fisheries.

But Mr. Costigan didn't quite see it that way. He was willing that Capt. Howard should be given every opportunity to develop a canning business on the Labrador coast and make all the money he could out of it. In fact, there was no privilege to which a Canadian citizen could reasonably lay claim that he was not willing to accord to Capt. Howard. But he evidently thought there should be something left for other enterprising citizens, too, for when the Captain left Ottawa he took with him only a five years' lease to thirty miles of the coast.

Something else which Capt. Howard carried away from Ottawa was a commission from the controller to act as a sub-collector of customs along the bleak north shore in the region of his domain. The customs department had for years been bothered by smuggling up the Gulf of St. Lawrence from St. Pierre, a French possession off the south shore of Newfoundland, which has always been a source of supply for cheap brandy and other contraband. It was thought that while he was looking after his own business, Capt. Howard might very conveniently keep an eye also to the business of the Customs Department, so far as the schooners running back and forth in the Gulf are concerned.

He was accordingly authorized, his appointment dating from the 4th of April last, to seize any vessel found guilty of violating the Customs law, but was enjoined to be exceedingly cautious in making seizure, and only to proceed after a careful collection of the facts. He was not to be paid any salary, but to receive a share of the proceeds of any fines that might be imposed as a result of his seizures. Moreover, he was instructed to report from time to time to the Collector of Customs at Quebec.

THE PRESENT SEIZURES

In whatsoever manner the seizures at present under consideration were effected, the incident has certainly caused a good deal of irritation in Newfoundland, and official correspondence on the subject was exchanged yesterday between Ottawa and St. John's. On behalf of the seized schooners, Messrs. Morrison & Morine, of St. John's, wired to the Acting Premier guaranteeing the payment of any penalty that the vessels might have incurred by infraction of the Canadian Customs laws. The request was referred to the Controller of Customs, who at once telegraphed the firm that the release of the vessels had been ordered. Capt. Howard, besides being directed to release the vessels, was ordered to make a full report of the particulars.

"Gat." Howard tells his Story[206] (1895)

Capt. "Gat." Howard has arrived in Ottawa from the North Shore of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, where he has carried on a lobster canning business during the summer, and where, according to the Newfoundland papers, he has been making it unnecessarily warm for the Labrador fishermen. That, at least, is the side of the story which has been put rather persistently before the public for the past month or so. Capt. Howard's version of the trouble down there, he gave to a Citizen reporter last night. Hitherto he has maintained a determined silence on the subject, as he has not made his official report to the Customs department.

"I suppose you have seen or heard the stories they tell about your so-called high-handed treatment of fishing vessels on the Canadian Labrador coast," the reporter remarked, by way of a starter.

Capt. Howard produced a bundle of clippings from his pocket, remarking that he guessed he was well supplied, "and," he said, "I may tell you that these reports in the Newfoundland papers are absolutely false. Nor do they even touch upon the charges on which the seizures were really made, one of which was the serious charge of smuggling, or to put it more politely, 'landing goods on the Canadian coast illegally.'

LOCATION OF THE SEIZURES

"In the first place, if you please, we will call the Canadian coast of Labrador, as you term it, by its proper name – the Province of Quebec. Labrador is Newfoundland's territory. Now, then, about these stories of my having acted in a high-handed manner. To begin at the beginning, they had their origin in this fact: On my way down to Gaspe in the spring, on board the steamer "Admiral," I was approached by a man who evidently knew all about my business, and who made the remark that I would not and could not do my duty as a customs officer on their coast, as they'd be too many for me. He as much as hinted that if I tried it, I would not come back alive. Now that annoyed me, and I just answered back that I would do my duty fearlessly and that the first man who attempted to interfere would be dealt with in summary fashion. I put it pretty strong. Well, that expression was conveyed to the people of the North Shore before I got there, and was the sole foundation for all the stories about my threatening to shoot people and all the rest of it.

"This same fellow afterwards chartered a schooner at Gaspe and sent her to Blanc Sablon, Labrador, to a firm who had imported a large consignment of goods from Jersey and traded them off for fish along the Quebec shore; and that, mind you, without entering it at the Customs.

"Now on my arrival at the North Shore I found upwards of 140 sail of Newfoundland fishing vessels, as many as fifty of them in a harbor; several of them without so much as a register, with no clearance papers or any shipping certificate whatever. I simply ordered them off the Canadian coast, although they were liable to seizure even upon the high seas, and by the cruisers of any nation. The remainder,

[206] From "Gat." Howard tells his Story[206] (1895)

without exception, had only fishing certificates granted by the Newfoundland government."

FISHING LICENSES ONLY

Here Capt. Howard handed one of these certificates to the interviewer. It merely permits the vessel to engage in fishing on the coast of Newfoundland and its dependencies; the vessel to carry nothing but her fishing outfit, and at the end of the season and before engaging in any other business to surrender the license and get out a regular marine clearance. A heavy penalty, $500, is imposed for handing any of the ship's stores without permission of the customs.

"Now," continued Capt. Howard, "all these schooners had provisions on board, upon which the Newfoundland Customs had collected duty, but which were being used on the Canadian coast when the vessels were fishing, and which should have been taken out of bond and the duties paid in Canada. I explained to them their position and ordered them off the coast to the Newfoundland port for which they had been cleared and at which, according to their license, they were bound to report first thing. They departed, but I suppose many of them came back. However, there was not the least incivility passed on either side. Indeed, many of them thanked me for explaining how they should have their papers made out."

JUST SMUGGLING

Then Capt. Howard explained about the seizures. The schooner "Telegram," of St. John's, Nfld., Soper master, had an illegal clearance. It read "from Carbonneau to Bradore, Labrador." Bradore is in the Province of Quebec, and besides is not a port of entry, so that no clearance should have been given to that place. Capt. Howard found her landing provisions illegally there for one Udell, who had squatted on a fishing berth at Bradore, and this for the third time during the season. Capt. Howard was pretty out-spoken in his censure of Skipper Soper. He described him as a sort of sea person who kept his smuggling accounts on the blank pages of the book in which he wrote his sermons.

"Isn't this the person who complained in the St. John's papers about your profanity, Capt. Howard?"

"The same; and talking about profanity, he's the same precious preacher fellow who, as we passed in our steam launch, sang out that he hoped the boiler would blow up and send us all to ----."

Capt. Howard used plainly a term that at least denoted the preaching sailor's orthodoxy. He said he had at the outset offered to treat the skipper "as a gentleman," provided he behaved decently. But instead, it seems he laid for Howard with a loaded gun, and even refused at first to give any orders to his crew while that officer was on board. "I admit," added Capt. Howard, "that I did talk to that skipper as I thought he deserved upon the morning I released his vessel on the Government's order. You see, he began by insulting me by twitting me about my lost authority. However, I fixed him for that by insisting upon getting his bond. And he gave it."

TOOK HIS BOND

"Now, as for the seizure of the 'Cranford,' W. F. Penney master," continued Capt. Howard, "there she was at the pier at Bradore, getting out for the West India

trade, clearly against the law." He went on to tell how for years Penney had been carrying on a fishing business, furnishing the fishermen with prohibited goods; while in the store he found smuggled goods. Capt. Howard got on smoothly enough with Penney, and was surprised to hear that the latter had accused him of unofficial behavior. He, however, had proof of all the proceedings and held Penney's bond, as well.

Capt. Howard next showed the papers of the seized schooner "Annie," of Hants Harbor, Nfld. They showed the loose manner in which such things are done in the Ancient Colony. It purports to be a domestic fishing license, but is made out on a foreign clearance form. Moreover, then she was landing Newfoundland goods at her owner's, Capt. Phil. Smith's, fishing stand at Snuff-box, P. Q.[207], as had been the practice for years. Howard had a good word to say for Skipper Smith. "I consider him," he said, "an honest man who erred through ignorance of the law. He admitted I was only doing my duty in seizing his vessel. Penney and Udell upbraided him for not having thrown me overboard, but you should have heard his plain language to them. He gave his opinion of their smuggling schemes, and said it was all their fault he was in his present position."

In the course of his explanation of the circumstances under which he seized the Halifax schooner "Foaming Billow," Capt. Howard clearly demonstrated that tobacco had been sold from her which had been taken out of bond in Halifax destined for Esquimaux Point, P. Q., but never entered there, and the tin caddy in which it had been, was found with the bonded revenue stamp still upon it. This was a clear case of smuggling and may give the department a clue to extensive operations in that line. Capt. Howard had no trouble with Capt. Smith.

A FISHERMAN'S YARN

"But what of the reports from Newfoundland sources about your big armed crew and cutter?" [he] was asked.

Capt. Howard chuckled. "Why," said he, "I simply followed the Foaming Billow into Bradore Harbor in a small sail boat with only one man besides myself on board, a fisherman who sailed the boat. There I found the 'Billow,' the 'Cranford' and the 'Telegram' and placed the three of them under seizure, although they had a combined force of 40 men. So the public can judge how many gatling guns I could have had on that boat or on my person during the three days and nights I had possession of them. Indeed, when the 'Annie' arrived, that I had placed under seizure previously, we had a colony of over 60 men. No; all the arms on the sail boat were my sporting rifle and shot-gun, and the revolver I sometimes carry."

In regard to the story of Capt. Eastman, of the "Amazon," as published in the Citizen[208], to the effect that Howard refused to let him buy provisions for his starving

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[207] Province of Quebec.

[208] "Capt. Eastman was preparing to proceed to Harrington Harbor, Nfld., where he had accepted a charter to convey a cargo of fish to Halifax. Howard, learning of this, wanted the Amazon to proceed to Blanc Sablon and to enter and clear at the Customs there, necessitating a special trip of several hundred miles. Rather than do this, Eastman says he decided to abandon his charter, by which he suffered a net loss of $500. […] He says that Officer Howard was unnecessarily abusive and offensive, and even refused to allow him to buy food necessary for his crew. Capt. Eastman is a Newfoundlander,

crew, and caused him to lose a cargo of fish, for which he claimed $500 damages, Capt. Howard has quite a different account of the affair. It appears Eastman made the same statement on the coast, but afterwards admitted before witnesses that he only wanted to buy some onions. Besides, the Amazon was loaded to the hatches with salt and barrels, so that without discharging them she could not have taken a cargo of fish on board. Howard took the precaution to make a list of the ship's stores, which shows she had lots of provisions on board.

Capt. Howard has any amount of documentary evidence in support of his statement, all of which he will probably include in his report to the Controller of Customs.

THE CRASH OF 1894

Financial Crisis in Newfoundland[209] (1894)

The financial crisis, so long expected in Newfoundland affairs, has come at last, and its very suddenness prevents the full realization of its calamitous effect. One bank, five of the largest fish-dealing houses, and a shoal of smaller concerns have failed. […] The causes that led to this disaster […] are many and difficult to explain, but the chief is the rotten banking conditions which prevail in this country, and which have been the cause of incessant anxiety during the past seven years.

The Newfoundland fish trade is run on what is termed the supplying system. The merchant, or dealer in fish, supplies the fisherman with provisions for the winter, and a schooner and fishing requisites in the spring, all on credit. The fisherman turns him over his catch of cod and herring in the autumn; and the merchant, to cover incidental losses and bad debts, charges him for his credit supplies from 25 per cent. above the cash figures. In bad years this does not nearly meet his losses. And the depletion of the fisheries, increase in taxes, diversion of hundreds of men from fishing to railway building through the island at higher wages, and, lastly, the destruction of St. John's by fire two years ago, have combined to financially embarrass every firm dealing in the fisheries.

The necessarily small volume of money in circulation here, and the contracted scope of banking business, compelled the merchants to resort to pernicious practices of overdrawing accounts and endorsing and floating paper, which they were the more easily able to accomplish as they were, nearly every one of them, directors of the two banking concerns doing business here. The necessary consequences resulted. In the endeavour to rescue what they had sunk they plunged further into the financial morass till their whole system of business became a gigantic fabric of promissory notes.

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but his vessel is of Canadian register." MR. MARTIN IS RECKLESS. (1895, October 1). *The Ottawa Daily Citizen*, p. 5.

[209] From THE CRISIS IN NEWFOUNDLAND. (1894, December 22). *The London Times*, p. 8.

The crash might have been postponed another year, but some two weeks ago Mr. Hall, of the firm of Prose, Hall, and Morris, London, England, died suddenly. This firm is the financial agent of nearly all the merchants here who export fish to Europe, and Mr. Hall had charge of this branch of the business. When he died, his family and trustees demurred at continuing so hazardous a business, and certain exchanges becoming due on Friday were protested in London. The Commercial Bank drew these exchanges and, not having funds in London to honour them, fell back upon its mercantile clients. These were similarly circumstanced, and on Saturday the firm of Edwin Duder made an assignment. This precipitated the crash. The rumour of this spread through the city, and on Sunday it was known that several other concerns would follow suit.

Yesterday morning, however, a worse blow struck the community when the Commercial Bank posted a notice on its door that it would suspend payment for the present owing to the failure of several of its mercantile customers to respond to their liabilities. The effect of this on the community is impossible to describe. The bank was besieged in a few moments by hundreds of men anxious to exchange notes for gold. Foiled there, those who had notes of the Union Bank rushed to its banking house, and for about an hour it paid out gold in a steady stream. Then, as its stock was clearly inadequate to the demand, it suspended temporarily until it could replenish its gold reserves from the United States. The suspension of the firms of Alan Goodridge and Sons, Baine Johnston and Co., Job Brothers and Co., and John Steer followed in quick succession. […]

There are two chartered banks only doing business in Newfoundland, the Union and Commercial Banks. There was also the Savings Bank, a Government provident institution, the deposits and interest guaranteed by the colony. The deposits in the Savings Bank amount to $3,000,000[210]. Half of this was in Government bonds, stocks, &c.; the other half was lent at interest to the Union and Commercial Banks to be used in their ordinary business. Of this amount the Union Bank had about a million[211], but the Government owed it on overdrawn current colonial accounts $650,000[212], leaving the Union Bank's indebtedness about $350,000[213]. The Commercial Bank had a million from the Savings Bank, also without any commensurate offset, and this was the heaviest blow; the charter of both banks provides that the Savings Bank shall be a preferential creditor in the event of their failure. Yesterday morning the Government enforced this proviso, and the Commercial placed its specie at its service. The Commercial was also severely hampered by its unwieldy note circulation.

At this juncture it is impossible to give any accurate figures of the liabilities of the Commercial Bank and the houses which have suspended payment. In the case of Duder, and presumably some of the others, the bank is partly secured by mortgages on his property. The one bright prospect in the situation is that there are about two

[210] About $90,000,000 in 2020, adjusting for United States inflation.
[211] About $30,000,000 in 2020, adjusting for United States inflation.
[212] About $19,500,000 in 2020, adjusting for United States inflation.
[213] About $10,500,000 in 2020, adjusting for United States inflation.

million dollars' worth of fish oil, besides other products, in this city, and if this can be shipped to market and realized it will bring in at least 75 per cent. of its value. If the estimate of 75 per cent. of the products is realized, then it is very probable the depositors in the Commercial Bank may get their money paid ultimately by the sacrifice of the capital stock and the property of the shareholders. These latter will probably lose everything, and as there are among them widows, orphans, and charitable institutions it would man absolute beggary to hundreds least able to cope with their troubles. Commercial Bank notes[214] are selling for one-tenth their value to-night, and will not be taken at all by business people.

The condition of the Union Bank is similar, but not so hopeless. There is a feeling of genuine confidence in its solvency, superinduced by its successes in the past and the knowledge that it has substantial resources at home and abroad. Its future is, however, threatened by the fact that two, at least, of the largest firms doing business with it must suspend within 48 hours. They are merely keeping open now in the hope that some settlement may be speedily effected which will save the bank, and if this fails then everything will come down with a smash. The result will depend largely on the realization of the fishery products. About 90 per cent. of the catch is in the merchants' hands, so there can be little or no loss from traders making away with their fish. […]

Thousands of people have Commercial notes of greater or lesser value which are absolutely valueless at present, and the whole circulating medium consists of about $200,000[215] in gold, silver, and copper. This amount has got not only to do for St. John's, but the whole island as well. Outside this city there are no banks or exchanges, the people do their whole business in bank notes, and these will really be the worst sufferers, as they cannot get their notes to St. John's or effect any arrangement. […]

The following abstract from the last statement of the Union Bank will illustrate the prevailing financial methods here. Its liabilities were $4,455,745[216], including an amount of $3,015,305[217] due by its deposits, bills, notes, &c., its capital reserve, bank-note circulation, and dividends making up the remainder. In May, when this statement appeared, it had as assets a gold reserve of $196,974[218]; bills discounted by other banks and funds available in 15 days, something over four millions. It is, therefore, apparent that, int eh event of any large embarrassment during which it coud not realize its assets, its position would be jeopardized.

[214] Newfoundland's banks were able to issue their own bank-notes.
[215] About $6,000,000 in 2020, adjusting for United States inflation.
[216] About $133,732,000 in 2020, adjusting for United States inflation.
[217] About $90,500,000 in 2020, adjusting for United States inflation.
[218] About $5,912,000 in 2020, adjusting for United States inflation.

"Paralyzed business of all kinds"[219] (1894)

The financial crash which has so unexpectedly befallen Newfoundland is in extent and severity of the most serious character. The closing on the same day of the only two banks in the colony has literally paralyzed business of all kinds. Without any warning we were deprived of our currency with the exception of the small amount of gold and silver which happened to be in the hands of a few. For a long time payments have been made mainly in bank notes and cheques, and the amount of gold and silver in circulation was very small. Hence when the startling news spread on Monday morning that both banks had suspended payment, the majority of people found that they had only a few dollars or gold pieces in their possession. Numbers of well-to-do householders found that their stock of coin ranged from five to twenty dollars[220]. Notes of both banks speedily became valueless. Shops ceased to do business, except to a limited extent on credit. People had nothing wherewith to meet current expenditure. In an isolated place like this no help could be found. We were at once reduced to a primitive condition, being without any medium of exchange.

As the situation was realized the outlook became darker and darker. Employers of labor soon found that they must discharge their hands, having no means of paying their wages. Contractors who had large buildings on hand had to discontinue operations. Several factories dismissed their employés. Servants were informed that they must wait for their wages – how long no one could tell. Shopkeepers found that they had no customers. Trade was at a standstill.

But the terrible character of the crisis was not realized till it was announced that one after another, six of our largest firms had suspended payments, being unable to meet their drafts. The large number of persons who had deposits in the banks, or held their notes, found that the latter were useless and the former beyond their reach for the present. The panic speedily spread. Consternation or anxiety was written on every face. The ruinous character of the calamity became apparent, and despair seized many a heart. Many who on Sunday considered themselves comfortably provided for, found, on the following Monday, that their all had been swallowed up, and that they were left more or less destitute.

SHAREHOLDERS' BAD PLIGHT

The shareholders, especially in the Commercial bank, it is feared, will suffer severely. A good opinion of the Union bank prevails; and had it not been that the suspension of the Commercial bank caused a run on the other, which soon compelled it to close its doors, it is generally believed it would have weathered the storm. The Commercial bank did not open at all on Monday, December 10th, and exhibited a notice to the effect that it had been compelled to suspend payments for the present. At once a run on the Union commenced and an excited crowd thronged it, demanding gold for notes and cheques. The struggle to get near the counter was severe. When the directors realized the situation and considered that the gold in their vaults did

[219] From THE NEWFOUNDLAND CRASH. (1894, December 26). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 7.
[220] About $150 to $600 in 2020, adjusting for United States inflation.

not exceed $200,000[221], which would not nearly meet the demands likely to be made, they at once suspended business. The gold held by both banks was handed over to the Savings' bank, to which both were indebted and which had a preferential claim. The run on the Savings' bank commenced, but it was not considered wise to meet the claims of applicants, as the gold in was entirely insufficient. Thus their gold was locked up and our circulating medium was gone. The amount of misery and suffering of all kinds that has followed no one can at present estimate. It is by far the severest blow the colony has ever received. It is tenfold worse than the fire of 1892; and coming so soon after that calamity it is more severely felt.

As yet no help has come. Our immediate want is a currency. It would greatly lighten the gloom if the Bank of Montreal should see its way, either to come to the aid of the Union bank or establish a branch here speedily. In the store of the merchants are fish to the value of two millions of dollars; but of course it cannot be realized. It is announced that the Peoples' Bank of Halifax has dispatched an agent to open a branch here. This, no doubt, will give temporary relief to a small extent. Application has been made to the Imperial Government for assistance, but their reply has not yet been made public. They would only give aid on condition of sending out a commission and ascertaining the financial condition of the colony and controlling the expenditure of any sums advanced. The next step might be to bring us to the status of a Crown colony.

The revenue will be deficient this year by a quarter of a million of dollars[222], as compared with that of last year. The inflation which followed the fire swelled the revenue to an abnormal condition, and reaction follows. […]

From all this it is evident that our condition is of the gravest description. The immediate cause of the collapse of the banks was the failure of a London firm – Prowse, Hall & Morris – through which the sale of seven-eighths of our exports was conducted. Their drafts were due here and could not be honored.

The Crash and the Credit System[223] (1894)

The entire coin circulation in the Colony – gold, silver and copper together – does not exceed about $200,000[224], or say £40,000. For the purpose of trade the notes of the two suspended Banks have been the current medium, but when the Commercial failed, and the Union had to close its doors until it could replenish its store of specie, these notes became unexchangeable. Those who possessed only Commercial notes suddenly found them literally worth no more than the paper on which they were printed, because there was no one in the Colony who could give coin for them at whatever discount. Naturally the shopkeepers and others refused to take them at all, and the distrust extending to the notes of the other Bank, business was brought to a dead-lock, wages could not be paid in a current medium, and thousands

[221] About $6,000,000 in 2020, adjusting for United States inflation.
[222] About $7,500,000 in 2020, adjusting for United States inflation.
[223] From A NEWFOUNDLAND telegram. (1894, December 28). *The Glasgow Herald*, p. 4.
[224] About $6,000,000 in 2020, adjusting for United States inflation.

of heretofore well-to-do people suddenly found themselves unable to procure the bare means of subsistence. […]

For years past – how long it is now difficult to say – our oldest Colony has been living and trading on credit. […] Newfoundland, as most people know, depends practically on the fish trade, […] and the fish trade has come to be a sort of combination of the "truck" and the "supply" systems. The fisherman obtained on credit his vessel, appliances, and provisions for the whole season's operations from the St. John's merchant. In a country where the circulating medium is so scarce, the merchant in turn could only secure the supplies by buying on credit from the store-dealers and importers, and by over-drafts from the banks. When the fishing fleet came in, the catch was handed over to the merchant to repay the advances, and in a good season it would do so even though the fisherman had to pay for the accommodation a premium of 20 per cent. or more on cash prices. But in a bad season the catch would not clear the debt of the fisherman, who would have to be assisted again to resume operations in the next season. Meanwhile the fish brought had to be marketed, and this process involved another round of credit operations. The merchant might ship off at once to Europe and draw against bills of lading enough to clear his account at the banks. But as a general rule he had to store until sales and shipments could be effected. The storing necessitated further advances from the banks, to be repaid when shipments were made, or from some other firm of merchants who would give their acceptances against store-receipts.

The system of cross accommodation had become so extensive that the principal operations of the Banks seem to have been in connection with cross bills with merchants in the fishing trade. And only by thus helping their customers and backing each other's bills could the Banks keep things going until the product of the season's fishing could be turned into cash. For about ten months of every year, therefore, the colony has subsisted on paper credit alone. And year by year the position got worse as the fisheries were gradually depleted, colonial taxation increased, rival industries attracted men from the fishing, and metallic currency grew smaller and smaller. It has been said for some years past the entire business system of Newfoundland has been a gigantic fabric of promissory notes.

With inflammable materials, any trifle may cause a blaze. In the case of Newfoundland the only cause for wonder is that the conflagration did not occur long ago. The immediate cause of the panic was the death of the London financial agent for most of the Newfoundland fish exporters. This caused a winding-up of the business, in the course of which some of the drafts of the Newfoundland firms were refused acceptance. These drafts went back to the Commercial Bank, who, finding the drawers unable to refund, had to put on pressure which resulted in a rapid succession of mercantile failures in St. John's, and a general panic in the colony. When this bank collapsed there was a run upon the Union Bank by all who held its notes, and then that bank closed its doors until it could get a supply of gold from the United States. This step may have averted disaster, but it increased the general distress, as bank notes were unexchangeable and coin was unprocurable.

"Depressed and despondent"[225] (1895)

The vicious system of banking which has been followed here for years had much to do with the present calamity. There were two banks whose subscribed capital was supplied almost entirely by persons resident in the island. Largely the stock represented the savings of hard working people belonging to the middle classes. The depositors were persons in business or those who had retired from business on a moderate competency. The charters of those banks are now discovered to have been loose and faulty, affording no protection to note holders, such as American and Canadian charters provide, and no supervision to guard against mismanagement or fraud. […]

Managers were invariably selected from the mercantile class. Years of bad fisheries or low prices for foreign markets came, and the capital of large fish-exporting firms was in part swept away. Then came the temptation to obtain advances from the banks to carry on their business, and a fatal system of permitting largely overdrawn accounts without due security was entered on. Managers, being also merchants, were led to accommodate each other, and thus money intrusted to the banks came to be used to an unjustifiable extent in carrying on the precarious business of the country, advances being unsecured. To such an extent were over-drafts permitted, that in one instance twice the amount of the whole bank capital was thus borrowed. Not only large exporting firms were thus accommodated, but trading firms with small, or almost no, capital were dealt with.

The revelations connected with the Commercial Bank since its failure are appalling, and the losses and misery inflicted on note-holders, depositors, and stockholders are deplorable. The Union Bank is in a very different condition so far as yet appears, but there, too, large overdrafts were permitted and undue credit given, and the shareholders will lose everything. […] An Act has been passed guaranteeing the Union Bank notes at 80 cents the dollar, but the Commercial Bank notes only at 20 cents the dollar. […] Holders of Commercial Bank notes resent deeply the discrimination against them, and will not part with their notes at such a low estimate. […] These notes were colonial currencies, and were employed by the Government in all their payments. […]

People are in a very depressed and despondent condition; labour, buying and selling, and manufacturing, are suspended. All hands in the boot and shoe factories, foundries, biscuit, and wood factories, have been discharged. […] All the large establishments in St. John's, shops and offices, have discharged half their employés, and reduced the wages of the remainder by 33 per cent. Private householders are retrenching, and reducing the number of their servants.

[225] From THE CRISIS IN NEWFOUNDLAND. (1895, January 16). *The Leeds Mercury*, p. 8.

A run on the Bank of Montreal[226] (1895)

Canadian banks, including the Bank of Montreal had established branches in Newfoundland by early 1895. Unlike the failed banks, they had sufficient reserves to weather a temporary loss in confidence.

I am afraid the recent absurd panic and run on the Canadian banks, which have branches here, have not tended to elevate the community in the opinion of outsiders. It was a sheepish scare, it must be confessed, without anything to justify or excuse it in reason or fact. […] How the fright originated is an inscrutable mystery; but I fear it was not accidental. There is pretty strong evidence to show that some designing villains were at work the night before, spreading evil reports regarding the banks and representing that they were "going to burst." […] In some inexplicable way such senseless rumors went round on the evening before the panic showed itself; and on the morning after, as soon as the shops opened, numbers of excited individuals rushed about making purchases of various kinds to get rid of their notes. Later, crowds began to gather in front of the banks; and it was evident that a run would take place. The news spread and the panic-stricken crowd rapidly increased in numbers. It was largest in front of the Bank of Montreal, which, of course, does the largest amount of business, the next being the Bank of Nova Scotia. It was pitiable to see the terror-stricken people awaiting the opening of the bank, many of them fully believing we were going to have a repetition of "Black Monday" when the two local banks closed their doors.

Great was the astonishment of the crowd when the Bank of Montreal threw open its doors an hour before the usual time and admitted the surging crowd, a large proportion of them being women. The manager, Mr. Gaeta, had foreseen what was coming and met it skillfully and courageously, as also did the managers of the two other banks. On getting inside, the crowd, shouldering one another to reach the wicket, found double the usual number of tellers ready to receive them with cheerful faces, while a huge pile of bags full of gold coins was at the elbow of each. Nearly everyone wanted gold for the notes they brought; and soon a perfect torrent of gold began to flow out in exchange for the paper presented. It was a curious sight. The half frantic women, with pale faces and disheveled hair; the burly men, with fierce determination in their eyes, but terror in their hearts lest they should not reach the counter before the gold had all vanished, were all struggling together. But the golden piles never seemed to diminish. No sooner was one bag emptied than another took its place. Clerks were seen bringing up fresh bags from the vaults. The tellers rolled up their sleeves and counted out the yellow coin with amazing rapidity, apparently quite anxious to redeem the notes. As the first applicants, with happy faces and many sighs of relief, began to stream out with their gold-laden pockets, and told of the piles inside, the panic began to abate; and it dawned on the others that they had been fooled and that possibly, after all, the Bank of Montreal, the third largest monetary

[226] From THE SCARE AT ST. JOHN'S. (1895, May 21). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 6.

establishment in the world, might survive this terrible run; and the other staunch institutions might stand this "tempest in a teapot." The pressure after a couple of hours, began to slacken, and by 12 o'clock the squall was over, and before 1 o'clock the offices were nearly empty, and only ordinary customers were dropping in. Many of the poor frightened sheep were thoroughly ashamed of themselves, but could give no account how their fears were excited. Nothing is more infectious than fear.

THE EATING OF SALT COD

Why import fish when you can catch your own?[227] (1821)

The following poem was part of an advertisement by J. & E. Wilkinson, English suppliers of angling equipment.

Respected Anglers, young and old
As Spring advances, we make bold
Our Fishing Wares to recommend,
If you to buy will condescend.

The public, too, at large we wish,
To patronize *fresh-water* fish;
Regretting that such sums are spent
In purchasing *salt fish* for Lent;
And asking if it be not strange
That ships should o'er th'Atlantic range
Merely from Newfoundland to bring
Salt codfish, bad as salted ling,
Distinguish'd both by fibre tough,
For which few teeth are strong enough?
Salt salmon too, and herrings red,
In hundreds have the scurvy bred;
And without scandal we may think,
Folks eat them, *with a view to drink*.

Salt Cod as Slave Food[228] (1824)

The *food* of the slaves [in British Guinea] consists of vegetables and salt fish. […] The fish used by them is the salt cod brought from the British settlements in North America. It is given on the Sunday, in allowances at the rate of a pound per week for every working [slave]. The children and the superannuated have a smaller

[227] From J. & E. Wilkinson. (1821, April 14). Address to the Public [Advertisement]. *The Lancaster Gazette*, p. 3.
[228] From Slavery in British Guinea. (1824, January 31). *The Ipswich Journal*, p. 4.

quantity. […] Now, it is evident that two ounces of salt fish per day (and, deducting the bone, it is no more, even when they have their share) is not sufficient for a hard-working man. The [slaves], therefore, of both sexes, are obliged to spend much of the Sunday and of the nights in fishing.

Salt Cod as a Lenten Food[229] (1886)

Many devout Christians abstain from meat during Lent, the forty days before Easter. Salt cod did not count as meat, so it was a popular source of protein during this time.

Salt cod on Good Friday is, it appears to me, a sort of tradition with many people. Of course, those who observe Lent scrupulously – in black clothes and with fasting Wednesdays and Saturdays – naturally make a rigorous observance of Good Friday' but salt cod appears on that day only in many households not particular about fasts as a rule.

To make salt cod as nice as the natural toughness and insipidity of the stuff allows, it should not be too much boiled, but should be soaked for a very long time. I know of a good French cook who let this fish lie in water for three full days. She then scraped the black skin off, and put the fish in the colander and let the water-tap run on it for several minutes.

Salt cod must be put on the fire in cold water. When at the point of boiling, skim the pot; as soon as it boils, take it to the side of the fire, cover with a tight-fitting lid, and let simmer for twenty minutes, then remove from the water and drain the fish quite dry.

In England we almost always see boiled salt cod served with the traditional egg-sauce poured over the fish. But another way of finishing is this: Put a lump of butter in a saucepan, and let it melt, dredge in flour till it is pretty thick, then add pepper and unmade mustard. Stir this till it is well mixed and a little cooked, then dilute with milk. Lay the cod-fish in this sauce in the pan, and leave it there for five minutes; serve with the sauce over.

Cold salt fish is best used up by being made into a pie. The fish, broken up into flakes, is put in a dish, with a very little chopped onion and parsley, and a liberal quantity of bits of butter mixed amongst the fish, and covered with a crust of cold boiled potatoes mashed with milk. Bake brown in the oven.

More on Cod and Lent[230] (1894)

Mention must be made of the seasonable salt cod. This fish is deservedly held in reverence as a fast[231] dish, for it would be hard to find anything more suitable as

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[229] FILOMENA. (1886, April 17). A LADY'S LETTER ON CURRENT TOPICS. *Supplement to the Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle*, p. 11.
[230] SOME LENTEN DISHES. (1894, February 17). *The Chicago Tribune*, p. 16.
[231] In this context, a dish for when one is trying to fast – to abstain from food.

a mortification of the flesh, prepared as it usually is, stiff with salt and drying, and innocent of any garnish beyond plain boiled parsnips, and perhaps, as a concession to the weakness of the flesh, a garnish of parsley and a spoonful of egg sauce. Granted that a hermit, trained to look on the pangs of dyspepsia as only a form of diabolic possession, might consider this fare almost too good for times of abstinence, much more for a period of serious fasting, modern digestions are not of such heroic kind. Moreover, we are apt to consider indigestion more deserving of medical attendance than spiritual glorification, so we are obliged to seek some modification of the grim and undisguised plainness of this comestible. Therefore, soak it considerably more than was aforetime considered necessary, and, after the initial bath, add to the soaking liquid a third, if not a half, of its volume of milk to soften and sweeten the dish. Finally, when it is cooked, careful housewives will boil it in half water, half milk, allowing but a very small proportion, if any, of salt, by which means the flesh is kept beautifully white, and nearly as digestible and palatable as fresh fish. It is then served with either poulette, bechamel, egg, or Indienne sauce, and garnished with delicately boiled parsnip, salsity, or potatoes.

Ten ways to cook Cod[232] (1891)

I. – BRANDADE OF COD. – Take two pounds of salt cod and soak for some hours, then cook by placing it in a fish kettle with cold water, and allowing it to boil; then draw the kettle to the side of the fire, and leave it for twenty minutes without boiling. Take out the fish and strain it, then remove the skin and bones; while it is still warm pound it in a mortar, with two or three spoonsful of cream sauce, or dissolved butter. It should form a thick paste; put it into a saucepan, and add gradually, beating all the time, a teacupful of best salad oil, or dissolved butter, and a few drops of lemon juice. The mixture is now like a very thick cream. Still keeping it hot, but not allowing it to boil, add a pinch of pepper, a little more cream, a soupcon of garlic, and a little chopped parsley. Serve with fried bread sippets[233].

II. – BOILED SALT COD. – Let the fish soak for twenty-four hours, changing the water frequently, and at the last mixing an equal quantity of milk with the water. To cook it put it into a fish kettle with plenty of water and a spoonful of vinegar. As soon as the water boils, skim it, and draw the kettle to the side, and let the fish simmer until done. Serve it with egg sauce, and a garnishing of mashed potatoes.

III. – SALT COD WITH TOMATOES. – Cut into small pieces two pounds of cod, previously soaked. Chop an onion and fry it in plenty of butter, add the fish, a little garlic, then five or six tomatoes, cut in slices with the seed removed, then cook very slowly for half-an-hour. Tinned tomatoes may be used instead of fresh, and in that case a thickening of flour and water must be added.

IV. – FRIED SALT COD. – Cut the fish into slices, put into a saucepan with water, and simmer until cooked; strain it and let it get cold. Take away the bones and

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[232] From THE HOUSEKEEPER. (1891, April 11). Ten ways of Cooking Cod. *Supplement to the Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle*, p. 12.

[233] A British term for a small piece of bread used as a garnish, or for dipping into a sauce.

season with pepper, a little lemon juice, and a few drops of oil. An hour after, flour the slices, dip them in beaten egg, and then bread-crumbs, and fry a delicate brown in butter. Serve with slices of lemon.

V. – SALT COD IN THE DUTCH FASHION. – Cut two pounds of fish into slices, and cook in water as in the preceding recipe. Take it out of the saucepan, strain it, and dry it in a cloth, and place it in a very hot dish, surround it with boiled potatoes cut in two, and mask the whole with dissolved butter mixed with chopped parsley.

VI. – SALT COD IN THE SPANISH FASHION. – Take two pounds of cod, cut in slices, and cook in water as before; strain it and remove the bones and skin. Take two or three capsicum, grill them, cut them into strips, and sprinkle with salt. Chop two onions, and fry them a yellow colour in butter; add to them four large tomatoes in slices, without seeds, a little garlic, a bouquet of herbs, salt and pepper; cook until the tomatoes break. Boil twelve potatoes in water, peel them while hot, and cut in slices. Then take a deep dish, and arrange first a layer of potatoes with pepper and salt, then a layer of fish, and afterwards half the capsicum; over this pour half the sauce that you have made with the onions and tomatoes, again another layer of potatoes, of fish, and of capsicum. Pour over the remainder of the sauce, powder the top with flour, and bake in a slow oven for three-quarters of an hour. Serve in the same dish in which the fish is cooked.

VII. – COD IN THE ITALIAN FASHION. – Use fresh cod. Cut it into small slices, and fry in butter or oil, strain and arrange the slices in a shallow saucepan, and pour over enough tomato sauce to just cover them; bring to boiling point over the fire, and then simmer for twenty minutes. Add a little pepper, and serve.

VIII. – SALT COD WITH CREAM. – Take the remnants of boiled cod, remove bones and skin, and break it into flakes. Put it into a saucepan with two ounces of butter and a teacupful of cream, a teaspoonful of mustard, and a little pepper. Let the fish become quite hot, but not boil, and it is ready to serve.

IX. – BAKED FRESH COD. – Have a nice sized piece from the middle of the fish, cut it open, and take out the bone, and stuff with a mixture of bread-crumbs, chopped parsley, two anchovies, salt and pepper, mixed together with an egg, a little butter, and a squeeze of lemon juice. Put the fish in a dish with some pieces of butter on it, and some fish stock round it, and bake. Serve with caper sauce, having carefully poured away the stock in which the fish was cooked.

X. – FRIED COD WITH ONIONS. – Fry the fish as in recipe IV., strain it, and place on a dish with a covering of finely minced onion fried in butter, and flavoured with one or two drops of vinegar.

APPENDIX: THE GASPÉ COD FISHERY

Gaspé, Quebec, had an important, if small-scale, cod fishery. The following information and illustrations shed light on one of Newfoundland's rivals in the salt cod market.

Preparing Cod for export in Gaspé[234] (1883)

Canadian fishermen do much more than supply the demand of their home population. […] The salting of the large Gaspe codfish sent to the Mediterranean is done with great care, and it is said that they will keep for two years or more even in warm climates. They are caught in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, about 20 miles out in summer, and as far as 35 miles off in winter, the finest fish being taken in August and again in October in deep water. Those which are brought in fresh are used for these markets.

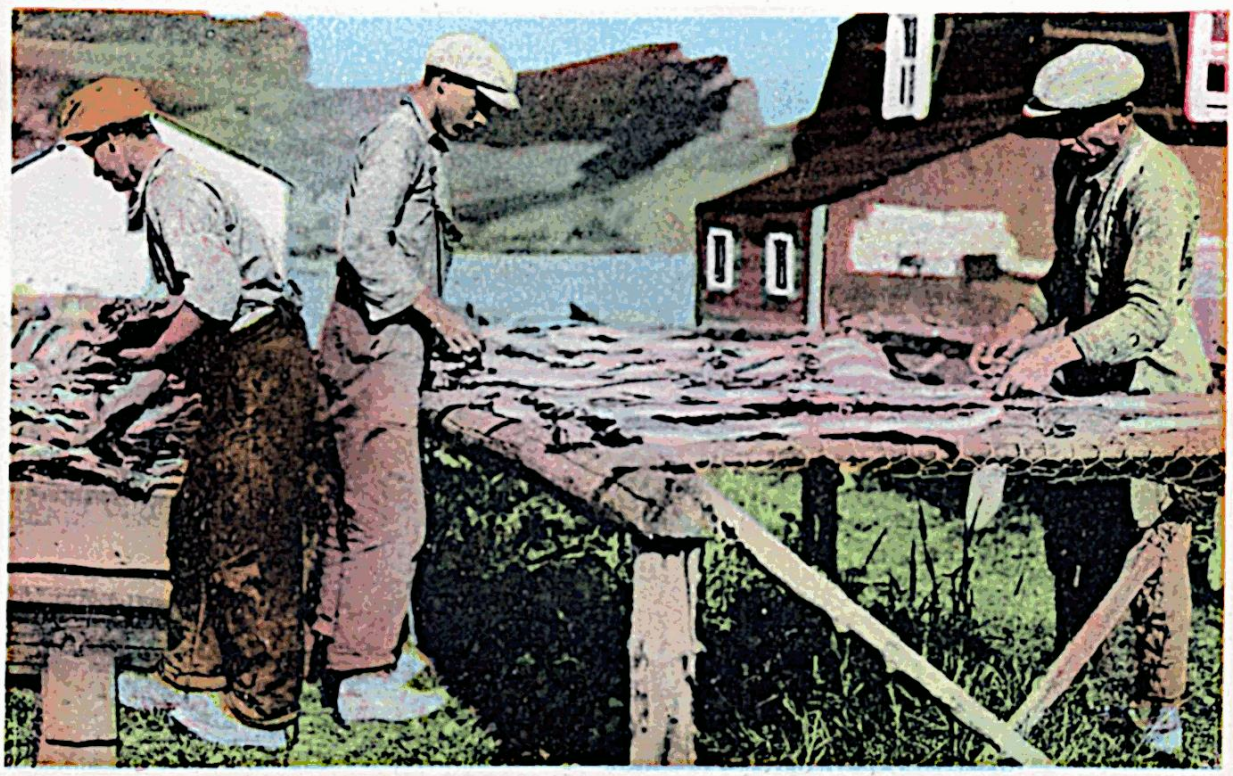
After being split open and dressed, they are laid in salt for eight or ten days, then the salt is washed out, and they are spread out to be dried by sun and wind for two or three months. Thus prepared they are shipped in bulk in the vessels […] specially built to carry this food to the religious-fast-observing peoples of Spain, Portugal, Italy and other countries possessing extensive seaboards and fishing communities in Europe, and to the Catholic populations of Central and South America. [These vessels] are, as a rule, of about 300 tons burden. The average net value to the exporter may be set down at about £1 per quintal (112lb.), and it is estimated that over 20,000 quintals of these large-sized Gaspe cod are annually exported from Canada to the Mediterranean. Gaspe cod of medium size go to Brazilian ports, and the smaller kinds and such as are split or are otherwise damaged in drying, to the West Indies.

Images of the Gaspé Cod Fishery (c. 1945)

The following images were published by H. V. Henderson, West Bathurst, N.B., Route 11, Quebec, Canada. They were part of a souvenir folder of postcards postmarked August 13, 1945. It is highly likely that H. V. Henderson is Hedley Vicars Henderson (1891 – 1964), a renowned photographer of the Gaspé peninsula. I therefore believe the images to be in the public domain, according to Canadian copyright law. -C.W.

[234] From CANADA AT THE FISHERIES EXHIBITION. (1883, May 17). *The London Times*, p. 7.

Un pêcheur vigoureu des eaux profondes.—A Hardy Deep Sea Fisherman



Séchage de la morue. Spreading Codfish on flakes to dry at Percé, P.Q. 381.

Empilant la Morue sèche sur la plage.
Piling Dried Codfish on the Beach at Grand E'Tang, Gaspe, P.Q. G.E. 12.

Une charge de Morue séchée sur la Côte de Gaspé, P.Q. — A Load of Dried Codfish on Gaspe Coast, P.Q. — C.N.R. 4315

Les pêcheurs de Gaspé au travail,—à Belle Anse. Gaspe Fishermen at work, Belle Anse, P.Q.—B.A. 2.