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Chambers, G. T. W.,  
1912.

# The Fisheries

of the  
Province of Quebec

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*Historical Introduction*

BY  
E. T. D. CHAMBERS  
(*Special Officer Fish and Game Branch*)

Published by the Department of Colonization, Mines  
and Fisheries of the Province of Quebec.



# The Fisheries

of the

Province of Quebec

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Part I

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*Historical Introduction*

BY

*Edward*  
E. T. D. CHAMBERS

*||*  
(Special Officer Fish and Game Branch)

Published by the Department of Colonization, Mines  
and Fisheries of the Province of Quebec.



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To the

Honourable C. R. DEVLIN,

Minister of Colonization, Mines and Fisheries,

QUEBEC.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit herewith the first instalment of a historical introduction to a study of the fisheries of the Province of Quebec.

Though no attempt has thus far been made to compile anything like a complete or consecutive record of early Canadian fisheries, the facilities are certainly not lacking. In the pages of Cartier, Champlain, Lescarbot, Charlevoix, Denys and Chrestien LeClereq, and down to those of Pierre Fortin and l'Abbe Ferland, we are shown picturesque views of the fish and fishing of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, of Gaspesia and of the Labrador coast; while scattered in rich profusion among the voluminous archives of New France, in the Marine Department at Paris, in the Bibliotheque Nationale and elsewhere are numerous official documents containing valuable information on the same important subjects. A considerable number of these last-mentioned papers—hitherto unpublished—have been copied for me in Paris by the courtesy of Dr. A. G. Doughty, C.M.G., Chief Archivist of Canada; as well as other manuscripts in the files of his own department at Ottawa.

Dr. William F. Ganong, of Smith College, in his notes to the recently issued editions of both Nicholas Denys and Chrestien LeClereq, published by the Champlain Society, has also brought to light a number of documents in the Clairambault Collection in Paris, relating to the fisheries of New France, while to Dr. John M. Clarke, of Albany, we

are indebted for much valuable material extracted from original sources regarding the earliest sedentary fisheries of the Baie des Chaleurs.

Mr. C. J. Simard, Assistant Secretary of the Province of Quebec, and Mr. Evanturel, in charge of the provincial archives, have afforded me every facility for consulting the manuscript sources of information in possession of the department, while to the Hon. J. Douglas Hazen, Minister of Marine and Fisheries for the Dominion of Canada, to Mr. Johnston, Deputy Minister, and to Mr. Found and other officials of that department, I am under obligations for the loan of important documentary matter bearing upon a later period of our fisheries than that chiefly dealt with in the following pages, but which will, it is hoped, form the subject of a subsequent report.

That "*écrin de perles ignorées*,"—as Frechette so aptly calls the history of our dear Province of Quebec, holds many priceless gems of religious fervour and patriotic devotion, but among its ever-to-be cherished jewels of courageous daring and lofty ambition for home and country and people, and the extension of legitimate influence and power, must surely be counted, also, those bold plunges of the pioneer fishermen of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, into practically unknown western seas, and those fearless attempts to establish the first sedentary fisheries on Canadian soil, amid the uncivilized aborigines of Gaspesia and the yet more savage Esquimaux of Labrador, often in the face of hostile fleets, and subject to the ravages of roving pirates, who pillaged and wrought destruction with fire and sword both at sea and on shore.

The Canadian angler of to-day—with some knowledge of the history of his country's fisheries—and while enjoying his summer vacation on some of our inland waters, with perhaps an Indian guide for his only companion, will not be uninterested in recalling the orders issued to the inhabitants of Montreal, two and a quarter centuries ago, to remain in certain well-defined limits when going a-fishing, for fear of being surprised and murdered by the savage Iroquois; and

a realization of what the commercial fisheries of the Gulf meant to Quebec upwards of two centuries ago will not be in vain if it suggests investigation into the lack of that more ample development of the rich harvest of the sea which invites, very largely in vain—though with every prospect of most satisfactory returns—the investment of capital, courage, and industry.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your Obedient Servant,

E. T. D. CHAMBERS,

*Special Officer, Fish and Game Branch.*

Quebec, June 30, 1912.



# Fisheries of the Province of Quebec

By E. T. D. CHAMBERS

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## *Historical Introduction*

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### PART I

More than four hundred years have passed away since Basque and Breton fishermen gathered the first harvest of the sea from the waters that wash the coasts of Labrador and Gaspé on the one side and those of Newfoundland on the other; <sup>1</sup> and some comparatively modern students of these fisheries have clung to the more or less suppositious belief that it is necessary to go back for still another four hundred years if we would reach a period of time prior to the earliest pre-Columbian visits of Icelanders, Norsemen or Basques to the fisheries of our eastern coasts.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "There is some reason to believe that this fishery existed before the voyage of Cabot in 1497; there is strong evidence that it began as early as the year 1504."—*Francis Parkman* in the "Pioneers of France in the New World," p. 170.

"For several centuries men of Dieppe and St. Malo and other sailors from Havre de Grace, from Honfleur, and other places have made voyages to these countries to fish for cod."—Lescarbot, I, 236. See also Biard, *Relation*, 2, and Postel, cited by Lescabot, I, 237.

<sup>2</sup> *On a des preuves à peu près certaines que cette Ile (Terre-neuve) avait été visitée environ 400 ans auparavant par des marins Islandais, lesquels après avoir quitté leur Ile, cotoyèrent le Groënland, touchèrent à Terre-neuve, et se rendirent même jusqu'à une terre qu'ils appelèrent Vinland, maintenant les côtes de l'état de Massachusetts.*—*Rapport Annuel de Pierre Fortin, Magistrat, commandant l'expédition pour la protection des Pêcheries dans le Golfe St-Laurent, pendant la saison de 1862*, p. 60.

"I believe that during the twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the northern shores, say the coasts of Labrador and Newfoundland, were occasionally visited by the Icelanders,

The Vinland of the Danes and Scandinavians, which they claim to have discovered about 1000 A.D., and which Rafn<sup>1</sup> and his followers place on the coast of Massachusetts, is held by a number of respectable authorities<sup>2</sup> to have been in the neighbourhood of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and their "Helluland" has been identified, to the satisfaction of careful investigators, as the coast of Labrador.

There is equally good reason to suppose that Cabot's landfall of the 24th June, 1497, when he first sighted the New World, was upon the Coast of Labrador, as claimed by Mr. J. P. Howley, F.R.G.S., of Newfoundland, though the majority of Mr. Howley's fellow-countrymen claim the honour for Cape Bonavista.

The early records of the Newfoundland fisheries specially interest us, because they naturally and necessarily deal with the early history of the industry in what are now Canadian waters. In fact the name Newfoundland was applied, in the sixteenth century, not only to the island colony, but also to Nova-Scotia, Cape Breton, Prince Edward's Island and the islands and coasts of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, even down to the State of Maine. Foreigners called these countries by the generic name of the "Baccalaos"—the land of dried cod-fish.<sup>3</sup>

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Irish, Welsh, Bretons, and Basques."—*Notes on the Coast of Labrador*. A Paper by Samuel Robertson of Spar Point, read before the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec by Dr. Morrin, on the 16th January, 1841. Transactions of the Society, Vol. IV., pp. 30, 31.

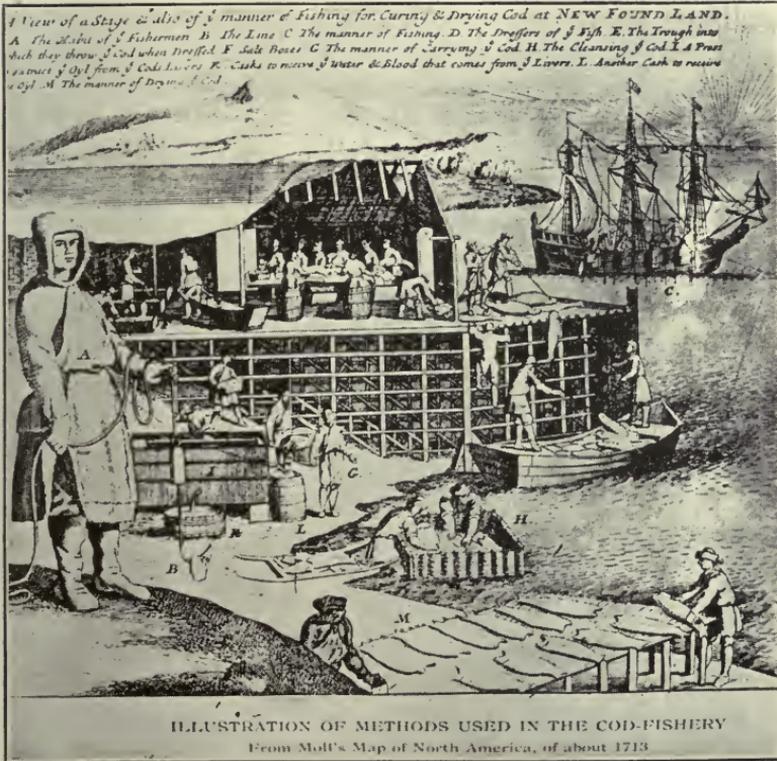
"The Basques and Bretons were for several centuries the only ones who were employed in the whale and cod fisheries and it is very remarkable that Sebastien Cabot, when discovering the coast of Labrador, found there the name of Bacallaos, which signifies cod in the language of the Basques."—MS. in the Royal Library of Versailles cited by Parkman.

<sup>1</sup> In his *Antiquates Americanae*, published in 1837.

<sup>2</sup> Amongst others, Paul Henri Mallet in his *Histoire de Danemarck*, Barrow in his *Voyages to the Arctic Regions* (London, 1818), J. Elliot Cabot, in the *Massachusetts Quarterly Review*, Vol. II., Dahlmann in his *Forschungen* (Vol. 1), and J. P. Howley, F.R.G.S., of Newfoundland.

<sup>3</sup> *History of Newfoundland* by D. N. Prowse (London, 1896), p. 23.

Judge Prowse, the leading historical authority of Newfoundland says:—"From contemporary records we can now state pretty accurately when the various nations began to fish in Newfoundland. The English in 1498; the records show their continuous operations from that date. The Por-



#### EARLY COD FISHING METHODS.

tuguese appear to have commenced the fishery in 1501. The first account of the French is in 1504."

The Portuguese fishermen followed immediately upon the voyage of discovery made by Gaspar Cortereal in 1500, and fishing companies were formed in Viana, Aveiro, and Terceira, Portugal, for the purpose of founding establishments in Terra Nova. In 1506 the King of Portugal gave orders

that all fishermen returning from Newfoundland should pay a tenth part of their profits at the Custom House. At different times, Aveiro alone had 60 vessels sailing to Newfoundland, and in 1550, 150 fishing vessels. Equal numbers sailing from Oporto and other ports, gave a large increase of revenue."

Thus the first and chief result of the discovery of North America was the immediate establishment of a great fishery. In all ages of the world the fishery has been the mother of commerce, the parent of navigation. The cod fishery, pursued by Englishmen, first in Iceland, where at one time 1,400 English fishermen had fishing rights, and afterwards on a larger scale in Newfoundland, made Englishmen sailors, and Britain a great maritime Power. De Witt says:—

"The navy of England became formidable by the discovery of the inexpressibly rich fishing bank of Newfoundland."

The fishing industry was responsible for the early colonization of North America. The first attempted settlement of New England by Gosnold and Brereton in 1602 was to prosecute the fisheries. Judge Prowse says:—"It is amongst the popular fictions of American history that when the Pilgrim Fathers moored their barque on the wild New England shore, their sole object was to worship God in their own way, and to kill Quakers after their own fashion, but sober history tells quite a different tale. In Winslow's 'Brief Narration of the True Grounds or Causes of the First Planting of New England,' it is stated that when the Puritans sent agents from Leyden to the High and Mighty Prince James to gain his consent to their going to America, the king at once asked, 'What profit might arise?' They answered in one single word—'Fishing.' 'So God have my soul,' said the royal Solon, 'tis an honest trade; 'twas the Apostles' own calling'; and so they obtained leave to go. They sought a place for their settlement convenient for cod fishing and whaling, and in 1624 they sent to England a ship laden with salt-cod-fish."

To the English of the days of Cabot, the discovery of the fishery grounds of Newfoundland was a veritable Godsend—a piscatorial El Dorado, for codfish was gold in those old days.

While the cod-fisher pursued his calling in the harbors of the Newfoundland and Labrador coasts—the more daring spirits, chiefly the Biscayans, chased the seal and the walrus in the Gulf and followed the dangerous trade of the whale fishery. The head-quarters of the latter were the Magdalen Islands, the Straits of Belle-Isle and the North East portion of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Judge Prowse, already quoted, thus describes the life of some of these fishermen in those early days: “They followed their quiet avocations armed to the teeth. Each vessel mounted cannon, and his rude arms always lay alongside the fisherman as he plied his oar and cast his net. But they were merry souls amidst all the dangers of the seas, wars, pirates, and rovers. Each week the Admiral of the port retired, and at every change the new official gave a feast to all. The cheap and generous wines of Europe would then be freely circulated, and the sombre woods of the little port be enlivened, perchance by the *chanson* of the French or the rattling of the castanets and lively airs on the Spanish guitar. If it was a Basque port the fun would be fast and furious—there would be the national Gaita (the bag-pipes) and song dance, and single-stick, with broken heads, to enliven the feast. If there were English there, they would be admirals and rulers over all, and woe betide the foreigner who disobeyed the West Countrymen’s orders, or dared to do anything on Sunday but drink and feast.”

### THE COD FISHERIES.

Of the fish which abounded in these waters the most important—called by the natives “baccalaos”—now rejoices in the less musical names of “cod” and “morue,” and during the centuries that have intervened since its discovery there by Europeans, it has brought vast fleets over the Atlantic to gather the rich harvest of these ocean depths, which has rewarded the toil of so many generations of fishermen.

Never was so rich a mine of wealth opened by the most fortunate adventurer of Southern climes, as that afforded by these fruitful ocean plains, and although untold millions have been taken from what was once an apparently inexhaustible store, portions of these seas still yield a rich return to the judicious and industrious toilers of the deep.

Until the sixteenth century, Iceland had been the scene of the most extensive cod fisheries. There is a story that



A HAUL OF CODFISH.

Basque fishermen came to our Labrador waters as early as 1470, but what is certain is that from 1525 to about 1700 they frequented the Straits of Belle Isle and the Gulf of St. Lawrence in considerable numbers; and in 1534, when Jacques Cartier was passing through these Straits, he met a fishing vessel from La Rochelle looking for the harbour of Brest<sup>1</sup>; and in describing Islettes (Bradore Bay), he notes that "there great fishing is done."

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<sup>1</sup> *Relation Originale de Voyage de Jacques Cartier au Canada en 1534.*

Herrera (ed. 1728, dec. iii., l. x. cap. 9) says that in 1526 the Breton, Nicholas Don, pursued the fisheries at Baccalaos. Purchas in his *Pilgrimages* says that Rut reports that in 1527 eleven sail of Normans and one of Bretons were at St. John. Lescarbot says (*Nouvelle France*, 1612, page 22) that Baron de Léry landed cattle on the Isle of Sable in 1528. Ramusio (in *Raccolta*, 1556, iii., 424) says: "Li Brettoni and Normandi, per la qual causa è chiamata questa terra il capo delli Brettoni," i.e., "the Bretons and Normans, for which reason the land was named Cape Breton." The "discorso," from which the above is taken, is that of the *Gran Capitano* Francese, of 1539, held by some writers to be Jean Parmentier of Dieppe. This "discorso" states that the Bretons and Normans visited these coasts thirty-five years previously, that is in 1504; also that Jean Denys, of Honfleur, and the pilot Camarto (Gamort), of Rouen, sailed to this Cape Breton in 1506, and, in 1508, "un navilio di Dieppa detto la 'Pensee'" (a ship of Dieppe, the "Pensee"), carried thither "Thomas Aubert."

Gosselin (*Documents authentiques et inédits*, etc., Rouen, 1876) says the following ships sailed to Newfoundland (which name, as we have already seen, was then applied to all the coasts of the Gulf of St. Lawrence) in 1508: "Bonne-Aventure," "Sibille," "Michel," and "Marie de Bonne Nouvelles." Mr. George Dexter, writing of this period in an article on "Cortereal, Verrazano, Gomez, Thevet," says:—"The coasts of Normandy and Brittany were peopled by a race of adventurous mariners, some of them exercising considerable power, as, for instance, the Angos of Dieppe, one of whom (Jean) was ennobled and created Viscount and Captain of that town. Such places as Dieppe, Honfleur, St. Malo and others had already furnished men and leaders for voyages of exploration and discovery. These had made expeditions to the Canaries and the African coast and the fishing population of the French provinces were not unused to voyages of considerable length. They were not slow, then, in seeking a share in the advantages offered by the new coun-

tries discovered by Cabot and Cortereal, and they speedily became skilful and powerful in the American fisheries. The fishermen of the ports of Brittany are known to have reached the Newfoundland shores as early as 1504. They have left there an enduring trace in the name of Cape Breton, which, in one form or another is found upon very early maps. Two years afterward, Jean Denys, who was from Honfleur, is said to have visited the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and to have made a chart of it."

Benjamin Sulte<sup>1</sup> says that before the first voyage of Cartier (1534) fishing and fur trading brought ships to the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and at Champlain's visit in 1603, trading was being carried on as far as Lake St. Peter.

In 1621 no less than 800 fishing and trading vessels were reported in the Gulf.

The Basques, in 1623, captured in the Gulf a fishing vessel belonging to one Guers (or Guerard)—a subordinate of Champlain. These Basque fishermen carried Guerard's ship away with them to Prince Edward Island, refusing to recognize the king's order giving the sole fishing rights in the waters of New France to the Canada Company.

Champlain, writing in 1625, mentioned the fact that the Basques fished for whales at Grande Baie near the Straits of Belle Isle.<sup>2</sup> The Rev. George Patterson<sup>3</sup> believes that they explored the Gulf and mouth of the river St. Lawrence.

Speaking of these and other early Canadian fishermen he says:—"Of the life of these men on those shores we have no record, and we can form an idea only by what we know of a later period. But we think it did not differ materially from

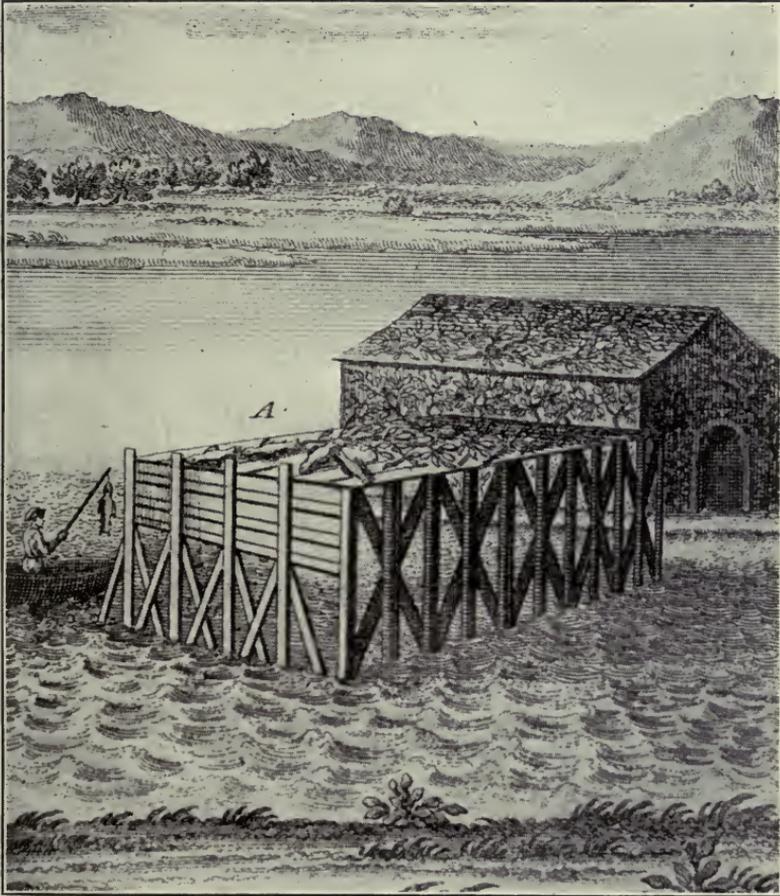
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<sup>1</sup> *Le Golfe Saint-Laurent (1600-1625) Par Benjamin Sulte.*—Proceedings of the Royal Society of Canada, Vol. IV, Section 1, page 7 (Montreal, Dawson Bros.), 1887.

<sup>2</sup> "Il y a un lieu dans le golfe Saint-Laurent qu'on nomme la Grande-Baie, proche du passage du Nord de l'île de Terre-Neuve à cinquante-deux degrés, ou les Basques vont faire la pêche des baleines."

<sup>3</sup> In his paper on *The Portuguese in North America*, in the Proceedings of the Royal Society of Canada, Vol. VIII (1890), p. 146.

that of the same class in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The cod was the primary object of pursuit, and then, as now, was taken by the line in deep waters. Although



STAGING FOR CODFISH.

(Reproduced from *La Potherie's Histoire de l'Amérique Septentrionale.*)

Hakluyt speaks of some taking the fish home wet, yet the earliest glimpses we obtain of them show them as having establishments on land, as well for the preparation of it for market, as for the prosecution of the inshore fishery. Here

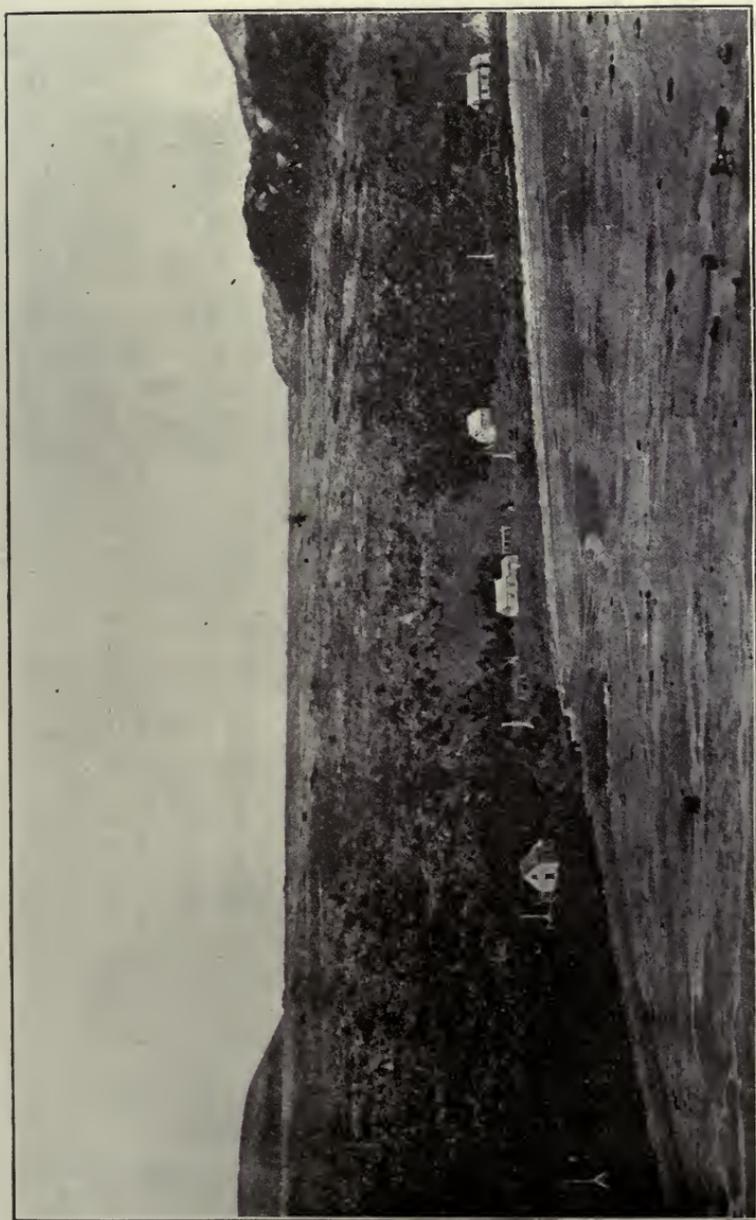
were erected stages and other appliances for the splitting, cleaning, salting and drying the fish and extracting the oil from the liver. The amazing abundance of smaller fish near the shore in their season, such as the herring and the mackerel, afforded opportunities for profit which could not have been allowed to pass unimproved. Perhaps, however, the whale might have been a more tempting object of pursuit, at least to the more daring, from the excitement which its capture occasioned, and the large profit to be obtained at a single stroke. These monsters of the deep were then to be found even on the New England coast, and were killed in the manner that has been common ever since. When struck near the shore, their carcasses might be towed to land near the fishing establishment and the oil extracted there. Or if farther at sea, it would be cut up there and the pieces brought in the vessel to be disposed of in the same way. Seals and walruses, which were then abundant, would be treated in a similar manner. All this would require the erection of store-houses, no doubt rude enough, for the storage of salt and other supplies necessary for their work or for trading with the natives, and afterwards for the storage of fish, oil, etc., for shipment, as well as vats for the rendering of the blubber. There must also have been small huts for men to live in while on shore. Thus there would be the appearance of a small fishing village, which during summer would be the scene of busy activity, and which might form the foundation of a permanent community.’<sup>1</sup>

### THE HARBOUR OF BREST.

This harbour has been the subject of much ridiculous legend, though from the fact that it was being sought in 1534 by the fishermen met by Cartier in the Straits, it was, apparently, already at that time a rendez-vous. It was simply

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<sup>1</sup> *The Portuguese on the North-East coast of America*, by Rev. George Patterson, D.D., in *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Canada*, Vol. VIII. (1890).



THE SITE OF THE ANCIENT "TOWN" OF BREST.

another name for what is now Old Fort Bay,<sup>1</sup> a mile and a half to the west of the mouth of the Esquimaux river.

A little book published in Lyons in 1608<sup>2</sup> describes Brest as "the principal town of the whole country, well provisioned, large and strongly fortified, peopled by about fifty thousand men and furnished with all that is necessary to enrich a good-sized town."

When it is remembered that this letter was written in the year in which Champlain founded Quebec, it will be seen immediately that it is a fairy tale of the wildest sort.

Mr. Samuel Robertson, who lived on the Labrador coast in the first half of the nineteenth century, gave a graphic imaginary picture of Brest in its palmy days. "I estimate," he said, "that at one time it contained two hundred houses, besides stores, etc., and perhaps 1,000 inhabitants in the winter which would be trebled in the summer. Brest was at the height of its prosperity about the year 1600, and some thirty years later the entire tribe of the Eskimos was totally extirpated or expelled from that region. After this the town began to decay, and towards the close of the century the name was changed to Bradore."<sup>3</sup>

The concluding sentence of the above indicates that Mr.

<sup>1</sup> "Port Brest (Breton), now *Baie du Vieux Fort*."—Hiram B. Stephens in "*Jacques-Cartier, an essay*" (p. 135).

"*Il est bien sûr que sur la baie de Saint Paul se trouvent des ruines qui ont conservé le nom de Vieux Fort. Le même nom est donné à ce lieu dans les cartes attachées à l'histoire du Canada par Charlevoix.*"—Abbé Ferland, in a report to Mgr. the Bishop of Tloa on the *Mission du Labrador*, in the *Rapport sur les Missions du Diocese de Quebec* (No. 13, 1859, p. 79).

<sup>2</sup> *Coppie d'une lettre envoyée de la Nouvelle-France, ou Canada, par le Sieur de Cobes, Gentilhomme Poiteuin, à vn sien amy. En laquelle font brièvement descrites les merveilles et richesses du pays, ensemble la façon & moeurs de ceux qui l'habitent, la gloire des François et l'espérance qu'il y a de rendre l'Amérique Chrestienne.*—A. Lyon, par Léon Savine M.D.C. IX. Avec Permission des Supérieurs. There is a copy of this book in the Lennox Library, New York.

<sup>3</sup> *Notes on the Coast of Labrador.* A paper by Samuel Robertson, of Spar Point, read for him by Dr. Morrin in 1841, before the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec.—*Transactions of the Society*, Vol. 1V, pp. 32-34.

Robertson could not have known where Brest was actually located; for he confuses it with Bradore Bay, which is 25 to 30 miles further east.

The story of Brest attributed in the Lyons publication to "Sieur de Combes," who is not known at all outside of the title of this letter, has been effectually disposed of by both Dr. S. E. Dawson<sup>1</sup> and Mr. W. S. Wallace.<sup>2</sup>

We have already seen that after the Basques came the Portuguese to the waters of the Gulf, following the course taken in 1500 by the brothers Cortereal, while in 1535 the voyage of Estevan Gomez showed the way to the fisheries to his Spanish fellow-countrymen. What is now Bradore Bay was long known as Baie des Espagnols, and in 1704 there were still to be seen there the ruins of a Spanish fishing establishment.<sup>3</sup> Jacques Cartier, in the description of his first voyage to Canada in 1534, tells of the sedentary fisheries of the Micmac Indians in the Baie des Chaleurs, and even describes the hempen nets which they employed and the large quantity of mackerel which they took in them near the shore.

### JACQUES CARTIER ON THE FISHERIES OF THE ST. LAWRENCE.

In the following year we have his description of the fishes of the St. Lawrence, as follows:

"As has been mentioned in previous chapters, fish of all the kinds ever heard of abound in the river; for, from its mouth up to its end (*i.e.*, as far as they went), in proper season will be found nearly all kinds of salt and fresh water fish; also will be found in Canada large numbers of whales,

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<sup>1</sup> *Brest on the Canadian Labrador*. By Samuel Edward Dawson, Litt. D. (Laval), in the Proceedings of the Royal Society of Canada, Second Series, Vol. XI.

<sup>2</sup> Historical introduction by W. S. Wallace to *Labrador, the Country and the People*, by Wilfrid T. Grenfell, C. M. G., M.D., and others, New York, 1910.

<sup>3</sup> W. S. Wallace in his Historical Introduction to *Labrador, the Country and the People*. p. 14.

porpoises, sea-horses, and adthothuys,<sup>1</sup> a kind of fish we had never seen or heard of. They are as large as a porpoise, white as snow, have a body and head like a greyhound, and stay in brackish water between the river of Saguenay and Canada. There will also be found in June, July and August, plenty of mackerel, mullet, barr (sartres), large eels and other fish, also smelt, as good as in the River Seine, and plenty of lampreys and salmon. Above Canada (i.e. Quebec) are bass, trouts, carp, bream and other fresh water fish. And all fish are taken in large numbers in their season by the tribes for food.”<sup>2</sup>

*Jacques Cartier*

### EARLY NORMAN FISHERMEN.

As a result of Cartier's explorations and of his descriptions of the new western lands and of the fisheries of their seas, Norman merchants reached out so promptly for the commercial possibilities of the lands and waters of New France—the fisheries of which had declined considerably, according to E. Gosselin, since 1527—that in January and February of 1541, 1542, no less than sixty ships went “to fish for cod in the New Lands,” while in the corresponding months of the three following years, two ships sailed daily, on an average, on the same mission, from Havre and Rouen and from Dieppe and Honfleur.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This was apparently the *Delphinapterus leucas* (Pallas) sometimes called simply *Beluga*, and by others the white whale, now known as porpoise in English, and as *marsoin* in French. Schools of these fish are frequently met in the brackish water of the St. Lawrence and occasional individuals have been seen in the harbor of Quebec. They are common at the mouth of the Saguenay.

<sup>2</sup> *Relation Originale du Voyage de Jacques Cartier au Canada en 1535.*

<sup>3</sup> *Narrative and Critical History of America*, by Justin Winsor, vol. IV, p. 61.

See also page 13 of *Documents authentiques et inédits pour servir à l'histoire de la marine Normande et du commerce Rouen-*

After 1545 the industry was neglected until 1560, when it was again resumed, and thirty-eight vessels left for the "New Lands." That French fishermen were numerous in the Gulf in the last quarter of the sixteenth century is evident from the testimony of Parkhurst<sup>1</sup> and Haies.<sup>2</sup>

According to the well-known Seville cosmographer, Alonso de Santa Cruz, Labrador, in the middle of the sixteenth century, was "frequented by the English, who go there to take fish which the natives catch in great numbers."<sup>3</sup>

Parkhurst, already referred to, writing in 1578—in the reign of Queen Elizabeth—realized the strategic importance of Belle Isle, and the value of the Gulf and Labrador fisheries, as shown by the following:—

"Now to show you my fansie, what places I suppose meetest to inhabit in those parts discovered of late by our nation:

There is neare the mouth of the grand baie an excellent harbour, called of the Frenchmen, Châsteau, and one island in the very centre of the straight, called Belle Isle, which places if they could be peopled and well fortified, we shall be lordes of the whole of the fishing in short time, if it doe so please the Queen's Majesty, and from thence send wood and cole with all necessaries to Labrador lately discovered; but I am of opinion and doe most steadfastly believe that we shall find as rich mines in more temperate places and Climates."



*Jacques Cartier.*

*nais pendant les XVIe et XVIIe siècles.* Par E. Gosselin, Greffier Archiviste du Palais de Justice de Rouen. Rouen, Imprimerie de Henry Boissel, 1876. 8vo., pp. XV., 173.

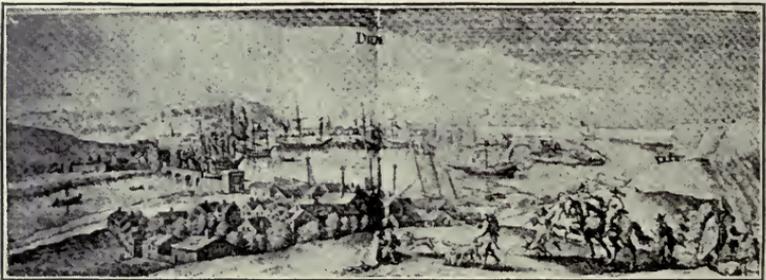
<sup>1</sup> Anthony Parkhurst in his letter of December, 1578, to Hakluyt. He had accompanied Hawkins in his voyage of 1566.

<sup>2</sup> See his account of Sir Humphrey Gilbert's expedition.

<sup>3</sup> In an unpublished manuscript entitled *El Islario General*, referred to by Gosling in his "Labrador," page 65.

## FRENCH FISHERY REGULATIONS.

There were no well-defined laws or regulations in France governing the sea fisheries until the edict of 1584 issued in the reign of Henri III. Thenceforward, the administration of the fisheries in French waters and in those of the French colonies extended over the migratory as well as sea fish, and over the curing of the fish, as well as the taking of them both by sea and also from the shore. The sea fishery early attained considerable importance, and was the source of an extensive commerce. It was regarded with the greatest favor by the heads of the state because it called for the services of accomplished sailors and so became the nursery of explorers and discoverers and of recruits for the navy.



DIEPPE.

France was always more interested in the cod fishery than in any other, for it called for longer voyages and better ships than did the home fisheries, being chiefly made—under the old regime in Canada, as well as to-day—by fishermen from France—off the shores of Newfoundland. These hardy Normans of the early part of the sixteenth century were also amongst the pioneer fishermen of Canadian waters.

The French ports which furnished most of the ships and fishermen for the cod fishery in its early days, were Saint-Malo, Dieppe, Granville, Bayonne, Saint-Jean-de-Luz, Les Sables and l'Île de Ré.

Salted codfish in the early days of the industry was chiefly consumed in the interior provinces of France, while the prin-

cipal market for the salt and dried fish was at Marseille, whence it was sent partly to Provence and Languedoc and partly to Spain and Italy.

Raudot, in the early part of the eighteenth century, consolidated all previous French fishery regulations, but it was only in 1726 or thereabouts that a department or branch of fisheries was established in the Bureaux de la Marine.<sup>1</sup>

Nor was it till 1683 that "the inhabitants of Canada" were lawfully permitted to send to France duty free, cod and other fish taken in the colony. Prior to that date, fishermen from France alone enjoyed such privilege. The permission was repeated in 1699.<sup>2</sup>

### CHAMPLAIN WRITES OF FISH.

Samuel de Champlain, in the story of his first voyage to Canada, in 1603, makes mention of the fisheries of Gaspé and Percé<sup>3</sup> and also of "the bank where fishing is carried on."<sup>4</sup>

In Chapter XI. of his "Voyage" of 1604, the founder of Quebec has related how he partly occupied himself in the New World with the making of fish ponds. Speaking of the gardens made by some of his party at Port-Royal, three years previous to his founding of Quebec, he tells, himself, in his journal: "*J'en fis un pour éviter l'oisiveté, entouré de fossés pleins d'eau, dans lequel il y avait de très belles truites que j'y avais mises et où descendaient trois ruisseaux de fort belle eau courante. Je fis aussi un petit réservoir pour y mettre du poisson d'eau salée, que nous prenions au besoin.*"<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Those who desire to make further researches into the subject will find in the Archives of the Marine at Paris, series C-5, a mass of letters, memoirs, statements, etc., extending over the entire period from 1422 to 1789.

<sup>2</sup> See the decree of the "Conseil de Marine" of April 16th, 1669, in Correspondance Générale (Canada) 2nd series, Carton, 11.

<sup>3</sup> *Œuvres de Champlain publiées sous le patronage de L'Université Laval*. Quebec, 1870, Tome II, Chap X.

<sup>4</sup> Idem. Tome II, Chap. XIII.

<sup>5</sup> *Œuvres de Champlain, Tome III, Chap. XI.*

At the end of the story of his second voyage, Champlain describes at some length the harpooning of whales in the fisheries of the Gulf, the killing of a number of porpoises by the crew of the ship on which he was returning to France and the catching of a quantity of fish by means of baited hooks trailed on a long line behind the vessel.

In Volume IV of his history he gives the following description of the manner in which the Huron Indians took fish in nets under the ice. "The men make the nets to capture fish in summer as well as in winter, when they generally fish,



*Samuel de Champlain.*

reaching their prey even below the ice, either with the line or the seine. They perform this kind of fishing by making several holes in a circle through the ice, through which they have to draw up the seine some five feet long and three feet wide. At this opening they begin to let down their net, which is attached to a wooden pole from six to seven feet long, and having brought it under the ice, they move this pole with the net from hole to hole, where it is seized by a man or two through the holes; and this they continue until the opening of five or six feet is reached. This is done, by means of certain small stones attached to the end; and afterward they draw it up by its two ends, and thus secure the fish caught in it. This is, in short, the method they employ in fishing during the winter."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Les hommes font les rets pour pescher, & prendre le poisson en esté comme en hyuer qu'ils peschent ordinairement, & prennent le poisson jusques sous la glace à la ligne, ou à la seine. Et la façon de ceste pesche est telle, qu'ils font plusieurs trous en rond sur la glace, & celuy par où ils doibuent tirer la seine a quelque cinq pieds de long, & trois pieds de large, puis commencent (sic) par cest ouverture à mettre leur filet, lesquels ils attachent à une perche de bois, de six à sept pieds de long, & la mettent dessous la glace, & font courir ceste perche de trou en trou. ou un homme, ou deux mettent les mains par les trous, prenant le perche où est attaché un bout du filet, jusques à ce qu'ils viennent ioindre l'ouver-

## SAGARD'S FISH STORIES.

The Recollet Frere Gabriel Sagard Theodat, in his *Histoire du Canada*, published in Paris, in 1636, describes quite fully the inland fisheries of the Gulf. Speaking of Gaspé Bay he declares that the sailors took there, lobsters, trout, mackerel, cod and other fish.

Of the whales which played around the ship in such numbers, he minutely describes their anatomy and habits, remarking especially upon the smallness of their gullets, which only enabled them to swallow one mackerel at a time, and which, he says, "makes so much more wonderful the double miracle wrought for Jonah, when the gullet of the whale was first enlarged to enable the prophet to find refuge inside the whale, and was once more enlarged to enable Jonah to emerge therefrom."<sup>1</sup>

Commenting upon the enormous wealth of fish in the waters of the New World, Sagard remarks: "God, who had peopled the earth with different kinds of animals, as well for the service of man as for the adornment and embellishment of the universe, has also peopled the rivers and the sea with as great or even a greater diversity of fish, all of whom exist in their own species and in almost infinite numbers, notwithstanding that man is daily drawing from them a portion of his nourishment, and that gluttonous fishes are constantly warring with and living upon smaller or weaker species in the depths of the ocean, devouring them in enormous numbers. These," he says, "are among the marvels of God."<sup>2</sup>

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*ture de cinq à six pieds. Ce fait, ils laissent couler les rets au fonds de l'eau, qui va bas, par le moyen de certaines petites pierres qu'ils attachent au bout, & estans au fonds de l'eau, ils le retirent à force de bras par ces deux bouts, & ainsi amènent le poisson qui se trouue prins dedans. Voila la façon en bref comme ils en usent pour pesche en hyuer."*

<sup>1</sup> *Histoire du Canada et Voyages que les Frères Mineurs Recollets y ont faits pour la conversion des infidèles, etc., etc. Fait et composé par le F. Gabriel Sagard Theodat, Mineur Recollet de la Prouince de Paris, Paris, M, DC XXXVI Tome I., pp. 131-132.*

<sup>2</sup> *Idem* Tome III., p. 760.

Frere Sagard described in an interesting manner "the preachers to the fish" among the Montagnais Indians, of whom there was one, in his time, in nearly every fishing camp. These preachers were in the habit of nightly haranguing the fish, adjuring them to be courageous and to fear nothing, but to come forward boldly and permit themselves to be caught, because the Indians were their good friends, who would show them all proper respect and burn none of their bones. In the same manner the spirits of the water and of the fishing nets were also adjured and at the same time tobacco was often burned and thrown into the water.<sup>1</sup>

Sagard describes the netting of fish in winter by the Montagnais Indians, in terms almost identical with those employed by Champlain in referring to the Hurons.<sup>2</sup>

At page 588 of Vol. III. he describes the curious fish-hooks used by the Indians, which he discovered through accidents which had occurred to the dusky fishermen of those days in our inland waters, and which are not unknown to those who go a-fishing in our own day, for big fish, with fine lines. We quote as follows:—

"We found in the bellies of several large fishes, hooks made of a piece of wood and bone, so placed as to form a hook, and very neatly bound together with hemp; but the line being too weak for drawing on board such large fishes, the result was the loss of the labor of the fishermen, and of the hooks thrown into the sea by them; for, in verity, there are in this fresh water sea, sturgeon, assihendos, trout, and pike of such monstrous size, that larger ones cannot be seen anywhere else, not to speak of several other kinds of fish there caught, which are here (in Europe) unknown."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Idem Tome III., pp. 641, 642.

<sup>2</sup> See Vol. I., page 245, of the Paris Reprint of 1866.

<sup>3</sup> *Nous trouuâmes dans le ventre de plusieurs grand poissons des ains faits d'un morceau de bois accommodé avec un os, qui seruiot de crochet & lié fort proprement avec de leur chanure, mais la corde trop foible pour tirer à bord de si gros poissons, auoit faict perdre & la peine & les ains de ceux qui les auoient iettez en mer, car veritablement il y a dans cette mer douce des*

Speaking further of the fish to be found in different parts of what was then included in New France, Sagard says:—  
 “As for the fishes found in the rivers and lakes in the country of our Hurons, and particularly in the fresh-water sea, the principal are the Assihendo, of which we have spoken elsewhere, and trout, called Ahouyouche by them, which are mostly of extraordinary size, insomuch that I have not seen there any that were not bigger than the largest we have on this side; their flesh is ordinarily red, though in some of a yellow or orange color, yet of excellent taste.

“The pike, called Soruissan, which they catch here also with the sturgeon, called Hixrahon, astonish people, for some are of marvellous size, and more palatable than any of our species of fish . . . . Some weeks after the season for catching large fish, they pursue the capture of the Einchataon, a kind somewhat resembling our barbel, and about a foot and a half or a little less in length: this fish serves to give taste to their sagamité during winter. . . . .

“In another season they catch with the seine a certain kind of fish, which seem to correspond to our smallest her-rings, and which they eat fresh or buccaned. . . . They also catch several other species of fish, but as they are unknown to us, and as similar ones are not found in our rivers, I make no mention of them. . . . .

“Eel in the proper season is an invaluable article to our Montagnais. I have admired the extreme abundance of this fish in some of the rivers of our Canada, where every year uncountable hundreds are caught. They come just in time, for, were it not for this succor, one would be greatly embarrassed, more especially in some months of the year; the savages and the members of our orders use them as meat sent by Heaven for their relief and solace. They catch them in two ways: with a wicker basket, or with a harpoon during night by the light of fire. They construct with some ingenuity

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*esturgeons, assihendos, truittes & brochets, si monstrueusement grands qu'il ne s'en voit point ailleurs de plus gros non plus que de plusieurs autres especes de poissons qu'on y pesche & qui nous sont icy incognus.”*

wicker baskets, long and wide, and large enough to hold five or six eels. When the sea is low, they deposit them on the sand in a suitable remote place, securing them in a manner that the tide cannot carry them off. At both sides they heap up stones, which extend like a chain or small wall on both sides, in order that the fish, which always seeks the bottom, in encountering this obstacle, may glide slowly towards the aperture of the basket to which the stones lead. When the sea has risen, it covers the baskets and after it has subsided again, they are examined. Sometimes a hundred or two hundred eels are found at one tide; sometimes more, and occasionally none at all, according to wind and weather. When the sea is agitated, many are caught; when it is calm, few or none; but then they have recourse to their harpoons. . .

“The savages cure fish in the following manner: they let them drip a little, and then cut off the heads and tails; they open them at the back, and having emptied them, they make incisions, to allow the smoke to penetrate them thoroughly; the perches in their huts are all loaded with them. When they are well buccaned, they bring them together, and make them into packages, each containing about a hundred.”

Pere LeJeune, writing in 1634<sup>1</sup> says: “This harpoon (for spearing eel) is an instrument consisting of a long stick, of the thickness of three fingers, to the end of which they fasten an iron spike, which they arm on each side with a curved prong, both coming nearly together at the end of the iron point. In striking an eel with this harpoon, they drive the iron into it, and the two prongs, yielding to the force of the thrust, let in the eel, after which they contract again by themselves (having opened merely by the shock of the stroke), and prevent the speared eel from escaping. This fishing with the harpoon is ordinarily done only during the night: two savages sit in a canoe, one behind who steers and paddles, and the other ahead, seeking by the light of a

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<sup>1</sup> *Relation de ce qui s'est passé en la Nouvelle France sur la grand Fleuve de St. Lavrens en l'année 1634. Relations des Jésuites, etc.* Vol. I.

bark torch, attached to the prow of the craft, his prey with the eyes, while gently moving along the bank of this great river. Perceiving an eel, he darts his harpoon without losing hold of it, pierces the eel as stated, and then throws it into his canoe. Some will catch three hundred, and many more, in a single night, but very few at other times.”

Charlevoix, describing the Canadian Indians of his time and their fishing says: <sup>1</sup> “These people have a wonderful skill in striking in the Water, especially in the Torrents. They fish also with the Sein, and they have an odd Ceremony before they use this Net. They marry it to two young Maids, and during the Wedding Feast they place it between the two Brides. They exhort it very seriously to take a great many Fish, and they think to engage it to do so by making great Presents to its pretended Fathers-in-Law. . . The Sturgeon here is a Sea and a fresh Water Fish; for they take it upon the Coasts of Canada, and in the great Lakes which cross the River St. Lawrence. . . . The Savages take them in the Lakes in this Manner: Two Men are at the two ends of a Canoe; he behind steers, and the other stands up, holding a Dart in one Hand, to which a long Cord is fastened, the other end is tied to one of the Bars of the Canoe. As soon as he sees the Sturgeon in his Reach, he throws his Dart, and endeavors to strike where there are no Scales; if the Fish is wounded it flies, and draws the Canoe along pretty swiftly, but after having swam about 150 Paces it dies, they then draw up the Cord and take it.”

#### A LARGE CATCH OF COD.

The *Journal des Jesuites* furnishes several interesting items of information concerning the fisheries of New France in the middle of the seventeenth century, including a good fish story told the Jesuits by Sieur Lepine, on his arrival in Quebec from the Lower St. Lawrence on the 31st October, 1656.

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<sup>1</sup> Letters to the Duchess of Lesdiguieres, etc.; London edition of 1763.

He claimed that in one day while fishing at Malbaye, eight leagues below Isle aux Coudres, he had caught a thousand cod, which catch, he said, had never been equalled before in the country.

From the same work we learn that at the end of the preceding season (1655), two large fishing vessels had been lost off Gaspé.

Lepine, who reported the large catch of cod off Malbaye to the Jesuits, became in 1659 a member of a firm or society established for the purpose of carrying on seal fishing or hunting in the neighbourhood of Tadoussac. His associates were Courville, deTilly, Buiffort, Godefroy, Rozee and Simon Guyon.



*Pierre Boucher.*

Several references are made to the cod, salmon, eel, and sturgeon fisheries of the St. Lawrence in the journal above quoted from.

The archives of Montreal for 1659 are interesting as containing frequent notices prohibiting the inhabitants of that place from going far from their habitations to fish,

for fear of the Iroquois.

Pierre Boucher,<sup>1</sup> Governor of Three Rivers, who wrote in 1663 of the resources and the requirements of New France, at the request of Louis XIV., and dedicated his book<sup>2</sup> to Colbert, devoted a whole chapter (VII.) to the fish of the colony, of which he gave a fairly complete list.

<sup>1</sup> He was the ancestor of many prominent Canadian families, including those of Boucher de Boucherville, Boucher de la Bruere, Boucher de Grosbois, Boucher de la Perriere, Boucher de Grandpre, Boucher de Niverville, Boucher de la Broquerie, and many others.

<sup>2</sup> *Histoire veritable et naturelle des mœurs et productions du pays de la Nouvelle France vulgairement dite le Canada.*

## DENYS' ACCOUNT OF COD FISHERIES.

By far the most complete and most authoritative description which we have of that fishing for cod in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and Baie des Chaleurs, which played so large a part in the early relations between Europe and North-eastern America, is to be found in the second volume of Denys' *Description and Natural History of the Coasts of North America*.<sup>1</sup> From 1633 to 1688, with a few breaks, Nicolas Denys was largely interested and personally engaged in the sedentary cod fishery of the waters adjacent to Acadia, which was the name then employed to include the Gaspé peninsula, as well as the territory now comprising New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Cape Breton and Prince Edward Island.

One of his biographers well says, "With excellent arrangement and all completeness, and withal by aid of many a vivid phrase, happy turn and illustrative incident, he brings before us with the greatest clearness every detail of that business of which he was a thorough master, and a master in love with his work. It is only under pressure of limited space that I resist the temptation to dwell further upon his picture of the life of the summer fisherman, but I commend these chapters to the reader in the confidence that they will make him say with me,—'would that I too might have been a fisherman.'"<sup>2</sup>

*Autograph of Nicholas Denys'*

<sup>1</sup> *Description Géographique et historique des costes de-l'Amérique Septentrionale, Avec l'Histoire naturelle du Pais. Par Monsieur Denys, Gouverneur- Lieutenant General pour le Roy, & propriétaire de toutes les Terres & Isles qui sont depuis le Cap de Campseaux, jusques au Cap des Roziers.*—A. Paris, M. D. C. LXII.

<sup>2</sup> William F. Ganong, Ph.D., in his *Introduction to Denys' Description and Natural History of Acadia.*—Toronto, The Champlain Society, 1908, p. 30, 31.

Writing in 1672, Nicolas Denys says: "Those who follow the fishing are mostly Normans from Honfleur, Dieppe and other small harbors of that country, some from Bologne and Calais, Brittany, Olonne and all the country of Aulnais. The Basques," he adds, "are the most skillful; after them the Rochelle men and those from the neighboring islands, then the Bourdelois and Bretons."

#### DR. CLARKE'S DESCRIPTION.

"Each year, to quote from Dr. John M. Clarke, "these fishing crews made their way across the Atlantic, anchored in the bays and coves, made their catch, cured it ashore and returned to France with their cargo. Sometimes the trip across was made even twice a year, once just after the early summer fishing, and again after the autumn return of the fish, when all sailed back to be in time for the Lenten market. Even during these years, while Denys watched and shared in the fishing on the coast, from 1633 to 1688, and while it was carried on from across the sea, the coast was a scene of great activity from June to December and brought some hundreds of vessels from the other side. The picture which Denys has given of the whole procedure of the fishing business in chapter after chapter of his Natural History of 1672 presents the minutest detail and particulars of these operations as then carried out, from the embarkation on the French coast till anchor was again dropped in the home ports. With the beginning of permanent settlement by the fishing folk the methods of the business did not materially alter, as everything still depended on the shipmasters who came from France. In the 1700's the settlements were gradually attained, bringing with them the storing of the fish ashore till convenient transportation could be had and Denys' dream of a successful *pesche sedentaire* was realized. We have very slender records of this business on the coast till the time of the coming of the organizer and syndicator of the Gaspé fish-



COD-SPLITTING TABLE ON THE BEACH AT PERCE

ing, Charles Robin, in 1766.<sup>1</sup> A practical fishing master of Gaspé to-day, trained by long experience in the Robin establishment, upon reading Denys' account, assures me that, *mutatis mutandis*, that is, due allowance being made for the fact that the fishing fleet is now Canadian and not French, the methods and processes in vogue now are entirely like those of 200 years ago, and that time has found little to add to the efficiency of the business.

"It was the business of the beach master then, as now, to keep the beaches well covered with rounded stones and pebbles, as free from sand as possible, and to see that the boys pulled out all weeds and removed all debris. With the same shaped hooks and with lines rigged as now, and with the same bait, the cod was taken, and pitched from the shallows with the same shaped irons. At the splitting table, built as to-day, were the trancheur, decoleur and piequeur, supplied with fish from the same shaped barrow by the same shaped boy. The splitters, with knives of the ancient pattern, to-day still grasp the fish by the ears for decapitation, with one time-honored movement disembowel it and push the livers into the vat through a hole in the splitting table, and with another cut out the backbone. The liver vat still has its wicker for the oil to drain through, and still gives off, as the livers stew in the sun, an incense too rank to rise heavenward, the special *parfumerie* of the devil, equalled only by the aroma rising from the cods' heads festering in the sun's heat on the plowed fields.

"It is going on three centuries since the splitters at their table stood in half barrels with their aprons running down outside. In describing the work at the splitting table, Denys says amongst other details:

"The decoleur pushes the cod on to the dresser, who takes it by the ear with a mitten that he wears on his left hand, otherwise he could not hold it firmly, places the back against

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<sup>1</sup> There are some manuscript records in possession of the federal and provincial governments referring to this industry, and many others have more recently been copied in Paris under direction of Dr. A. G. Doughty, C. M. G., Dominion Archivist.—E. T. D. C.

a wooden rod the length of the cod, two fingers thick and nailed opposite to him on the bench to hold the fish steady and prevent it from sliding in its fat during the operation.' The dresser still wears the mitten and the table still has the wooden rod.

"As then, so now, the fish are laid head to tail and salted, are arranged on the stages, grouped *en mouton* at night and in piles on the beach. The stages of flakes on a well-constructed beach are now as they were then, though the fir boughs with which they were overlain are now being driven out by wire netting; the introduction of which was a decided advance in the curing of fish as it is less liable to harbor the multitude of flies which are attracted by the fish during the first days they are on the flakes as well as in damp weather. The mow shaped piles on the beach are sometimes thatched with gaff cod laid tail upward, but more often with birch rinds, or in heavy weather with sail cloth as in the old days.

"In fact, throughout Denys' description, the procedure is that still regarded as essential to making good fish. The gentleman I have referred to finds a slight difference in the mode of drying the fish then and now, and suspects that the old way may be the best. Now the fish are spread on the flakes flesh up, and towards evening turned skin up for the night. Then they were laid skin up first, turned flesh up later in the day and then again turned skin up for the night. The old process involved another turning, but gave the skin a chance to dry first, and the back must be thoroughly dried in all well cured cod.

"The changed conditions of the coast to-day, of course, have made the final stages in the packing for shipment wholly different from formerly. Now the fish are packed in tubs and drums containing one Portuguese quintal of 128 pounds for the Brazil markets, in casks of 448 pounds for the Mediterranean and West Indies.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Dolbel remarks that the 448 pound cask is a quite recent innovation and being shipped by steamer puts the fish on the market much earlier in the season than was usual by the old system of shipping in bulk by small sailing vessels carrying from 1800 to

“The large and gaff fish generally go in bulk to Portugal. Not every economy is employed in utilizing all parts of the fish. Should a Chicago packing house allow so much of any of its meat animals to go to waste as the fisherman does of his cod, a very large margin of profit would be sheared away. The cod’s head, with its sharp, hard, enamel teeth and keen-edged bones and delicate flesh, is thrown away, the backbone and sounds with their possibilities for glue and fertilizer are rejected, and the livers refined only to a very crude oil for leather dressing. Probably ten thousand tons of these rejectamenta are annually left to waste their sweetness on the Gaspé air.”

#### DENYS’ FISHING ESTABLISHMENT.

Denys’ had obtained from the Company of New France, all the shores of the Gulf of St. Lawrence from Canseau, in Acadia, to Cap des Rosiers, and prosecuted the cod fisheries with considerable energy but without profit to himself, for he was unable to give sufficient surveillance to the work of his employes, and his affairs went from bad to worse until he was practically ruined. The French Government resumed possession of the immense territory granted to Denys, adding it once more to the Crown Domain; but by way of compensation, granted certain lands in Miramichi Bay and along the river of that name to his son, Richard Denys de Fronsac. Later on, the Sieur de Fronsac obtained a concession of Percé and the neighboring territory, and settled some seven or eight families there.<sup>1</sup>

In 1673, Frontenac, with the consent of Mgr. de Laval,<sup>2</sup> assigned the spiritual care of the little settlement to the Recollet Fathers, who erected chapels both at Percé and at

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2500 quintals, sailing late in September and not often arriving till November.—(Note by Dr. Clarke).

<sup>1</sup> Abbé Ferland in *Les Côtes de la Gaspésie*. . . . .

<sup>2</sup> Père Chrestien le Clercq in *Nouvelle Relation de la Gaspésie*, pp. 20, 21.

Bonaventure Island. The brutal destruction of this Percé mission, in 1690, is related further on.

### FATHER CHRESTIEN LE CLERCQ.

Following the two first missionaries to Percé, there came two years later, namely in 1675, Father Chrestien le Clercq, to minister to the Indian tribes of the Gaspé coast. After twelve years' labor in the Indian settlements from Gaspé to Miramichi, he published, on his return to France, a description of Gaspésia and its inhabitants<sup>1</sup> which is of entrancing interest, and in which he speaks of the importance of the Gaspé cod fishery, for which four or five hundred French fishermen visited Percé every season, in his time, and states that in the Baie des Chaleurs are found "prodigious quantities of all kinds of fish; cod, salmon, herring, trout, bass, mackerel, flounders, shad, sturgeon, truckers, pikes, pondfish, eels, squid, pickerel, oysters, smelt, skate, whitefish. In a word, one can say that the hunting and fishing there are profuse, and that one can find, without much difficulty, everything necessary for life."

Le Clercq also refers to the tomcod, and relates that the Micmac Indians caught the little fish on lines through holes cut in the ice—just as we do now in the St. Lawrence. The Micmac name for the tomcod was ponamon, according to the Clercq, which gave its name to Bonodemeguiche (December)—the month in which the tomcod ascends the rivers.

In 1765 we find a third Monsieur Denys "very well established," to use the words of Father Le Clercq, "upon the border of a basin commonly called *La Petite Rivière*"

<sup>1</sup> Nouvelle Relation de la Gaspésie.... Par le Père Chrestien le Clercq. Paris, M.D.C. XCI.

The Champlain Society published in 1910, a new edition of this work with English translation and notes, edited by Dr. William F. Ganong.

Le Clercq was also the author of a very valuable and now rare work entitled *Premier Etablissement de la Foy dans la Nouvelle France*, from which is taken the map on the following page, showing what was known of New France in 1691.



(to-day Barachois), "separated from the sea by a beautiful tongue of land, which, by the wonderful charm it gives to this place, renders it a very agreeable abode."

This Monsieur Denys was Pierre Denys, Sieur de la Ronde, son of Simon Denys, who was a brother of Nicholas, to whom so much space has been already devoted. Pierre had a son, Father Joseph Denys, who became a priest.<sup>1</sup> Pierre himself was born at Tours, in 1631, and came to Quebec with his father while still young. It appears that in 1672, in company with Maistre Charles Bazire, Receiver General of the King's dues, and Charles Aubert, Sr. de la Chesnaye, he formed a partnership to establish a fishery, and obtained from Intendant Talon, a grant of the coasts, a league in depth from a league south of Isle Percé, to half a league within the Bay of Gaspé.

#### MORE ABOUT THE PERCE FISHERY.

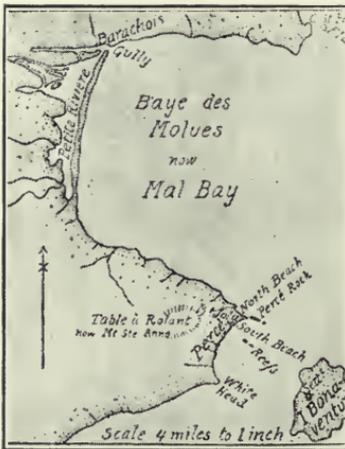
Dr. Ganong, from whom the details in the preceding paragraph have been borrowed, has had access, through Mr. H. P. Biggar, to a series of papers, still unpublished, in the Clairambault Collection in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. From him, therefore,<sup>2</sup> we quote the following further story of the Percé fishery of the fourth quarter of the seventeenth century, in his own words:

"The company having expended large sums in improvements, and having carried on the fishery as agreed, this grant was confirmed, as that of the Seigneurie of Isle Percée with an apportionment of the respective shares of the proprietors, by the Intendant du Chesneau on November 2, 1676. The grant fell within the lands formerly ceded to Nicolas Denys, who protested against it; but the protest was in vain, since Denys' own grant was already in fact, if not in form, forfeit for non-fulfilment of its conditions. From the beginning,

<sup>1</sup> Further details of the family are given in his *Memorial of his family*, by Forsythe de Fronsac.—Boston, 1903.

<sup>2</sup> From his note on pages 77, 78, and 79, to "The New Relation of Gaspésia" (Le Clercq), published by the Champlain Society.

Pierre Denys was the active manager of the enterprise. In 1672 he went to Isle Percée to live, and in 1673 was joined by his family, who were accompanied by the Recollet Father Exuper Dethunes. No doubt their residence here was, however, only temporary, and for the summer season. Documents of the Clairambault Collection, of date 1676, state that in September of that year a brother and son of Pierre Denys, with a Recollet Father and three other persons, were at Isle Percée or Petite Rivière,<sup>1</sup> and that at Isle Percée was a large



storehouse of fifty feet by twenty-five, a lodging for the commandant, and another, not yet finished, for the Recollets, with 100 arpents of cleared land. At Petite Rivière, which other documents locate at the bottom of the Baye des Morues, two leagues from Isle Percée, (thereby establishing its identity with the present Barachois), was the winter settlement and general headquarters; that at Isle Percée being only a summer fishing station. Here was dwelling

for fifteen persons, storehouses, stables, cleared lands, gardens, farming utensils, boats, cattle, poultry, swine, and hosts of articles and stores of which a full list is given. This was the settlement at which Father le Clercq found Monsieur Denys "very well lodged" in October, 1675. His basin, commonly called la Petite Rivière, was obviously that now called Barachois. The exact site of the settlement on the Barachois is not stated, but the full description of the place sent me by Rev. Father Sirois, formerly of the village of Barachois,

<sup>1</sup> There were actually eight people in all at Percé, of whom Pierre Denys gives the names as follows: "my brother, St-Pierre, my son Bonaventure du Tartre, my youngest son, Jacques Boissel, Pierre Filsonpier, sailor, Lepine and his wife,"—and the Recollet Father.

shows that there is only one suitable site for settlement around the entire basin, and that is in the position of the present village of Barachois, which is admirably situated in all respects. Not only are the situation and the land of great excellence, but the part of the basin in front forms an admirable harbour for fishing boats, the very best place for this purpose anywhere in the basin. Here, accordingly, the establishment of Pierre Denys must have stood, though there is now no trace or tradition thereof in the village. The site of the buildings at Isle Percée is not known, but local tradition places them at North Beach, where now are extensive fishing establishments; and the probabilities favour this site. The Recollet Fathers received grants of land from the Company on November 22, 1676, at both Petite Rivière and Isle Percée, a tract four arpents by forty at the former place, and one arpent square, with house, at the latter. But the enterprise of the company was not a success. Pierre Denys, afflicted with failing sight which later led to complete blindness, retired in favour of one of his brothers and died in 1708. Later, the grant appears to have lapsed, for another document of the Clairambault Collection shows that in 1685 the residents of Isle Percée, who had been in the employ of Pierre Denys, petitioned Richard Denys for grants of their lands, as if the rights thereto had reverted to their original owner, Nicolas Denys. There is some evidence that in 1687 Denys de Bonaventure, the son of Pierre Denys, who had aided him at the settlement, received a new grant at Isle Percée. In 1690 both settlements were destroyed."

#### HOW THE FRENCH FISHERMEN WERE PAID.

Among the many documents recently copied for me from the French archives, through the kind offices of the Dominion Archivist, Dr. A. G. Doughty, C.M.G., are a number of memoirs concerning the Denys establishment at Percé,<sup>1</sup> which

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<sup>1</sup> On the back of an inventory of goods at the fishing station of Percé, made on the 12th July, 1676. (No. 295, Vol. 1016 of the Clairambault Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale.)

shed some interesting sidelights upon the fishery, and upon the hopes, the requirements and the demands of those interested in it. Thus we learn that it was the custom in the latter part of the seventeenth century for the fishermen from France to have two-fifths of the cod which they caught. A memorandum still to be seen in the *Bibliothèque Nationale* mentions this fact and adds: "A ship of ten boats, for example, should have for its cargo three thousand quintals, which is three hundred for each boat, and the crew should have twelve hundred quintals for its share." Each boat was manned by five men, so that a ship of ten boats was manned by fifty men. Half of these were left ashore to dry the fish.

The document from which the above details are taken was signed by Jean de Berraute, in presence of the Rev. Eustache de Monpassant, Superior of the Recollet Fathers, and in that of Monsieur Denys, Seigneur of Percé.

Stress is laid by the writer of another document of this series<sup>1</sup> upon the necessity of securing for the establishment the best fishermen available, in order that those who come after them, and the people of the colony who engage in the industry may follow their methods. None were declared to be more proficient than the Basques and the fishermen of Bayonne, and while it was said to be much easier to procure Normans and Bretons, the latter were described as of more doubtful utility than the others; so much so, in fact, that the crew of a single boat of men from Bayonne would ordinarily catch as much fish as three other crews. It was admitted that some of these others might with advantage and with probability of improvement, be employed in company with the Bayonne fishermen.

When Pierre Denys, the nephew of Nicolas, undertook the re-establishment of the Percé fishery, he urged that the king should lend the promoters a ship for the first three years of their enterprise, and that while young men were preferable for the work, and a number of respectable girls might also be brought out, who would work ashore and probably

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<sup>1</sup> Collection Clairambault, Vol. 1016, folio 302.

settle in the colony, it was not desirable to burden the undertaking at the beginning, as had been done at Plaisance, with families of young children, some of the latter having been infants at the breast (*“mesme charges d’enfants Encor a la mammelle”*).<sup>1</sup> Denys estimated that with the loan of a ship from the king the sum of twenty thousand livres would suffice for the first establishment of the fishery; being ten thousand for the equipment of the ship and fishing apparatus and ten thousand for the advances to the young men and women engaged, and for the cost of their passage from France. It was then hoped that about three years would see a colony of a hundred families at the establishment. It was urged that the king should give the free right of entry into France of the fish caught in the colony, not only to aid the Percé establishment, but also to encourage others to establish similar enterprises, since there were more than fifty suitable localities for them in Newfoundland, Cape Breton and Acadia.

The hope was expressed that the first fish of the season, which usually commanded the best prices, could be sent to the Levant, and that a ship might go annually to the West India Islands with a cargo of green cod, dried herring, salmon and mackerel, lumber for building purposes, oil and coal. The balance of the fish was to be sent to France. The soil of Percé was said to be able to furnish grain and vegetables for the subsistence of the colony, equal to those produced at Quebec, as well as fodder for the necessary cattle, while for drinking purposes it was assumed that beer could be made. The memoir further pointed out the opportunities for fortifying the establishment, indicating the importance of the site, which commanded the approach to Quebec by the river, and which was so located that it could not possibly be surprised, and that two thousand fishermen could be employed in the fisheries within sight of the fort.

Still another memoir<sup>2</sup> in the same collection of documents, speaking of the advantages to the Canadians of a

<sup>1</sup> The original spelling is retained.

<sup>2</sup> Collection Clairambault, Vol. 1016, folio 308.

sedentary fishery, represented that they could subsist on the trade of wood and furs in which they were engaged during the winter, leaving themselves seven months in which to prosecute the fisheries, the returns from which should consequently be clear profits for them. From these fisheries they should take and salt salmon, trout, bar, mackerel and sturgeons, while whales, walrus, porpoises and seals would furnish them oil for shipment to France at prices which would enable them to command that trade and to shut foreigners out from it.



*Colbert.*

It was contended that the location of Percé was better adapted for a fishing industry than any other, the fish being so abundant in the vicinity that it was unnecessary for the fishermen to go far from the coast, while the anchorage was good everywhere, the beaches very suitable for the drying of fish, and the whole establishment easily defended by the erection of a fort.

As Mgr. Colbert was not favorable to the money grant asked by Pierre Denys towards the support of his fishing establishment at Percé, Denys proposed a new arrangement which was not calculated to cost the Crown anything. This application, which was for permission to take from D'Anjou and Tourraine, without payment of export dues, all the wines and brandy required for his establishment, as well as for supplying the settlement at Quebec, was granted.

In 1689 Denys was reminded by instructions from Duchesne, in an autograph letter dated at Paris on the 16th of March, that he should seek out all possible objects of prospective commerce in the colony, such as salmon prepared in three different manners, namely smoked, preserved and salted, as well as all natural curiosities, rare animals and furs, including the skins of bears, otters, martens, and even of sal-

mon, specimens of which were to be sent to Mgr. le Marquis de Seignelay.

### PIRATES AT PERCÉ.

Brief reference has already been made to the destruction at Petite Riviere and Percé, in 1690, of the settlements of the Recollet Fathers.

They were twice pillaged during that summer; first in the early part of August, by a couple of New England privateers fitted out against the commerce of New France by the English speaking settlement of New York, and secondly by a portion of Admiral Phips' fleet on its way to its dramatic repulse at Quebec by the Count de Frontenac.

Father Emmanuel Jusneau, one of the Recollet missionaries at Percé, wrote on the 15th October, 1690, from Isle Dieu, to which place he had made his escape, a very melancholy description of the havoc wrought by the privateers from New York among the Percé fishermen, and of their sacrilegious destruction of the chapel there and of its contents. This letter has been preserved for us by Father LeClercq, to whom it was addressed by its author.<sup>1</sup> It contains such interesting details of the assault as an account of the piratical manner in which the two privateers took the little Percé colony by surprise, by appearing in the roadstead of Bonaventure, flying French colors. According to Jusneau's story, five fishing vessels were seized by the marauders, and after the discovery of the fact that the new arrivals were only wolves in sheep's clothing, and when both priests and people had saved their lives by fleeing to the woods, the fanatics of the expedition landed and proceeded to the desecration of the chapel and of the holy vessels and emblems that it contained.

Another version of this affair was given as follows by De Monseignat, in a *Relation de ce qui s'est passé de plus remarquable en Canada, depuis le départ des vaisseaux, au mois de Novembre 1689, jusqu'au mois de Novembre 1690*,

<sup>1</sup> Nouvelle relation de la Gaspésie.... Par le Père Chrestien le Clercq, Paris MC. XCI. pp. 7 et seq.

which is supposed to have been addressed to Madame de Maintenon.<sup>1</sup> De Monseignat says:—"There were seven or eight residents there with a Recollet house and friars; six fishing ships were moored there and fished from their boats. They were all taken without resistance. The captains and most of the crews saved themselves in the woods with the residents, and afterwards reached Quebec. The houses were burned and the church of the Recollets desecrated."

That the details of the descent of the privateers at Percé was known in Quebec shortly afterwards is shown not only

*De Monseignat's Autograph.*

by De Monseignat's Relation, but also by that of Captain Sylvanus Davis,<sup>2</sup> then a prisoner of war at Quebec, who wrote under date of August 10th, 1690, as follows:—"News came to town that our English had taken six French ships at the Isle of Percé."

Frontenac briefly refers to it in his despatch of the 12th November, 1690, to the Minister in Paris, the same that contained the official report of Phips' repulse at Quebec.

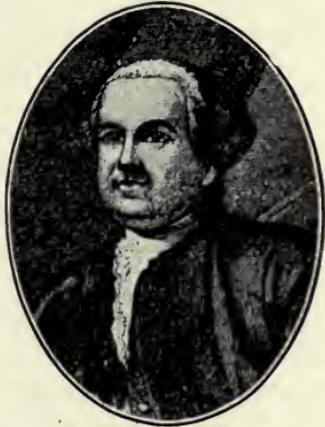
Juneau's first efforts on returning to the scene of desolation were devoted to the restoration of the crosses that had

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<sup>1</sup> *Collection de Manuscrits.....relatifs à la Nouvelle-France.*—Québec, 1883.—Vol. I., p. 506.

<sup>2</sup> Captain Davis had been taken prisoner by the Sieur de Portneuf at Casco Bay. His account of the occurrences of the year in and about Quebec is contained in Vol. I. of the third series of the Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society.—Boston, 1825, p. 110.

been torn down;—but only two days later, namely, on the 10th of September, seven vessels of Sir William Phips' fleet hove in sight, bearing down upon the settlement, and obliging the missionary and those of his flock who had returned with him to the scene, to board their boats, cut their cables, and crowd on all the sail that was possible. Though pursued by the hostile ships they continued to escape under the shadow of night, which was later on, however, illuminated by the fires set by the enemy to the habitations of Petite Rivière (now Barabois), and to everything else inflammable that had escaped destruction at the hands of the former invaders.



*Sir William Phips.*

### PHIPS AT ANTICOSTI.

Not satisfied with the work of destruction at Percé, Phips, on his way up the St. Lawrence to Quebec, landed a party of men on Anticosti to burn the buildings attached to Jolliet's fishery there. Nor was this all. One of Jolliet's ships on its way down the river from Quebec was seized by the enemy, and Madame Jolliet and her mother, who were on board, were taken prisoners by the New England fleet. After Phips' flight from Quebec, his captives were exchanged for a number of New England prisoners who were in custody there, amongst them having been the Captain Sylvanus Davis already quoted, a young girl named Sarah Gerrish, and two daughters of Lieut. Thaddeus Clarke. Clarke had been killed at Casco Bay, and Sarah Gerrish, who had been made captive by the Indians who had butchered the members of her family, was eventually taken by them to Quebec and ransomed by the French. Amongst the prisoners yielded up in exchange for the above by Phips, were M. de Grandville, Abbé Trouve,

an Acadian priest, and the members of Jolliet's family taken prisoners on board his barque, namely, his wife, and her mother, Madame Lalande.

### THE MAGDALEN ISLANDS.

The Magdalen Islands were included in the concession of a large part of Acadia to Nicholas Denys in 1653. Ten years later, together with the rights of fishery thereto pertaining, they were handed over by the Company of New France to Francis Doublet of Honfleur, who was commissioned to establish a colony and fisheries thereon. He did neither, but he gave proof to all succeeding generations of his conjugal affection, by changing the name Brion, by which the islands had been known up to that time, from the days of Jacques Cartier, to Madeleine, in honor of his wife. And Madeleine, or the English equivalent, Magdalen, they have ever since been called. In 1720, these islands, with the fishery rights thereto pertaining, were conceded by letters patent to the Count de St. Pierre, equerry to the Duchess of Orleans. The exclusive fishing rights of the islands were conceded by the King in March, 1742, to the Sieurs Antoine and Joseph Pascaud for the term of eleven years, which was extended in 1751 for another term of nine years. In 1798 the Magdalen Islands were granted by George III. under letters patent, to Admiral Isaac Coffin, who inaugurated upon them the system of feudalism which proved so disastrous to the fishermen of the islands that it finally drove hundreds of them into voluntary exile on the Labrador coast, as will be shown more fully later on.

### RIVERIN'S FISHERY ENTERPRISE.

The first preparations to establish permanent fishery settlements on the Gaspé coast after the time of Denys, seem to have been made by the Sieur Riverin about the year 1688. On the 12th of March of that year he received a Crown grant of the river and bay of Cap Chat on the Gaspé coast,

with six arpents of land on each side of that river for the building of the structures and ships necessary to the establishment of the fishery "which he is to commence next spring with all the rights of fishing, hunting and trading with the Indians on the extent of the said concession." In granting this concession, the Governor of the Colony, the Marquis de Denonville, declared that it was made in order to contribute as much as possible to the establishment of the said fisheries, and in consideration of the fact that they were the most advantageous propositions that could be made for the welfare of the colony.<sup>1</sup> There is more information to be found in the literature of New France concerning these early attempts to establish permanent fishery settlements in Canada than some historians seem to be aware of.

#### LOUIS XIV. AND THE CANADIAN FISHERIES.

No less prominent a personage than Louis XIV. employed his influence to further the success of Riverin's efforts, if, indeed, he was not one of the authors of the project.

There is still in existence a "mémoire du Sr du Riverin sur la Pesche," written as early as 1685, a portion of which reads as follows:

"Fishing will not only be advantageous by the returns which it will bring us from foreign countries, but still more because it will afford occupation for youths who now waste much time, either in idleness or in running the woods. It will train sailors and navigators, who are to be regarded as the means of subsistence to the other inhabitants of the country. Boston, and the whole colony set us an example which is not creditable to our nation, since it is growing every day by the fishing



*Louis XIV.*

<sup>1</sup> Registres d'Intendance.

that it carries on for the most part on our own shores, while the French are doing nothing.”<sup>1</sup>

Riverin himself was at work upon his project, however, at the very time he had prepared the above memorandum, or at least very shortly after it, and out of what we know were his slender means, he had built a vessel in France which it was his intention to employ in these fisheries.

“Le pauvre Riverin,” however, as De Denonville called him in 1686, in a letter to the French Minister, seems to have encountered ill luck from the very inception of his enterprise. The new vessel which he had built at La Rochelle for his fishery, and which he had anxiously expected at Quebec from day to day failed to arrive. “We do not know,” said the Governor, “whether this ship has perished or whether she has been taken by pirates, as were the ships that Monsieur de la Barre sent you three years ago, and that are believed to have been taken by the English robbers from Boston,” and he earnestly pleaded: “We have, Monseigneur, a great interest in having our navigation safeguarded by you and in being guaranteed from these piracies which discourage so much our merchants and fishermen.”<sup>2</sup>

Official representations from New France, and doubtless the promptings of Riverin himself, with his references to the march that was being stolen by the New England “pirates” upon the French in Canada in the matter of the fisheries, so impressed Louis XIV with the importance and possibilities of the latter, that in 1689 he signed instructions for the Count de Frontenac, reminding him of the vast utility to the people of Canada in the matter of commerce, as well as of industry, that the establishment of fisheries on the St. Lawrence and on the coasts of Acadia would be, and telling him that in order to make a commencement of such fisheries, His Majesty had had one Riverin engaged to undertake a

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<sup>1</sup> *Collection de Manuscrits*.....relatifs à la Nouvelle-France.—Québec, 1883. Vol. I., page 347.

<sup>2</sup> *Collection de Manuscrits*.....relatifs à la Nouvelle-France.—Vol. I., p. 371.

fishery for both Salmon and Whales at the entrance of the St. Lawrence, and had even given orders to the Commissioner of Marine at Bayonne to send him a number of harpooners and other Basque Sailors to teach the methods of the whale fishery to the people of the country.<sup>1</sup>

The orders given by the King for sending out trained fishermen to Riverin were promptly obeyed, but the latter was already crippled in resources, as shown by an anonymous memoir on New France, dated at Versailles on the 4th May, 1690, prepared for the information of the Marquis de Seignelay, and emanating from a friend of Denis Riverin, or at least from a strong sympathizer with his project, and with the development of the rich fisheries of New France.

“All the coasts of the King’s lands are so rich in fish,” says the author of the memoir in question, “that it is much to

*The Marquis de Seignelay's Autograph.*

be desired that nobody but the King’s servants should fish there, and that His Majesty should be powerful enough in those waters to drive foreigners from the fishery on the Grand Banks. At all events we ought to keep them away from the fisheries of the King’s coasts.

“The Spaniards go every year to the coast of Labrador from the Straits of Belle Isle, and the Bostonnais do more business than we do.

“Up to the present, all the inhabitants of Acadia as well as those of Canada, have thought more of the beaver trade and of the sale of brandy than of establishing the fisheries, which offer, however, the surest and most

<sup>1</sup> *Collection de Manuscrits.....relatifs à la Nouvelle-France.*—Québec, 1883. Vol. I., p. 452.

lasting profits, and those most suitable to the inhabitants of the country, and to the growth of the Colony. For what each resident is able to earn at it will pay him very handsomely each year for his trouble, and as this industry only opens after the land has been sown, and finishes before harvest, the industrious worker is able to make a good thing out of it without abandoning the culture of his land as the *coureurs de bois* do.

“Canadians are skilful, and if they wish to do so they will not take long to become as clever as the Basques in the whale fishery.

“There is reason to hope that they will be attracted to this industry by the good prospects of profit, providing the establishment of the fishery is persevered in, but the person who is anxious to embark in it is not financially strong and will have trouble to meet the necessary expenditure.

“The last harpooners for the *Sieur de Riverin* have been taken by the shippers from Bayonne to Quebec. I question whether he will be able to pay the costs, but he has positively promised me not to give up, and the *Intendant* will do all that he possibly can to sustain him.”<sup>1</sup>

#### RIVERIN AT MATANE.

*Riverin* established the headquarters of his Gaspé fishery in 1688 at Matane. He was filled with enthusiasm for the excellence of its harbor, which could accommodate ships of 200 tons, and with the richness of the surrounding waters in fish. He told *M. de Seignelay* that he could employ 500 boats at a time in the fisheries of the neighboring waters. Twenty leagues of the Gulf thereabouts were described by him as swarming with cod, which were of the very finest quality and suitable for shipment to Spain and to the Levant. As for the whale fishery, *Riverin* declared that he had seen fifty whales at a time on the surface of the water,

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<sup>1</sup> *Collection de Manuscrits*.....relatifs à la Nouvelle-France.—Vol. II., pp. 3, 4.

that it was not necessary to go out more than a quarter of a league from shore to find them, and that it was often possible to get near enough to them to be able to touch them with the oars of the boat. Charlevoix, the historian, by way of endorsing Riverin's statements, declares that he himself, in 1705, saw four whales at one time playing around his ship near Tadoussac.<sup>1</sup>



*Marquis de Seignelay*

Son of Colbert, died in 1690 at age of 39. Was Secretary of State under Louis XIV.

Riverin apparently kept his promise to persevere in his undertaking, as long as he found it possible to do so, for Charlevoix is authority for the statement that undeterred by first failures he persisted in his efforts, though the historian sagely observed that something more than industry and courage were necessary to the success of such a project as Riverin's, and that that something, which meant considerable funds, was what the promoter, like many other promoters, both before and after his time, lacked.

The persistence with which he sought financial backing, confident of the promise and excellence of his proposition, was in time rewarded by temporary success. He induced certain capitalists in Paris to take an interest in his project, but, as in so many other similar cases, "they wanted," in the words of Charlevoix, "to reap before the crop was ripe, and their impatience spoiled everything."



*Rev. Pere Charlevoix.*

<sup>1</sup> *Histoire et description générale de la Nouvelle France avec le Journal Historique d'un Voyage fait par ordre de Roi dans l'Amérique Septentrionale. Par le P. DeCharlevoix, de la Compagnie de Jésus.*—Tome Premier. Paris, M.DCC. XLIV., pp. 539, 540.

It was just about the time that Riverin was struggling with fate at Matane, that the Recollet Fathers, who had established a settlement at Percé, were also overwhelmed with disaster, in the manner already described.

Meanwhile, the importance of the fisheries of New France was the theme of further communications between Quebec and Versailles.

M. de Champigny, in a memoir on the condition of affairs in Canada, claimed in 1691 that the coasts belonging to the King of France were the only ones that furnished codfish to Europe, and that seals and porpoises were abundant. He added that these fisheries were of inestimable value.<sup>1</sup>

In 1699, the Court of Versailles again appeared impressed with the importance of a due development of the fisheries of New France, and special instructions, dated the 25th of


 A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading 'Callières', with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right and then loops back under the main text.

*Autograph of the Sieur Chevalier  
de Callières*

May of that year, were addressed by it to the Sieur Chevalier de Callières, Governor of the colony, in which he was told that "the establishment of sedentary fisheries was one of the best means of employing the King's Canadian subjects and

to develop the great riches of the colony, and that it was necessary for the Governor to support them with his authority and to give all possible assistance to those who undertook to establish them.<sup>2</sup>

## FISHERY CONCESSIONS ON THE SOUTH SHORE.

Various concessions of fishing rights and of land upon which fishery establishments were to be erected were made on the South Shore in the latter part of the seventeenth century.

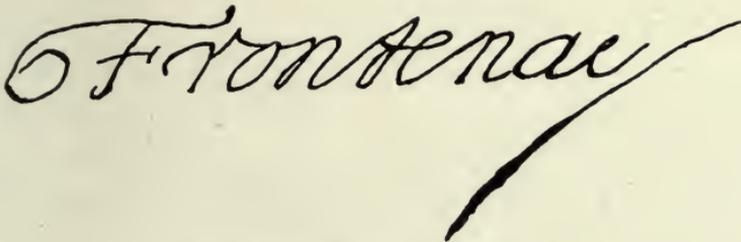
<sup>1</sup> *Collection de Manuscrits*.....relatifs à la Nouvelle-France.—Vol. II., pp. 67, 69.

<sup>2</sup> *Collection de Manuscrits*.....relatifs à la Nouvelle-France.—Vol. II., p. 324.

In May, 1675, the Sieur de Peiras was given by Frontenac two leagues in front and two in depth on the St. Lawrence at Metis, as well as the three Barnabé islands, for the establishment thereon of a fishery for herrings and other fish. One league in depth and one and a half leagues of river frontage at the same place were also granted in January, 1669, to François Pachat for fishing purposes.

On the 30th May, 1679, Frontenac accorded to Antoine Caddé, half a league on either side of the mouth of the Magdalen River, which flows into the St. Lawrence below Mount Notre Dame. This concession was two leagues in depth, and when, ten years later, nothing had been done on the property, it was given to Sieur Denis Riverin, who was already engaged there, as we have seen, in the establishment of a sedentary fishery.

The fishing rights of la Grande Rivière in the Baie des Chaleurs and of a league and a half of land fronting the



*Count Frontenac's Autograph.*

Baie, were ceded by Frontenac in 1697 to Jacques Cochu. In 1750, Jonquiere and Bigot ceded them to Cochu's heirs. Their rights formed part of the grant applied for in 1755 by Messrs. Prevost and Arnoux, then carrying on cod fishing in partnership at Gaspé. They applied for a grant, with the title of Seigniors of the lands situate between Cape Rosier and Grande Rivière, on the condition of building a fort there.<sup>1</sup>

The concession of two and a half leagues east of the mouth of the Grand Pabos and of half a league to the west

<sup>1</sup> See *Correspondance Generale*. Vol. 8, C. II., July 18th, 1755.

with the rights of fishing, hunting and trade thereon was made by Count Frontenac on the 14th November, 1696, to Sieur Hubert. On the 10th September, 1707, the Marquis de Vaudreuil conceded the point of Paspebiac, Baie des Chaleurs, together with a league in front of each side of the said point to Pierre Haimard, Provost Judge of Notre Dame des Anges, and the concession was registered in the office of the Superior Council of Quebec, 26th November, 1708.<sup>1</sup>

### LA HONTAN ON FISH.

The Baron La Hontan, in 1705, described the wealth of the salmon fisheries of the rivers flowing into the Baie des Chaleurs and of the cod fisheries of Percé, and furnished an interesting—though necessarily incomplete—list of the fish inhabiting the St. Lawrence from the great lakes down to its mouth, with a more or less amusing description of some of the species; giving the trout of the Great Lakes, for instance, credit for attaining a length of five and a half feet.<sup>2</sup>

Discussing the wealth and importance of the Canadian fisheries he went so far as to declare that neither New France nor New England could have subsisted, in his time, without both the cod fishery and the fur trade, and pointed out that the consumption of cod fish was so great in all the southern countries of Europe that few branches of industry were so safe or so lucrative as the fishery in question.

### THE PORPOISE FISHERIES.

The porpoise fishing industry is said to have been established at Kamouraska as early as 1701. At all events, the right to this fishing was formally conceded in 1705 by Governor de Vaudreuil and Intendant Beauharnois to Sieurs Hazeur and Peyre (or Peire) for fifteen years. For many

<sup>1</sup> *Jugements et délibérations du Conseil Supérieur de Québec.* Vol. V., p. 324.

<sup>2</sup> *Mémoire de l'Amérique Septentrionale ou la suite des voyages de M. le Baron de la Hontan, etc., etc.—A la Haye, M. DCCXV.—Second Tome, pp. 24, 51, 53, et seq.*

years it was far from proving a lucrative enterprise, and a statement of the firm's accounts forwarded to Paris showed that up to the 9th of September, 1707, their net loss had been 61,116 francs. It was only with the aid of 400 livres received annually for a number of years as a subsidy from the Crown, that the industry was kept afloat.

The two first of the porpoise fisheries were established at Kamouraska itself. Another was opened at Pointe des Iroquois in 1714, and two more in 1716; one in the bay of St. Denis, and the other at Rivière des Caps. Later on, a sixth was established.

In 1716, the fishery was a decided failure, the high winds blowing off the land in the Spring, and the fires which smould-

ered along the banks for so long a time during the summer having driven away from the coast the little fish which usually attracted the porpoises. As a consequence, only 23 of these



A Newly-killed Porpoise.

animals were taken, producing but 14 barrels of oil. In the following year, the fires on the coast caused by the settlers burning the slashed trees for the clearing of their land again drove away the small fish which should have attracted the porpoises to the coast, and Peire complained bitterly of his losses, and asked for a twenty year's privilege of the fishing in the hope that he might be able to reimburse himself.<sup>1</sup>

The Sieur de Boishebert, Lieutenant of Infantry, is on

<sup>1</sup> Archives of the Marine Department, B 1-29, Folio 43.

record as having applied in 1717 for the privilege of the same fishing, basing his claim thereto upon the fact that he owned the seigniory of Kamouraska, upon which his late father had expended very large sums, and also upon his own services as Lieutenant in the colonial troops.

Both the original grantees were at this time dead, and the *Sieur Peire*, who applied for a renewal of the concession was a brother of one of them and had been a partner of both. It would appear that he had only shortly before making this application discovered a more economical method of securing the porpoises, which consisted of an enclosure formed of small trees in comparatively shallow water, into which the huge fish were driven and captured. This method enabled him to dispense with the enormous cost of cordage for the nets in which he had previously secured the porpoises. In view of his tremendous outlay in the past for nets and other fishing plant, *De Vaudreuil* and *Begon* were anxious that he should have an opportunity of recouping himself. The *Sieur de Boishebert*, though seignior, was not, as they pointed out, entitled as such, to the right of the porpoise fishery; since what are known as the royal fishes, of which the porpoise is one, were always reserved by the Crown, even without special mention, when making concessions of seigniorial rights. Then, too, it was pointed out, that only two of the six porpoise fishery establishments of *M. Peire* were situated within the limits of *M. Boishebert's* seigniory. But taking into consideration both the splendid services of *Boishébert* as a good officer, and the losses and heavy expenditure of *Peire* in an undertaking of such importance to the colony, they recommended to the Secretary of State that these porpoise fishing privileges should be accorded jointly, and in equal shares, to *Boishebert* and *Peire*, provided that the former reimbursed *Peire* for half the value of the buildings and fishing utensils furnished by him at his six different establishments, the value in question to be decided by arbitration. The recommendation was approved both by the Council of the Marine and also by the Regent of France.

## CONCESSIONS IN LABRADOR.

Meanwhile there had been many concessions of fishing privileges on what is now called the Canadian Labrador. In 1661, the Compagnie des Cent Associés granted to François Bissot the Isle aux Oeufs *en-Seigneurie*, together with fishing rights over a large extent of territory on that coast, the limits of which do not appear to have been very satisfactorily determined by the deed of concession,—which was destroyed in the Quebec Lower Town fire of 1682,—but which limits were claimed by Bissot's heirs to extend as far east as Bradore Bay. This concession was afterwards known as the Seigniorie of Mingan, the disputes concerning which were only terminated by an agreement between the last claimants of the seigniorie and the Government of the Province of Quebec, in 1899, following the judgment of the Lords of the Privy Council upon appeals from the decision rendered by Judge Routhier in 1892, in an action instituted by the Crown for the establishment of its rights.

Bissot, who was an enterprising Norman immigrant, and had come to Canada about 1646, was the first Canadian tanner.<sup>1</sup> He was also one of the very first Canadians to establish sedentary fisheries in the Gulf. At the Isle aux Oeufs, and later on the mainland at Mingan, he founded posts at which he carried on fishing, sealing and trading with great success.

## THE FIRST SEIGNIOR OF ANTICOSTI.

One of Bissot's daughters married Louis Jolliet, the discoverer of the Mississippi,<sup>2</sup> and shortly afterwards, the bridegroom made a voyage of exploration along the Labrador coast, in the fisheries of which his father-in-law was so deeply

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<sup>1</sup> *Histoire de la Seigneurie de Lauzon, par J. Edmond Roy, F.R.S.C., Levis, 1897. Vol. I., p. 239.*

<sup>2</sup> *Histoire de la Seigneurie de Lauzon, par J. Edmond Roy, F.R.S.C., Levis, 1897. Vol. I., p. 249.*

interested. He charted his discoveries and in 1680 received a grant of Anticosti as a reward.

In those early days in the history of Canada the island of Anticosti was considered a much more valuable property than it is to-day, on account of its advantageous position as a fishing station at the entrance of the Gulf, and the great value of the fisheries immediately surrounding its coasts. Immediately upon receiving his grant, Jolliet proceeded to take possession of his island with the members of his family and to enter upon its development. The census of 1681 shows that Anticosti had a population of fourteen persons: Louis Jolliet, his wife, four children, and eight servants.

*Louis Jolliet*

*Clara Françoise Buisson*

*Autographs of Louis Jolliet and his wife.*

Sometimes the first proprietor of Anticosti spent his winters on his island, usually he lived during the winter months

in his Quebec home on Sous-le-Fort Street, fishing in summer on the coasts of Anticosti or to the north of the Mingan Islands, which islands,—in partnership with Jacques de Lalonde,—Jolliet had obtained a concession of from Frontenac and Duchesne in 1679, for the purposes of seal and cod fishing. Five to six thousands of salmon were sometimes taken by Jolliet in one season out of the rivers of the north shore.<sup>1</sup> His industry proved so successful that he furnished most of the fish consumed at Quebec, and also the supply needed for the soldiers; but the smaller barque employed by him in his carrying trade proved inadequate for the demands made upon it, and in 1685 he applied to the king for the loan of a ship for four years, to enable him to increase the output of his fisheries and also to employ as sailors a number of young Canadians, who would otherwise, he urged,

<sup>1</sup> Margry—quoted by Ernest Gagnon in *Louis Jolliet—Quebec*, 1902, p. 165.

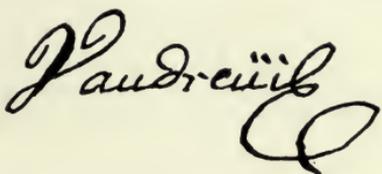
become libertines, through the temptations that awaited them in the wild life of the woods.

In 1690, as we have already seen, the entire establishment of Louis Jolliet on Anticosti, and another one belonging to him on one of the Mingan Isles were burned to the ground by the crews of some of the vessels of Sir William Phips' expedition against Quebec. His losses were very heavy, but a wealthy citizen of Quebec, M. François Viennay-Pachot, a friend of the Juchereau de la Ferté, who for several years had been the furnisher and partner of Jolliet, supplied him with all that was necessary to continue his work and his explorations, taking in exchange for his merchandise, whatever Jolliet could give him of the products of his enterprise.

Neither the exact date nor place of Jolliet's death is known, nor yet the location of his grave. It is believed that he died in the summer of 1700 and that he was buried on one of the Mingan Islands opposite the Grand Mecatina. His sons continued his fishing industry after his death, both on Anticosti and also on the north shore of the Gulf.<sup>1</sup>

### LE GARDEUR DE COURTEMANCHE.

On the 17th of October, 1702, Augustin LeGardeur de Courtemanche obtained from Governor de Vaudreuil a concession for ten years of the privilege of trading with the savages and of fishing for whales, seals, and cod, on all that part of the south coast of Labrador, from the Kegaskat River to the River Kessessasskiou between lat. 52° and 53° N.


 A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading 'Vaudreuil', with a large, decorative flourish at the end.

*Autograph of Philippe de Vaudreuil,  
First Governor of that Name.*

Courtemanche, who married a granddaughter of François Bissot, the daughter of Bissot's partner and son-in-law,

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Ernest Gagnon's superb life of Louis Jolliet should be consulted by those who are interested in the romantic period of our history in which he played so important a part.

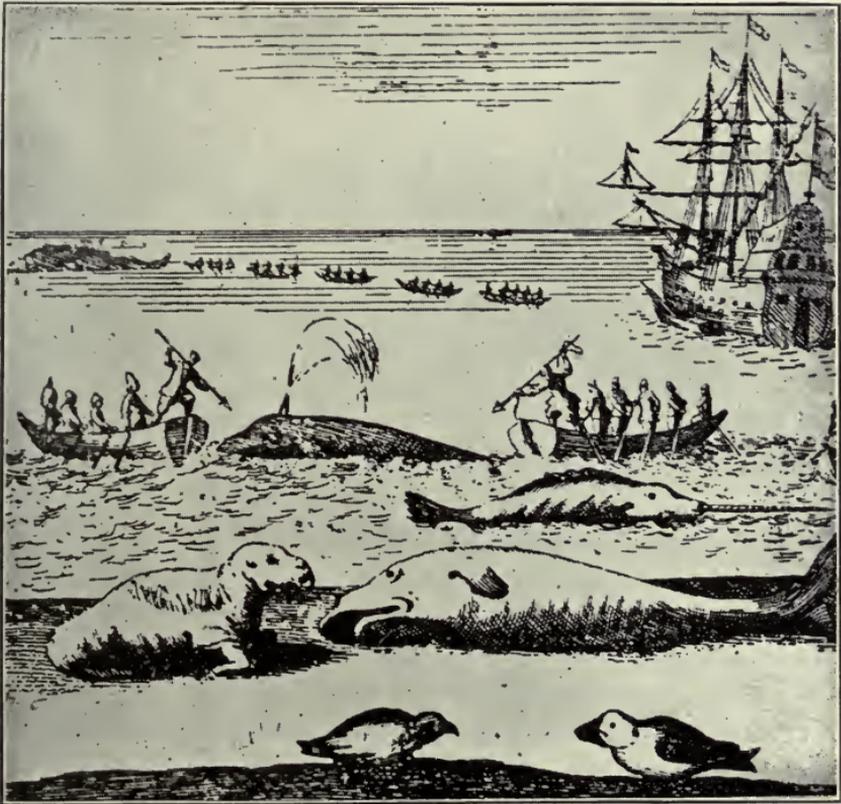
Etienne Charest, tanner of Levis, has left a narrative of the voyage made by him to his concession in 1704, in the course of which he says: "The French settlement (that of the port of Brest) is 20 leagues from it (the great Mecatina); its appearance is very gay. There is a very fine harbor there, into which all kinds of vessels can enter; more than 100 ships could be there together . . . . Above the fort at the head of the bay are three very pretty hills, on the summits of which are small lakes, in which trout and salmon abound to such a degree that with two or three hand lines or a common net one might tackle enough to feed a pretty large garrison, and half a league lower down is the Esquimaux River, full of salmon of extraordinary size."

Kessessasskiou River, the north-eastern boundary of Courtemanche's domain, was the Indian name of what is now known as the Hamilton River, so that LeGardeur controlled the entire coast line from the River Kegashka to Hamilton Inlet, with its valuable fishing and hunting privileges. He established his headquarters at Phelypeaux Bay, now Bradore, and built there a fort which he called Fort Pontchartrain. This bay, which was called Les Islettes by Jacques Cartier, was known later as Baie des Espagnols, and it was doubtless the ruins of Courtemanche's fort that were mistaken by Mr. Samuel Robertson in the early part of the last century for those of the imaginary "town" of Brest.

Courtemanche found the bones of whales piled up like sticks of wood, one on the other, in such quantities that he estimated one place to contain the remains of two thousand to three thousand animals. He counted ninety skulls of prodigious size in one little creek. The Basques had been compelled to abandon the fishery, not from failure in the supply of whales, but because of the attacks and depredations of the Esquimaux. Courtemanche met a St. Malo fisherman at Fort-eau, who informed him that his countrymen had carried on a fishery there "*de tous temps.*"

In 1714 Courtemanche obtained a renewal of his grant.

“The King being at Marly, and being informed of the success of the establishment which the Sieur de Courtemanche had made at Phelypeaux Bay, wishing to treat him favorably in consideration of the pains and cares which his establishment had cost him, hereby concedes to him the said Bay



#### WHALING.

*From Bernard's Recueil, 1700.*

of Phelypeaux, where he is established, and two leagues of coast either way from the said bay, and four leagues inland.”

He was also granted the sole right to trade with the savages and to the seal fishery, but in regard to other fish he was given a concurrent right only with any other vessels that might come there.

At the same time that his grant was renewed, Courtemanche was appointed Commandant of the Coast of Labrador.

“His Majesty deeming it necessary that he should have an officer of the army to command on the coast of Labrador, in the country of the Esquimaux, and being satisfied with the reliability of the Sieur de Courtemanche, captain of one of his companies serving in New France, His Majesty wills and requires that he command in the said coast of Labrador, and that he rule there and settle all differences that may arise between His Majesty’s subjects in regard to stations for the fishery,” etc.



*Autograph of Louis XIV*

It is surprising to find, from Courtemanche’s report for 1713, that there were only three French vessels fishing in the strait—one at Forteau and two at Blanc Sablon. It is possible that this was due to the then recent war between France and England.

A contemporary writer, whose name is unknown, but who is thought to have been a priest who visited the coast during the regime of Courtemanche, has left an account of the coast and of its resources which makes interesting reading at the present time, when everything connected with Labrador is attracting so much attention. The following is a translation :

#### MEMOIR CONCERNING LABRADOR, 1715-1716.

“Labrador is all that vast country to the east of Canada and north of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. It is a peninsula bounded by the River and Gulf of St. Lawrence on the south, the ocean on the east, Hudson’s Straits on the north, and Hudson’s Bay on the west. It joins Canada on its western border from the Isles of Mingan to Hudson’s Bay.

“Labrador belonged entirely to France before the Treaty

of Utrecht, with the exception of some small forts which the English had built in the bottom of Hudson's Bay.

“The King had ceded to them, by that Treaty, a part of Labrador—that is to say, the Strait and Bay of Hudson with all the coasts and rivers which fall into the said Strait and Bay of Hudson. This constitutes a large country, but almost uninhabitable and difficult to reach. The greater and better part of Labrador remains to the King—that is to say, from



KILLING WALRUS.

*From De Veer's Waerachtighe, 1605.*

Mingan to Belle Isle and from Belle Isle to the entrance of Hudson's Straits, with all the rivers and inland country. This coast is over 400 leagues in extent. It is certain that furs are more abundant and precious in Labrador than in Sweden, Norway or Canada.

“But that which merits more attention is that the fishery which can be carried on of salmon, codfish, seals, walrus, whales, on this four hundred leagues of coast is able to produce greater riches than the richest gold-mine in Peru, and

with less trouble and expense. It is very important and even necessary for the good of the State to make at once three or four establishments on the coast of Labrador. The abundant fishery of salmon, codfish, porpoises, seals, walrus, and whales; the walrus teeth which are finer than ivory and are used in the fine arts; the skins of seals, seal oil, walrus oil and whale oil; an infinity of caribous and other animals are in this vast country of Labrador, and will furnish an infinite number of skins and furs, the handsomest, the finest, and most precious in the world. It is said that the skin of the caribou takes the colour scarlet better than any other kind of skin. All this with mines of copper and iron, that can certainly be found in Labrador, is capable of making the proposed establishments both rich and flourishing, and of such great advantage to the State that Labrador should be regarded as its Peru.

“In effect, it will furnish France with fish and oils, whalebone, skins of seals and caribous, furs, ivory, and eider-down, and all in such abundance that a large trade can be established with foreign countries. Add to these, feathers for beds, such as are used in Russia.

“The abundance of all these things will be increased in proportion as the country becomes peopled and establishments become numerous. But it is necessary to begin with three or four.

“The first at Phelypeaux Bay,—a very advantageous place,—a good harbor with abundance of seals and codfish, and also whales. There are a prodigious number of birds called ‘Moyeis,’ which furnish quantities of eider-down, and of which the eggs are good to eat. The King has given this post to M. De Courtemanche, a Canadian gentleman, during his life. The seal fishery is the principal industry, and quantities of oil and skins are obtained. He has a large garden and grows all sorts of vegetables—peas, beans, roots, herbs, and salads, and has sown barley and oats, which grow well; perhaps wheat and rye will also grow. He keeps horses, cows, sheep, and pigs. The neighborhood of the bay has also

been explored. It is a plain of about four leagues in extent, but with little woods, so that M. de Courtemanche has to send for firewood to a distance of three or four leagues with his horses and carts. He is also able to reach it by boat from the river of the Eskimo, which is at a little distance. M. de Courtemanche has engaged thirty families of Montagnais to settle near his house. They are of great use to him, both for the fisheries in summer and for the chase in winter. He has made them very sociable.

“Near the house of M. de Courtemanche there is a little river containing quantities of salmon and trout.

“In time of war, Phelypeaux Bay is not safe because it is very open, but three leagues away there is a bay and a port called St. Amour, where the fishery is not so abundant as at Phelypeaux Bay, but being easy of defence one would be in safety there from the attacks of enemies.

“The second establishment should be at Petit Nord, in the Strait of Belle Isle, either at St. Barbe or at Chateau. This establishment would have the advantage of being in the Strait by which the fish and whales from the ocean enter into and return from the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

“At this port a lucrative trade could be carried on with the Eskimos, who come there in great numbers every summer.

“The third establishment should be on the east coast of Labrador, at Kessessaki, which is a large river between 52° and 53° N. lat. The fishery of all kinds—cod, seals, whales—is easy and abundant. There is a great quantity of fine woods to build stages, houses, or ships. These pine woods and large trees are a sign that the land is fertile, and one will be able to keep animals of all sorts, to grow wheat and all kinds of grains, vegetables, and root crops. In short, it should become a considerable colony and useful to the State because: (1) it is not far distant from France; (2) it will return great profits for little outlay; (3) the fisheries will yield certain and inexhaustible profits—advantages which are not found in mines of gold or silver, that are very costly to

work and soon exhausted, and cause the death of a great many persons. A great advantage for this establishment will be that the river Kessessaki is much frequented by the Esquimaux, who are adroit in the chase and in the fishery, and will be able to render great service to the French and furnish them with quantities of fish, oils, walrus teeth, caribou skins, and valuable furs.

“This immense country is filled with animals.

“It is said that the Esquimaux number more than thirty thousand. They have no communication with any Europeans nor with other savages, from whom they differ greatly. They have no beards, are light colored, well made and very adroit. They clothe themselves very properly in seal skins. They make canoes and boats, the construction of which is admirable, and are good smiths. It is believed that they take their origin from the Icelanders or Norwegians, but perhaps instead they may have originated from the colony the Danes had in Greenland about three hundred years ago, which has since disappeared. Without doubt one will find in their language words of European origin. It is easy to throw light upon them by means of Basque, Icelandic, Norwegian, and Danish languages.

“The Esquimaux are considered extremely savage and intractable, ferocious and cruel; they flee at the sight of Europeans, and kill them whenever they are able; but I believe they fly from Europeans because they have been maltreated, fired on, and killed, and if they attack and kill Europeans it is only by way of reprisal.

“I think that in the beginning of their intercourse with Europeans on their coasts they stole some trifling articles and then fled, but this did not warrant that they should be fired at and killed.

“Messieurs Jolliet and Constantin, who have visited them, have received a thousand tokens of friendship. M. Courtemanche, who has had eight or ten interviews with them, told me at Versailles in 1713 that they are good, civil, mild, gay, and warm-hearted men and women, and that they

danced to do him honor. They are very chaste, dislike war, and have a thousand good qualities. They are more timid than savage or cruel. It is very easy to see that there will be no difficulty in civilizing them if proper means are taken. They are as follows:—

“1. To forbid the savage Montagnais and other savages to make war on them. If the Montagnais have with them a Jesuit missionary, he could forbid them to do evil to the Esquimaux.

“2. It is also necessary to forbid the French fishermen and others, under the severest pains and penalties, to fire on them or to offer them any insult.



GROUP OF MONTAGNAIS INDIANS.

*(Photographed by the Author at Natashquan.)*

“3. To order the French fishermen to endeavor to win them over by offering friendship and even presents to those who join them.

“4. In exchange of merchandise and in all commerce with them to be sure that they are not discontented, and on all occasions to treat them with kindness and good will.

“5. To give them food, but neither to give nor to sell them any intoxicating liquors.

“6. To engage the Jesuits to undertake this measure to go amongst them and endeavor to civilize them, for the Jesuits have a great talent for humanizing the most ferocious savages. When commerce has been established with them,

it will be easy to convert them to Christianity. Their gentle spirit, their aversion to war, and their chastity make them easily disposed to conversion.

“It should also be held in view that in making these establishments on the Labrador, not only spiritual but also temporal blessings will be poured upon those who shall procure this glory to God and Religion.

“The Esquimaux civilized, will render important services to the French by the fishery and the chase, being very adroit both in the one and the other. They will bring skins and furs, walrus tusks, fish oils, eider-down and feathers for beds, having on their coasts an infinity of birds with fine plumage.

“Thus the Esquimaux will contribute to render commerce on the Labrador both large and lucrative. I forgot to say that it is necessary to use every means to induce the Esquimaux to take up their abode near the French, the advantages of which it is unnecessary to detail. Their proximity need not be feared, as they are not warlike but lazy and timid.

“Those who always make difficulties and have not the courage to undertake large enterprises say:—

“1. That the Labrador is a place cold and sterile, where nothing that is necessary for life can be found, and consequently is uninhabitable, and no one should dream of endeavoring to colonize there.

“Sweden, Norway, Russia, Scotland, etc., are all more northern countries than Labrador, and are consequently colder. These places are also filled with lakes and mountains to a greater extent than in Labrador. The land is as sterile as Labrador, and it is only by cultivation that they have become fertile and capable of supporting their large population.

“Scotland, Sweden, Norway and Russia are powerful countries, and filled with great and rich towns, all north of Kessessaki. Who shall say that one shall not make of Labrador as fine a country as these, and build in it cities as great and populous? All that is wanted is work and patience.

I claim that when the French are well led they are as capable, both of one and the other, as the Scotch, Swedes, Russians, or any other northern people.

“The French are capable of overcoming all difficulties when led by chiefs enterprising and steady. The work which they have done, are doing, and will do in Canada, is proof incontestable of this truth, that cold countries are more favorable to them than hot, and that in cold countries they are more robust, stronger, more enterprising, and more courageous than they are in hot climates, or even in France itself. For this reason it will be better to have Canadians, accustomed to cold and fatigue, to conduct these establishments on Labrador.

“It may be said, that to start these colonies on the Labrador will be too expensive for the King, who has other more pressing claims upon his purse.

“I reply, that it is possible to make these establishments without costing the King anything. What M. Courtemanche has done at Phelypeaux Bay has cost the King nothing. The others will not cost the King more. It is only necessary to engage two Canadians, wise and enterprising, to undertake the settlements at Petit Nord and Kessessaki, as M. Courtemanche has done at Phelypeaux Bay. In order that these men should not ruin themselves, but should even grow rich in sacrificing themselves for the State, it is necessary to grant to them all that is possible, to heap upon them honors.

“In order that these posts may be peopled and become important, it is necessary by bounties and privileges to induce the Bayonnais and other French, and especially Canadians, to establish themselves there and develop the commerce of the country, particularly the fishery, the profits of which are immediate, certain, and inexhaustible, and do not require a great outlay. It is necessary also to give to those who shall undertake the settlements of Petit Nord and Kessessaki (which should be named Labradorville), the titles of Commandant or Captain, if they have it not already, as in the

case of Phelypeaux Bay, and to give to each his entire company to reside at his post. Instructions must be given:—

“1. Not to encroach one upon the other, to live in peace and harmony, and on no account to entice away the savages the one from the other.

“2. To forbid the savages to make war on one another.

“3. To live in peace with the savages, to civilize them, trade with them, and induce them by kindness to come and



MONTAGNAIS WOMEN.

*(Photographed at Natashquan by the Author.)*

live near the French. Especially not to do them any violence or injustice.

“4. To have the care of missionaries who shall work at the conversion of the savages and the salvation of the French.

“5. To explore the country, not only the coasts, but also in the interior. To ascend all the rivers to their sources, and to engage the French as well as the Jesuits to seek the savages in their own homes, and to accompany them on their hunting trips and voyages.

“6. To examine the quality of the earth, to see if there are mines of copper, iron, or other metals, if there are valuable stones, such as marble and porphyry, if there are woods fit for houses and ships, if there are medicinal plants or drugs. In short, to discover all that the country may produce. Nearly all countries are less fertile along the sea coast than in the interior.

“7. To be sure to rear cattle and sheep, pigs and goats, and even horses. If the Canadian species are not able to resist the climate, it is necessary to introduce cattle from the Faro Islands or Iceland, which are countries more rugged and cold than Labrador. These animals will provide food for the colony and manure for the lands, to render them capable of producing grain, vegetables, and root crops.

“8. To endeavor to tame the caribou, which is the same animal as the reindeer, so greatly used by the Laplander and Russians, but it is necessary to avoid any appearance of magic.

“9. To breed quantities of birds, fowls, pigeons, geese, ducks, etc.

“10. To sow wheat, rye, oats, barley, and other grains. Oats and barley will grow well and afford food for the cattle and fowls. Without doubt Turkey wheat will grow with a little care.

“In Poland, where the lands are cold, they sow a little salt to warm them and render them fertile. The same must be done in Labrador, or grain must be brought from Canada.

“11. To plant all sorts of vegetables, peas, beans, lentils, etc., and also endeavor to cultivate fruit trees.

“12. To cultivate all sorts of roots and salads, which grow very well at Phelypeaux Bay, so M. de Courtemanche tells me, and are of great benefit to the crews of the fishing vessels.

“13. For the use of the fishermen, to have at each settlement one or two large inns, with good beds and other conveniences for the comfort of the seamen, but drunkenness and all other debauchery must be strictly forbidden.

“14. At each settlement there must be a Curé, an honest man, with a church well and properly adorned, where service can be performed with decency. It is a means to inspire the savages with respect and an inclination for Christianity. It is fitting that these Curés should be of the St. Sulpician order or some other community, if the Jesuits will not undertake the work.

“15. The commandants must be instructed to keep

the Crown informed of all that is required for the good and for the increase of the settlements.

“16. They should take care that solid and commodious houses be built, for which they should furnish plans. Lime can be made in the country, and it is possible to make bricks, tiles, and pottery.

“These means, and many others known to those who are more experienced than I, are able to render the settlements on the Labrador very considerable in a short time and without any expense to the King, and to attract there numbers of vessels which will bring all that is required, and take back fish, oils, and other produce. This will maintain a great commerce, will enrich the country and the merchants, and be very useful to the State.

“If it is possible to keep bees one can make hydromel, as in Muscovy and Poland, where quantities of bees are kept, although they are more northern countries than Labrador.

“The wool from the sheep will furnish clothes. Also clothes may be made from the sheep skins, as is the custom in many places, and of seal skins like the Eskimos, who are very properly clad.

“The ships can bring them wine and other commodities which the country is not able to furnish, and in exchange the inhabitants will give fish, oils, etc., which the country produces in such quantities that they will be able to buy all the commodities of France and Canada they have need of, and the colony will become a rich and powerful State.

“The colony of Placentia is a place more sterile than Labrador. This barrenness occasions the colonists to apply themselves entirely to the codfishery, which furnishes the means to supply them with all that is necessary and even to grow rich.

“It is possible, perhaps, that it will be more advantageous for the colonists of Labrador and for the State that they should apply themselves entirely to the fishery which produces such immense profits.

“Two difficulties are still made.

“1. That in Labrador the cold is of such long duration and so stormy that the colonists would not be able to stand it. To which I reply, that Norwegians and Swedes do not mind the cold at all, and that good houses, well sealed with wool or moss, are complete protection against it. Add to this that Canadian men and women, who will form these colonies, are accustomed to the severest cold.

“2. It is said that there are not sufficient food and commodities there to support a large colony. I reply that beef, veal, mutton, and game are not wanting, neither are fish, fresh and salted, nor vegetables and roots.

“It is possible to raise excellent pigs, but they must not be allowed to eat fish, and during the fishing season must be kept at a distance from the sea. Beef and pork, and also the caribou meat, can be salted and smoked. The country abounds with game, and the birds furnish abundance of good eggs.

“Oats and barley will come to maturity, and with the great commerce in the products of the country are more than sufficient to support a large and numerous colony. If the wheat and rye will not come to maturity they can be imported from Canada, which will be a good thing for Canada. It must be admitted from all I have stated in this memoir, that the reasons for establishing colonies on the Labrador are convincing, and the means thereto ample and easy.

“It remains then to carry out the proposal, to grant permission to those who have the courage to found these settlements, and to accord to them all that is suitable in order that they may not be ruined in sacrificing themselves for the honor and advantage of the State as well as for God and Religion.”

#### AFTER COURTEMANCHE'S DEATH.

In the year following Courtemanche's death, namely in 1718, Louis XV., by the advice of his uncle and regent, the Duke of Orleans, and over his own signature, granted to Courtemanche's widow and children a concession of the lands and fishing rights which had been accorded to him by

the late king. The three daughters of Courtemanche were given half the concession between them, in equal parts. One quarter went to the widow, and the other to the Sieur de Brouague, her son by her first marriage, in consideration of the assistance which he had given his stepfather in his fishing establishment on the coast. After her death, the King conceded her rights in the grant to her son, Sieur Brouague, in 1725, and also provided in the following year that he should inherit the rights to the concessions of his sisters after their death.



*Henri IV.*

Abbé Ferland, the historian, mentions the fact that memories of Courtemanche were still green in his time among the fishermen of that wild coast, who had a tradition that his wife was a daughter of Henri IV.<sup>1</sup> This tradition was given as a fact by Mr. Robertson in his paper on Labrador previously referred to. We have seen, however, that Madame de Courtemanche was a granddaughter of François Bissot. She was the widow of

Pierre Gratien Martel de Brouague, whose son succeeded his stepfather, de Courtemanche, as commandant of the coast, at the death of the latter in 1716, and who held office until the end of the French regime. Like his stepfather he had considerable difficulty with the Esquimaux of the coast. He was a man of mark in New France, having married, in 1732, Louise-Madeleine Mariauchau-d'Englis, sister of the eighth Bishop of Quebec. It was his daughter whose beauty, when she was presented at the French Court, filled with admiration the young king, Louis XVI. Brouague shared the control of Courtemanche's establishment after the death of the latter, with Sieur Foucher, a son-in-law of Courtemanche. One of Foucher's sons added to his name that of Labrador, and the Abbé Ferland is authority for the

<sup>1</sup> Voyage au Labrador, par l'Abbé Ferland, pp. 37, 71.

statement that there was still, in his day, a family in France bearing the name of Foucher de Labrador.

Courtemanche was in France about two years before his death. There is still to be seen in the *Archives Nationales*<sup>1</sup> a letter dated at Havre on the 10th of October, 1714, and addressed to the Minister of Marine by M. de Champigny, a former Intendant of New France, which contains an interesting reference to Courtemanche. The minister was informed that only a few days previously there had arrived at Havre a ship belonging to Sieur Vanqueray, a merchant of the place, with a cargo of green and dry codfish from the Labrador coast; and that on board this ship a Canadian gentleman, Sieur de Courtemanche, had arrived at Havre, from whom the writer had heard that he had established a considerable business on the coast, where the fishing was very abundant and that his visit to France was for the purpose of waiting upon the Minister to describe the fisheries in question, as well as the advantage which they offered to French ships, merchants and fishermen. M. de Champigny informed the Minister that Sieur Vanqueray and Sieur Feray, of Havre, had decided to equip two ships for this trade, and that other merchants of the place proposed to do the same thing. As for the Sieur de Courtemanche, M. de Champigny informed the Minister that he had always known him as a wise and capable man, who had seen good service both in the troops and in the business affairs of the colony, and that he had no doubt that the other Intendants who had served in Canada after him, would render the same testimony.

Charlevoix, in 1720, mentioned the fort built at Bradore Bay by Courtemanche, and referred to the cod-fishing of the locality as "very abundant."<sup>2</sup>

An important grant of lands and fishing rights was made by Governor Denonville on the 14th April, 1689, when the fishing privileges for cod, whales, seals and porpoises in

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<sup>1</sup> *Archives de la Marine*, B.3, 220.P.439.

<sup>2</sup> *Histoire de la Nouvelle-France, par F. X. Charlevoix S.J.*, Vol. I., p. 422.

the Gulf and River St. Lawrence between Blanc Sablon at 51 degrees, and the locality conceded to Sieurs Riverin & Co. at 52 degrees, were accorded to Sieurs Charles Aubert de la Chesnaye, François Pachot, François Poisset, Mathieu de Lino, Pierre Lallemand, Chas. Pattu and Jean Gobin, with

*Autograph of Governor Denonville.*

the privilege of three leagues in depth of land by three leagues frontage, to be taken anywhere within the limits already prescribed for fishing operations. Other important concessions along both sides of the Straits of Belle Isle for some 30 leagues, and including the island of Belle Isle and all fishing rights thereabout, had already been granted to Sieurs Riverin, Chanion, Catignon and Bouthier.

The Seigniory of St. Paul, "in the country of the Esquimaux," was granted by Vaudreuil in 1706 to Amador Godefroy de St. Paul, consisting of the bay and river called Quitzezaqui or the river of the country of the Esquimaux.

Early in 1717, three fishermen of the department of Granville, Gilles Lesdors and Pierre and Barthélemy Hue, applied to the Conseil de Marine at Paris for permission to establish themselves on Marmette Island or on some neighboring locality at Grand Bay, Labrador, and for authority to take whatever measures were necessary for spending the winter there, for keeping and utilizing fishing vessels and for drying their fish. They mentioned in support of their application that that portion of Labrador was only inhabited by the Sieur de Courtemanche and by Indians who would not suffer at all from their proposed industry.

The Sieur de Courtemanche had already, however, represented to the Council the undesirability of permitting establishments on the Labrador coast, because of the scarcity of wood there and the quantity which would be consumed by the wintering of a number of people on the coast, which might interfere with the supply of wood required by visiting fishermen for constructing scaffolding for the drying of fish.



*Autograph of De Courtemanche.*

The Council consequently refused the desired permission but recommended that Lesdors and Hue be advised to settle at Ile Royale.<sup>1</sup>

#### CONSTANTIN AT LABRADOR.



*Louis XV.*

Constantin, already mentioned as a grantee of fishing rights in Labrador, was credited with having been "one of the first from Canada to discover and explore the coast of Labrador, the country of the Esquimaux."<sup>2</sup> Because of the information to this effect, concerning Constantin, which had reached the king, and because Constantin had also established a fishery on the coast in virtue of a concession which had been accorded him by the Sieurs de Vaudreuil and Begon, Govern-

or and Intendant of the country, His Majesty "being," as the record has it, "in Paris on the 31st March 1717, and wishing to favor the establishment of the said Constantin on

<sup>1</sup> Ordre du Conseil de Marine, le 23 février, 1717. See "*Correspondance échangée entre les autorités Françaises et les gouverneurs et intendants.*" Publiés par ordre de la législature de la province de Québec. Vol. I, p. 126.

<sup>2</sup> *Archives de la Marine.* B.14. Page 234.

the said coast, granted him, on the advice of the Duke of Orleans, his uncle and Regent, four leagues in frontage of the said coast, being two leagues on either side of his establishment, with the adjacent isles and islets." As a testimony of his personal good will towards Constantin, His Majesty signed the order for this grant "with his own hand."

It was Constantin, according to a document in the archives of the Marine, who first took Courtemanche to Labrador. His original grant of territory from Vaudreuil and Begon extended thirty leagues eastwards from the straits of Belle Isle, facing the Gulf, by ten leagues in depth. Courtemanche, who was Commandant of the Labrador coast, sent to the Sieurs de Ramezay and Begon at Quebec a complaint from certain ship captains against Constantin who, it was alleged, wished to prevent them cutting wood and even from fishing without his permission. Constantin, on his part, pretended that what Courtemanche wanted was to prevent the existence of any other establishment than his own on the coast. After Constantin's death the rights held by him on the coast of Labrador with headquarters at St. Modet, were conceded in 1759 by Jonquieres and Bigot to the Sieur Breard.

### IMPORTANCE OF THE FISHERIES.

Of the importance attached to the fisheries of New France in official quarters, we obtain some interesting glimpses in a memoir prepared in 1691 by M. de Champigny, who, after claiming that the French possessions in North America supply the whole of Europe with codfish, declares that the fishing for walrus and seal, which produces so much oil, is more abundant than it is possible to imagine.

De Champigny was not slow to realize what the subjects of the King of France lost by the failure of the court to duly protect the fisheries of New France.

In the memoir just referred to he says: "The English of Europe, together with those of Boston and Manhattan, treat these fisheries as if the property in them was common to them

with us, and have erected establishments in New-Foundland which nobody has opposed, where they load a very large number of ships which are destined for Barbadoes, Jamaica and other islands, and above all for Spain and Italy, and often in time of peace, for France. Spaniards from the Bay of Biscay also take part in the cod, seal and other fisheries and even trade with the Indians of Labrador. The English of Europe have over a hundred vessels every year engaged in these fisheries, and those of Boston send more than two hundred smaller ships of 50 to 80 tons. As a matter of right all these fisheries belong to His Majesty for his subjects, yet the French derive the least benefit from them, particularly in times of war, because our enemies have the necessary ships for the



ST. MALO.

protection of their commerce. Readers of this memoir know how advantageous this fishing is to those engaged in it, particularly to the people of St. Malo, who trade in fish with Spain, Toulon, Marseilles and Italy, bringing return cargoes for Havre at good rates, consisting of the merchandise of Spain, Provence, Italy and the Levant. It is difficult to appreciate the abundance of these fisheries, which are capable of giving rise to a practically unlimited commerce; the fishes which they furnish always finding a ready market.

“Percé and Bonaventure Islands have accommodation for thirty large vessels, which can obtain cargoes of codfish and oil every year.

“In August, 1690, the English who besieged Quebec captured nine or ten vessels belonging to Bayonne and Havre de Grace. Pirates from Boston took this Spring a little

frigate of 50 tons, built at Quebec, belonging to the Sieur de la Chesnaye and valued, with its cargo, at twenty thousand pounds. The same pirates cruised all this summer at the entry of the St. Lawrence to destroy the fishing and to trap the ships ascending and descending the river, and doubtless the fleet would have been captured had it not been escorted by the King's ships.

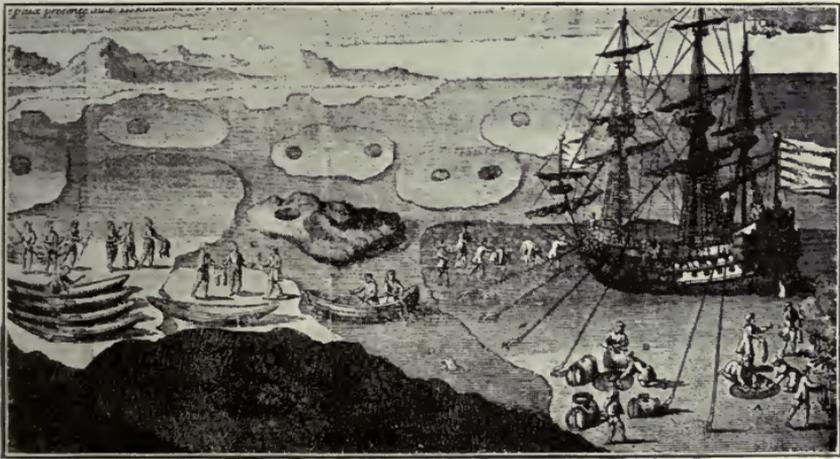
“The fisheries are of inestimable value, but in order to conserve them it is necessary for His Majesty to provide vessels which can protect them, and which can also drive away our neighbors from places which do not belong to them.”

Frontenac informed the Minister in October, 1694, that two Boston pirates had captured a little fishing ship equipped by M. Lazerne, a merchant of Quebec, and also the *flute* St. Joseph, whose captain was killed in defending his vessel. The loss of this ship was a serious one for Frontenac, and for many people of the colony who had goods on board of it.

#### FISHING IN NORTHERN LABRADOR.

In the season of 1717, no less than 33 ships were engaged in the fisheries off that part of the Labrador coast below the Straits of Belle Isle. The following details of this fishing were given to Sieur Begon by one de Lage, the master of a barque who had just returned from Labrador: “The first establishment was at Petite Rivière, six miles below that of the late Sieur de Courtemanche at Phelypeaux Bay (now Bradore). Eighteen of the fishing vessels belonged to this station, and found plenty of space for drying their fish on the beach at Petite Rivière and Isle à Bois. Forteau Bay, 12 miles below Petite Rivière was the scene of the second establishment, to which eight ships repaired with their catches of fish. The third was at l’Anse au Loup, or Wolfe Bay, 6 miles distant from Forteau Bay. Twelve fishing vessels could easily be accommodated there, but there was only two at the establishment, for the reason that there was no room

there for drying more fish than the catch of the two vessels in question. Six miles below Wolfe Bay is l'Anse St. Modét, where three ships fished during the season, but there was scarcely sufficient accommodation for them. Two ships occupied the station of Baie Rouge that year, six miles beyond St. Modét, but there was no shelter for a large number of vessels. The fishing was quite a failure that year, in fact the poorest that has occurred since vessels first visited the coast eleven years ago. One hundred miles below Baie Rouge is a large river named Quisisaquo<sup>1</sup>. The Sieur de Lage was



FRENCH SHIP TRADING WITH THE ESQUIMAUX.

there 25 years ago with the late Sieur de Jolliet, commanding the vessel St. François, and entered a harbor formed by a number of islands, but was only there for the purpose of making a treaty with the Esquimaux. He contented himself with anchoring in the harbor without ascending the river, which flows from the west and north-west, and there is every appearance that it was to the mouth of this river that the Sieur de Courtemanche had proposed to send an

<sup>1</sup> Now known as the Hamilton River. Some of the old maps of New France spelt the name Kessessakiou, which is the form employed in some of the Archives of 1749, to be seen in the Archives branch of the Provincial Secretary's department.

officer and twelve men to establish a depot''; a project which was heartily approved by Vaudreuil and Begon, on the ground that it would tend to drive away the Esquimaux from the coast, and would also facilitate the discovery of further harbors and fishing grounds. The proposal did not altogether commend itself to the French court however, which decided that the time was not then favorable enough to execute such a design. It would certainly have involved considerable expense, for M. Begon's plan was to have an armed cutter of ten or twelve tons with its rigging and fishing utensils brought out from Bayonne on board one of the ships that was to sail thence for Labrador for the fishing season of 1718. In case of difficulty in shipping the boat by a merchant vessel from France it was proposed to have it built at Quebec, though it was expected to be more economical to have it done in France and to send an officer and twenty men to meet it at Labrador, by one of the fishing vessels sailing from Quebec in the early Spring. These men would be longer on the way and under pay if they sailed on the cutter from Quebec which would have to hug the shore on account of its small size. Including the wages of the men and the cost of the boat, the expense of the project was placed at £5,596 10s.

It was proposed that the cutter should be ready to sail from Labrador through the Straits of Belle Isle to Hamilton Inlet about the end of June, and to fish cod during the entire month of July, thus ascertaining how abundant the fish were in these waters, and at the same time what opportunities there were for establishing seal fisheries on that coast, where the seal would be found in greatest abundance during that particular month.

Other reasons which were urged in support of the Sieur de Courtemanche's project were that the islands in Hamilton Inlet were reported to be well wooded, and that the only difficulty which had stood in the way of granting con-

cessions along much of the Labrador coast was the want of wood.

It was further claimed that ships from France could reach this river three weeks or a month earlier than they could the western Labrador coast, because it would not be



ESQUIMAUX.

necessary for them to wait until the ice had left the Straits of Belle Isle.

Mr. Begon gave the best of reasons for urging that the commencement of the proposed establishment should be entrusted to Canadians, who were not only so well adapted for the work of discovery, but so accustomed to life in the

woods and to the rigors of the Canadian winter, and who were by no means afraid of the Indians; while the men of St. Malo, the Basques and the Normans, who fished along the Labrador coast, were so much frightened, he pretended, at the sight of the Esquimaux, that a boat load of Frenchmen, well armed, would give up at the appearance of a canoe occupied by a single Esquimau, with only a bow and arrows for his arms. (*“Les Malouins, les Basques et les Normands qui vont à la pêche a cette coste et au petit. Nord sont tellement effrayé a la veue des Esquimaux, qu’une chaloupe de françois bien armés relâche a la veue d’un canot dans lequel il n’y a qu’un Esquimau qui a des fleches pour toutes armes.”*)<sup>1</sup>

It was pointed out that if the armed cutter had to be built at Quebec and sailed down to Hamilton Inlet, it would be possible to explore all the harbors in the Straits of Belle Isle. Mr. de Lage, also referred to in the memoir, was declared to be the only man to place in charge of the vessel, since nobody knew the coast as well as he did.

Messrs. de Vaudreuil and Begon insisted that it would be equally advantageous to the State and to the Colony that a solid establishment should be built up to assure the safety of the fisheries in time of war, and the security of commerce between France and Canada, so that ships taking the proposed route would not fall into the hands of English cruisers. “If,” they argued, “there are in this river (the Hamilton) as fine harbors as pretended, and if the fishing there proves to be abundant, it will be a great advantage for vessels fishing on the coast, because where they now go to fish (off the upper shore of Labrador) they are exposed to violent wind storms, and must arrive some weeks later, because of having to wait for the disappearance of the ice from the Straits of Belle-Isle.”

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<sup>1</sup> *Archives de la Marine*, B.1.29. Page 53.

## INDIAN TRIBES OF LABRADOR.

In 1719, in a letter<sup>1</sup> which was deemed important enough to be laid before the Regent of France, the Duke of Orleans, the Sieur de Brouague, Commandant of the Labrador coast, gave an interesting account of the Indian tribes encountered on the coast by the fishermen, and of the curious collection of facts and fables given him concerning them by an Esquimau prisoner. This person was his



FEMALE ESQUIMAUX IN HABITATION OF ICE.

authority for the statement that these Indians were exceedingly numerous in the north and of different nations, who were almost always at war with each other. He told him that the worst and most cruel of them all were those who were born with white hair, having black faces and very large noses and lips. These people, he said, were not accustomed to iron arrows, but used those made of bone or stone. The people of another very numerous nation were only two or three feet high, he said, but made up in width what they lacked in height. They lived on seals, deer, and

<sup>1</sup> *Archives de la Marine*, B.1.50, p. 177 et seq.

other game, and used turf instead of wood for fuel. He described the men of still another nation, which, like the others, he claimed to be very numerous, as having only half a body, one arm, and one leg, while the women, on the other hand, were perfectly formed. With this tribe was a man who had been a long time married—and the statement was apparently unaccompanied with any apology for the slur thus cast upon all the other members of the tribe. The married man was also described as knowing how to write, but when the prisoner was asked whether he was a member of the tribe, he replied in the negative, saying that he was a savage; which left Brouague to understand that this was the name which they, in their turn, gave to Europeans.

Brouague did his best to open negotiations with the Red Indians of Newfoundland, the ancient Beothic tribe, whose subsequent extinction is such a pathetic reflection upon the European civilization of the 17th and 18th centuries. The Commandant of the coast sent some of his men, both Frenchmen and Indians to winter on the coast of Newfoundland, because of the insufficiency of subsistence furnished by the hunt of the autumn of 1718, and charged them to enter into negotiations with the Beothics. They failed to meet with them, however, though they reported to have heard that they were very numerous.

#### A BAD SEASON.

The fishing of the Labrador coast proved a partial failure in 1719. Twenty-seven vessels from France caught and dried codfish that season on the Labrador coast, and the largest of them only cured 2,000 quintals of dried fish.

The Spring was so late, to start with, that eight or ten fishing vessels which arrived off the coast on the 16th May, were forced, after spending four or five days in the ice, to withdraw to Newfoundland, where they were compelled to remain until the commencement of June for the ice to disappear.

The fishermen had varied experiences that year with

the Esquimaux. On one occasion the latter stole a number of French boats, and according to Brouague, a gang of 40 to 50 of them endeavoured to surprise some of his men and would have cut their throats if they could have succeeded.

On the other hand an officer who went from Blanc Sablon to St. Mandez for some salt which had been left there was received most affectionately by the Esquimaux, who were assembled there with more than a hundred canoes and fourteen or fifteen boats, and who even assisted the sailors to load their boat.

Many of the vessels engaged in fishing in the Lower St. Lawrence in the early part of the eighteenth century were owned in Quebec, which was more interested in the cod fishing two hundred years ago than it is to-day. In the spring of 1734 no less than thirteen fishing boats left Quebec for the Lower St. Lawrence.

For forty-one years, almost without intermission, Brouague wrote an annual letter to the Council of the Marine, detailing the events which took place on the Labrador. They consist principally of accounts of the depredations of the Esquimaux and of his efforts to warn and protect the fishermen. It soon became a practice to make Bay Phelypeaux the headquarters for the coast, and at the end of each season the fishermen brought their boats and gear for him to take care of, knowing that anything left unguarded would be stolen or destroyed. On several occasions, small sealing posts, where three or four men only were employed, were attacked and the fishermen slain. Reprisals were naturally of frequent occurrence, and the Esquimaux were shot with little compunction by the enraged fishermen.

Brouague's post was by no means a sinecure. One of his duties was the settlement of disputes among the fishermen themselves. As in our own day, the favorite "berths," i.e., fishing stations, were much sought after, and excited great competition, fair and otherwise. The custom seemed to be for each vessel arriving on the coast to go or send

to Phelypeaux Bay and procure a license to fish in the locality each had selected in turn of arrival. Some of the fishermen did not conform to this regulation, those from the Province of Quebec particularly refusing to recognize Brouague's authority, often occasioning broils which he was powerless to put down. Each year he made a list of the vessels fishing on the coast, with the name of the captain, the number of men employed, and the quantity of oil and codfish secured. Isle au Bois, Chateau Bay, and Blanc Sablon seem to have been the favorite fishing places.



BATTLE HARBOR, NEAR CHATEAU BAY.

Brouague's reports show that twenty ships visited the coast in 1720, and that the product of dried codfish was 36,000 quintals. In 1721 it was 40,000 quintals. In 1729 when eighteen ships visited the coast and 1,275 men were employed in the fishery, 33,000 quintals were exported, and in the following year 34,000 quintals. In 1733 the product was 46,900. In 1735 it was 50,600, and in 1736 the figures reached 56,000 quintals.

#### LA PECHE AVEC LA FAUX.

Some of the fishermen on the Labrador coast had recourse, in the early part of the eighteenth century, to a most

destructive method of catching cod. This was nothing less than a species of jigging, known as "*la pêche avec la faux*," against which a vigorous protest was made to the Secretary of State for the Colonies in 1718 by the Sieur de Brouague, commandant of the coast. He failed to describe what was meant by "*la pêche avec la faux*," and as the term is not now employed either by fishermen or by those familiar with their craft, except to describe something like legitimate trolling, it becomes necessary to search the literature of France as nearly contemporaneously as possible with the time of Brouague for an account of the destructive method of fishing to which he so strongly objected. In the *Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire Raisoné des sciences des arts et des métiers*, edited by Messrs. Diderot and D'Alembert,<sup>1</sup> this fishing is thus described: "*Faux, (Peche)* is an instrument composed of three or four hooks, joined by their stems, and between which is a small salmon made of bright metal, shaped like a herring. When the fisherman finds himself in a locality where the codfish are abundant, and when he finds that they refuse bait, he employs the *faux*. The fish, deceived, take the bright and shining mass of metal for a herring and dart after it or gather around. The fisherman, meanwhile, continually jerking his line, jigs the fish wherever the hooks chance to strike into them. The destructiveness of this fishing is self evident, for it is quite apparent that for every fish taken in this manner, a great number are wounded. Now as soon as a fish is wounded and bleeding, all the others in the vicinity chase after him, disappearing with him. For these reasons, the practice, and all similar ones, should be prohibited."

The Sieur de Brouague employed almost the identical language of the encyclopedia in speaking of the evil effects of this fishing, namely: "*On faisoit la pêche de la morue avec la faux, ce qui faisoit beaucoup de tort, parceque pour en prendre une on en blessoit plusieurs.*" (They fish for cod with

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<sup>1</sup> *Troisième édition*, Geneve, M.DCC.LXXVIII. Tome 13, p. 913.

the faux, which is very destructive, because in taking one they wound many)<sup>1</sup>

It is reasonable to suppose that this manner of fishing was called "*la pêche avec la faux*" because of the employment of the false or imitation fish with which to attract the cod to the "jigger," as it may appropriately be called in English.

On receipt of the Sieur de Brouague's protest against this jigging of cod, the Council of the Marine in Paris sought expert advice on the subject, and in April, 1719, referred the matter to Messrs. Marin and Landreau, instructing them to communicate the complaint to the fish merchants and to ask their advice.

M. Landreau replied that the merchants of Bayonne knew nothing of such a method of cod fishing, and that only the fishermen themselves or their captains, who had then left for the fishing grounds some days previously, could give a reasonable opinion of it. The matter was therefore left in abeyance until the return of the Basques from their fishing.

The practice has been prohibited for a long time in Canadian waters, but is still permitted off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador.

### CONCESSIONS IN LABRADOR.

During the last thirty years of the French regime concessions on the North Shore were rapidly multiplied.

In 1736 the fishing rights in Chateau Bay were conceded by the Sieurs de Beauharnois and Hocquart to Louis Bazil, and in 1749 the Sieur Gauthier obtained them from Jonquiere and Bigot.

Lafontaine de Belcourt had received in 1733 a concession of land, with fishing rights, between the Itamamiou and Netagamiou rivers, and to the east of the Netagamiou was the

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<sup>1</sup> "*Sur la pêche avec la faux*" in the archives of the Marine, B. 1. 42, p. 34.

concession of the Little Mecatina granted in 1740 by Beauharnois and Hocquart to Sieur Vincent.



*Gilles Hocquart.*  
*Intendant of Canada,*  
1731-1748.

Between Little and Gros Mecatina were the fishing rights conceded in 1749 to de Beaujeu and Estebe.

Adjoining this latter on the east were those accorded in 1720 to De la Valtrie, and these again adjoined those of de La Fontaine, granted in 1750 for a term of 15 years by Jonquiere and Bigot.

The Sieur de Brouague was the grantee in 1750 of a concession extending east to the river St. Paul or Esquimaux.

Two leagues facing the Gulf on either side of the mouth of the St. Augustin, with fishing rights thereto pertaining, were conceded to Sieur Cherron in 1750 by Jonquiere and Bigot, and a similar concession appears to have been made to Phillippe d'Ailleboust de Cery in 1753.

Sieur Taché became, in 1750, the proprietor of the rights to lands and fishing between Phelypeaux and Forteau Bays, though it appears from

A large, elegant cursive signature in black ink, reading "L. Jonquière".

*Autograph of Governor de la Jonquière*

an entry on the margin of the deed of concession that he subsequently abandoned them.

Phelypeaux Bay, it will be remembered, was one of the concessions belonging to the Sieur de Courtemanche, and subsequently to his stepson, the Sieur de Brouague.

The fishing rights extending from Cape Charles to St. Alexis Bay, and those of the adjacent islands were conceded by Beauharnois and Hocquart, in 1743, to Sieur Antoine

Marsal, for a term of six years, to be counted from the 20th September, 1744, but among the archives preserved in the

*Beauharnois*

*Autograph of Governor Beauharnois*

Department of the Provincial Secretary at Quebec, we find that in November, 1749, the Sieurs de la Jonquière and Bigot, accorded to Sieur Baune, for nine years, the rights heretofore conceded to Sieur Marsal. Nevertheless, in 1753, Marsal was again given the same concession for a nine year term, though in 1758 Vaudreuil and Bigot gave permission to Marsal's creditors to enjoy it, till 1763, or for the balance of the time for which the concession had been made.



*Marquis de Vaudreuil.  
Last French Governor  
of Canada.*

One of the most important of the many concessions of fishing rights that marked the closing years of the French regime was that called in the title deed “*la Baie des Esqui-*

*maux dite Baie St. Louis,*” known to the aborigines as Kessessakiou, and to us as Hamilton Inlet. The fishing rights not only in this enormous bay, but also as far as Cap St. Gilles to the north and as the Rivière des Sables to the south, as well as in the river at the head of the bay (the Hamilton) “which discharges into it from the height of land” were con-

*Autograph of Pierre  
Francois de Vaudreuil,  
Second Governor of  
that name.*

*Vaudreuil*

ceded on the 20th September, 1749, by Jonquière and Bigot, to the widow of the late Sieur Fornel, of the said bay, for



INDIAN HARBOR, BETWEEN SANDWICH BAY AND HAMILTON INLET.

a term of twelve years. It was her husband, the late Louis Fornel, who claimed to have been the discoverer of Esquimaux Bay, and who wrote a description of it in 1743, which is now in the "*Correspondance Generale*" of the colonies at Paris.<sup>1</sup> Half a century before Fornel wrote his account of the Bay, it had been visited by Jolliet and de Lage.

For possession of this territory or at least of its fishing and trading rights, there had been much rivalry and competition for some years previously. We have seen that the seigniorial rights were granted in 1706 to Amador Godefroy de St. Paul. The son of this latter wrote to the French Minister in 1739, asking for a ratification of the concession. The Minister referred the application to Messrs de Beauharnois and Hocquart, who in September, 1740 reported that the Sieur Fornel, merchant of Quebec, as well as Sieurs Daine

<sup>1</sup> Vol. 109. C. 11.

and Foucault had applied for the concession, and that although the *Sieur St-Paul* merited the preference if he insisted upon it, by virtue of the prior grant to his father, yet he was not habituated to such voyages as would be necessitated by the navigation of the waters between Quebec and Esquimaux Bay, having never been to sea, but living at Three Rivers, engaged in traffic with the Indians who came there to trade.

Messrs. Beauharnois and Hocquart expressed the opinion that an important commerce in whale-bone and oil and a considerable seal hunt might be established at Esquimaux Bay, though they also laid much stress upon what might be accomplished in the way of christianizing and civilizing the Esquimaux and of securing them as allies of the king of France.

#### AFTER THE CESSION.

The troubles between the Esquimaux of the Labrador coast and the Canadian fishermen continued not only up to the fall of New France, but also during some years of the new regime. Only three years previous to Wolfe's siege of Quebec they destroyed several fishing stands along the Straits of Belle Isle, but were subsequently repulsed at Pennoyer river by the crews of sealing ships. They had twice assaulted Bradore during the times of Courtemanche and Brouague, coming into the Straits early in the spring, in skin boats, and burning buildings and boats and whatever they could not carry away.

After the taking of Quebec and the cession of Canada, Labrador naturally fell into the hands of the English. At that time, it is said the Esquimaux so infested the Straits of Belle Isle that it was not safe for a fishing vessel to go there alone. An organized band of Esquimaux came each summer from the north, ostensibly for the purpose of trading, but they generally contrived to obtain very much more of the coveted European goods by stratagem and force than they did by fair means. Their plan was to creep along the coast endeavoring to find some unsuspecting fishermen, and at night or in foggy weather to make a sudden descent upon

them, uttering the most frightful yells, in the hope that the fishermen would abandon their property and flee. Such was the terror in which they were held that this often had the desired effect. If, however, the Europeans stood firm, the Esquimaux at once came forward in the most friendly way and began a barter trade; but if the fishermen relaxed their vigilance for a moment, they were attacked and murdered in the most barbarous fashion.

There is nothing surprising in the fact that the Esquimaux wrought destruction as far south as Belle Isle in 1763, for the French had found them in 1702 as far west as Anticosti in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and tradition tells of a series of battles between the Montagnais Indians and the Esquimaux, one of which is said to have been fought near Pointe des Monts.

#### LOONS MISTAKEN FOR ESQUIMAUX.

For some years after the cession, Labrador was under the Government of Newfoundland, and a curious story quoted by Mr. W. G. Gosling in his history of Labrador, from the manuscript journal of Sir Joseph Banks, illustrates in an amusing manner the terrors inspired by the Esquimaux of those days. Admiral Sir Hugh Palliser, Governor of Newfoundland, visited Chateau Bay, Labrador, in his 50-gun ship, the "Guernsey," to attempt to open friendly relations with the natives. One dark night in a thick fog, the ship's company were alarmed by a noise they had never heard before. Everyone awake conjectured what it could possibly be. It came nearer and nearer, grew louder and louder; the First Lieutenant was called up. He was the only man in the ship who had ever seen an Eskimau. Immediately he heard the noise he declared he remembered it well. It was the war-whoop of the Eskimaux, who were certainly coming in their canoes to board the ship and cut all their throats. The commodore was acquainted; up he bundled upon deck, ordered the ship to be cleared for action, all hands to the great guns, arms in the tops, everything in as good order as if a French man-of-

war of equal force was within half a mile bearing down upon them. The Niger, which lay at some distance from them, was hailed, and told the Indians were coming,—when the enemy appeared, in the shape of a flock of loons, swimming and flying about the harbor, which from the darkness of the night they had not before seen. All hands were then sent down to sleep again, with no more thought of the Indians till the Niger's people came on board next day, who will probably never forget that their companions cleared ship and turned up all hands for a flock of loons.

### LIEUTENANT CARTWRIGHT.

The first person of European origin who succeeded in making friends with the Esquimaux was Lieut. Cartwright,



*Lieut. Cartwright.*

an Englishman who established a fishing stand below Cape Charles, shortly after the peace of 1763, and gave up a great part of his time to taming and instructing the natives. He was a scion of a well known English family, and had served in the East Indies as a cadet in the 39th Regiment, and in the German War as aide-de-camp to the Marquis of Granby. In 1766 he accompanied his brother, John Cartwright, who was lieutenant on H.M.S. "Guernsey," to the Newfoundland Station,

spending the summer in cruising about the coast of Labrador and indulging in shooting, for which he had quite a passion. A few years later he commenced a trapping and fishing business, engaging fishermen to take both seals and cod. In 1792 he published his journal of "Transactions and Events during a Residence of Nearly Sixteen Years on the Labrador," which is in three large quarto volumes full of interesting information. He succeeded in making friends with the Esquimaux, and on two of his visits to England carried

some of them to that country, where they attracted considerable notice. He would have made a large fortune out of his Labrador enterprise, had it not been for the robberies committed at his expense by American privateers in 1775-76, which, after capturing a number of vessels in the Straits of Belle Isle, took possession of his ship and rifled his establishments on shore. He estimated that he had been robbed of £14,000 worth of goods. Even after he had given up active operations on the coast and had resumed his residence in England, he retained an interest in the business on the coast, and in his evidence before the committee of the House of Commons in 1793 he stated that his affairs in Labrador were so flourishing that he had cleared over 100% in the course of the past three years.

In the eyes of Sir Hugh Palliser, the Governor of Newfoundland already referred to—the sole value of Labrador appeared to be in keeping it as a nursery for the British Navy. This idea plainly runs through his correspondence with the Admiralty and his Orders and Proclamations. Not only did he, as in duty bound, take considerable trouble to prevent French and New England ships from poaching upon the coast, but in defiance of the conditions of the Capitulation of Canada, he appears to have



*Sir Guy Carleton (Lord  
Dorchester).  
English Governor  
of Canada.*

disregarded all property rights conceded to Canadian fishermen on the Labrador coast under the French regime. So much so was this the case that Sir Guy Carleton addressed two letters to him from Quebec in 1766 and 1767, requesting that certain Canadians be permitted to retain fishing posts occupied by them. Palliser replied, refusing this request, and saying that it was the intention of the King to reserve the Labrador fisheries for the adventurers from Great Britain. The opposition to Palliser's policy in this respect on the part of the grantees of some of the fishing posts on the

coast is believed to have largely influenced the transfer in 1774 of the entire Labrador to the jurisdiction of Quebec.

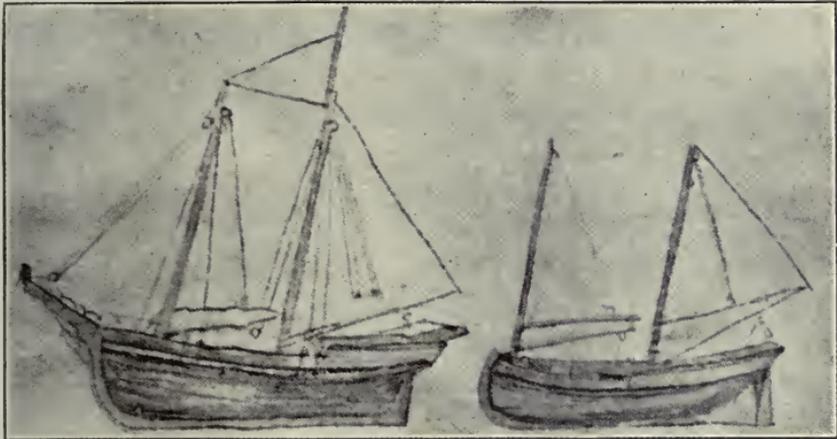
#### AMERICAN FISHERMEN AND LABRADOR.

Meanwhile, however, American fishing vessels were flocking to Labrador. The whale fishery in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and in the Straits of Belle Isle seems to have been carried on at this period principally by vessels from the New England colonies, and was the object of much concern to Sir Hugh Palliser. Gosling says: "He issued proclamations in 1765 and in 1766 for the conduct of this fishery, and laid many injunctions upon the crews for their proper behaviour. An abundance of whales was said to be on the coast in April, May, and June. From the very earliest days of the discovery of the new lands a whale fishery has been carried on in these waters, with short periods of intermission. The present whaling station at Cape Charles has a long line of predecessors. Sir Hugh's proclamations on the whale fishery were again supplemented by Governor Byron in 1768."

Dr. G. Browne Goode, in his *Report on American Fisheries*, 1884, tells us that in 1765 one hundred vessels cleared from New England for the whale fishery in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the Straits of Belle Isle. The season was a very good one, and they returned with about nine thousand barrels of oil. Loud complaints were made the next year against Palliser's regulations, which do not of themselves appear unreasonable, but necessitated a considerable change from the lawless and uncontrolled American methods of previous years. The *Boston News Letter* of November 18th, 1766, reports that the "vessels are returning half loaded"; and a later issue says: "Several vessels are returned from the whaling business who have not only had a bad success, but also have been ill-treated by some of the cruisers on the Labrador Coast."

The following is Palliser's account of the circumstance, in his letter to the Secretary of the Admiralty, August 25th, 1766: "When the King's ships arrived on their stations this

year upon the coast of Labrador, they found between 200 and 300 whaling vessels from the plantations, great part of which were employed fishing for cod and carrying it over to the



AMERICAN FISHING CRAFT OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

French ships in Newfoundland; also destroying the fishing works belonging to English fishers, firing the woods and doing every kind of mischief to prevent and discourage English adventurers from going to that coast; also in hunting and plundering the poor Indians on that coast. The King's officers immediately put a stop to all this, and sent them away a-whaling; then our new ship adventurers from Britain, under this protection, went to work, and have succeeded beyond expectations, taking amazing quantities of Cod."

The New Englanders loudly protested against being debarred from fishing at Labrador. One writes: "To me it is amazing that any body of men should attempt to engross it to themselves; it will never prove very profitable to any body of men in England, and must be advantageous to Americans only."

Additional instructions were sent to Palliser by the Admiralty in 1766, telling him "not to interrupt His Majesty's American subjects in fishing, provided they conform to the established rules of fishing."

In the Schedule of the Fishery for 1767, the number of

American vessels is given as about three hundred, of 18,000 tons, and 3,900 men.

The New Englanders, says Gosling, did not seem to mend their ways as the years went on, for we find, in the very full reports made in 1772-3 by Lieutenant Roger Curtis, even severer strictures upon their conduct. He said they were a lawless banditti, the cause of every quarrel between the Esquimaux and Europeans, and whose greatest joy was to distress the subjects of the mother country; they swarmed upon the coasts like locusts, and committed every kind of offence with malignant wantonness.

But their fishing operations were soon brought to a standstill by the outbreak of the War of Independence, when many of the erstwhile fishermen turned privateers and returned to their former haunts, to harry the unprotected fishermen and settlers in Newfoundland and Labrador.

In 1776 Governor Montague writes that he hears that four privateers have been seen in the Straits of Belle Isle, and that he has two men-of-war there which he hopes may encounter them. While the negotiations for a treaty of peace between Britain and the United States were in progress, great stress was laid upon the importance of the fisheries. Every point, every word, was carefully weighed. Time and again the negotiations were nearly broken off because of the difficulty in coming to an agreement on this matter. But finally, by the Treaty of Paris, 1783, it was 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 to fish; and also that the inhabitants of the United States shall have liberty to 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, and 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, harbours, and creeks of Nova Scotia and Magdalen Islands. As 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 that purpose with the inhabitants, or possessors of the ground."

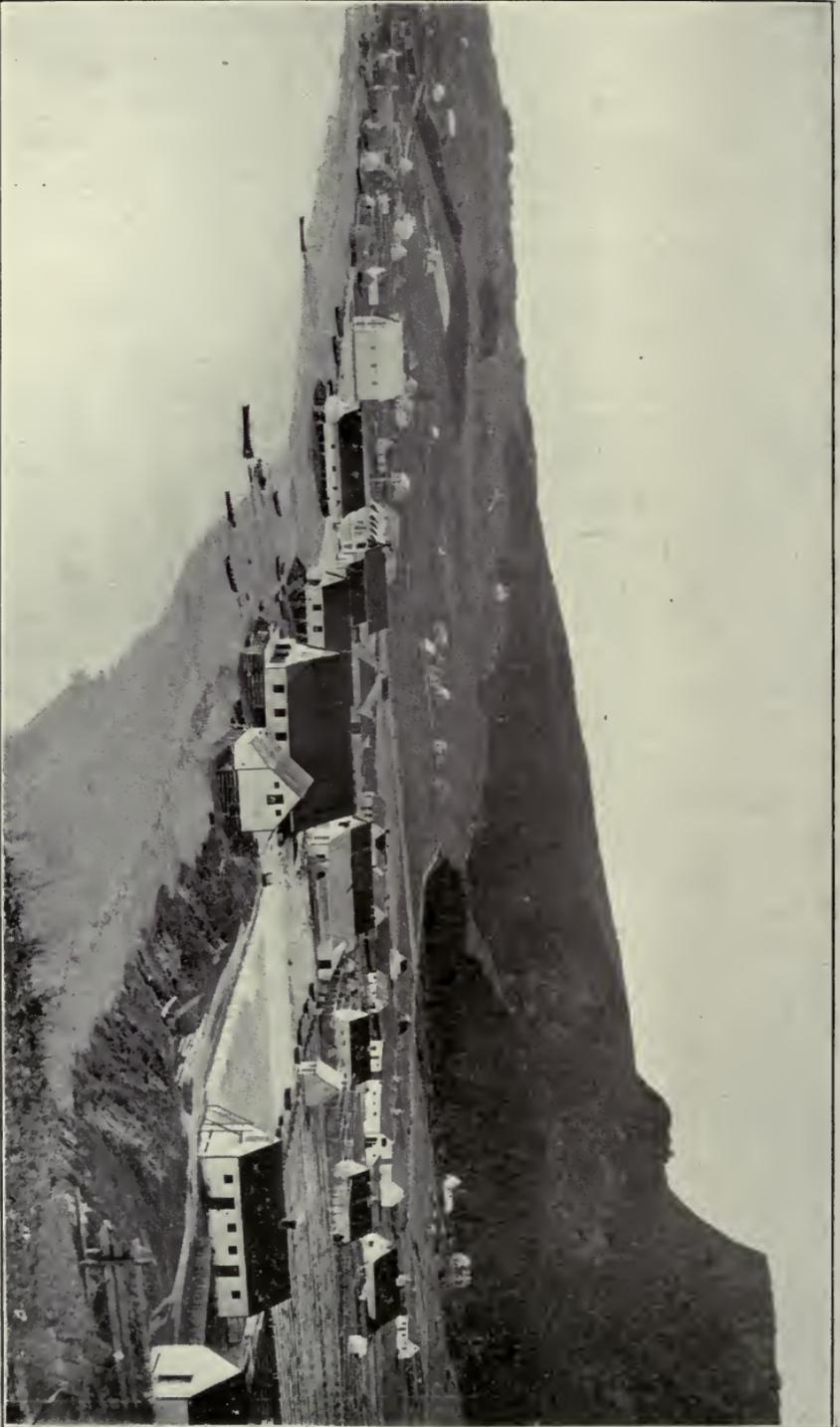
### LYMBURNER AND THE LABRADOR COAST.

According to Cartwright, already referred to, the first English-speaking trader to enter Hamilton Inlet was a Quebecker, the well-known Lower Town merchant, Adam Lymburner, of the firm of Lymburner and Grant. This firm appears in the returns of the seal and salmon fishery on Labrador for 1784-5, as having sealing posts from Little Mecatina to Black Bay, employing 100 men and taking 13,425 seals. Mr. Lymburner was again mentioned in connection with his business on the coast in 1806. He was a prominent resident of Quebec prior to the American invasion of 1775, and in 1791 was sent to England to suggest amendments to the project of the constitution to be promulgated by the home authorities.

In 1807 Lymburner and others acquired by purchase the right to the so-called Seigniori of Mingan, referred to elsewhere in this work, he and his associates, with their successors, continuing to be known as "The Labrador Company." For many years the fishery, chiefly for seals, was carried on with great success. Then came a period of failure, and finally the company was obliged to sell out. This was in 1820, since which time there has been a gradual, if slow, increase in population on the coast. In 1835 the value of the fishery, which was but £2,000 a year, on an average, in the time of the company, had increased to £20,000.

A number of Jersey fishing firms, prominent amongst which were DeQuetteville and Co., and LeBoutillier Brothers, were contemporary on the coast with Lymburner and Grant. In 1806 the following Jersey firms were also reported amongst the fishermen operating on the Labrador coast: Robert Bert-

THE ROBIN ESTABLISHMENT AT PERCE.



eau, Simon duBois, Falle and Durrell, and Emery and Best.

Fishermen from the Channel Islands have played an important part in the Canadian fisheries for the last century and a half.

### THE JERSEY FISHING COMPANIES.

The establishment on the shores of the Baie des Chaleurs of the great fishing industries controlled by Jersey capital and enterprise was almost contemporaneous with the fall of New France.

In his description of the Gaspé country published in 1863, Stanislas Drapeau quoted a previous writer, whom he does not name, as follows:

“Before Mr. Charles Robin, nobody engaged in the cod fish business in the Baie des Chaleurs.”<sup>1</sup>

This is, of course, an error, as we have already seen, in connection with the catching and curing of cod fish in that Bay, and with their shipment to Europe, by both the Sieur de Denys and the Sieur de Riverin in the latter part of the 17th century, though their commerce was not at all to be compared in magnitude to that inaugurated by the Robins.

It is perfectly true, however, that Charles Robin gave a new impulse and development to the fishing industry of the Gaspé coast. For many years previously very little fish had been dried there for export. Beyond what was required for local consumption, most of the green cod fish of the Baie des Chaleurs fishermen was then supplied to the Quebec market.

It was at Paspébiac that Charles Robin founded his first Canadian fishing establishment. From this beginning was destined to spring one of the most remarkable instances of industrial development yet witnessed in Canada. In their long control of the cod fisheries of the Gaspé coast, and for

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<sup>1</sup> Etudes sur les développements de la colonisation du Bas-Canada depuis dix ans. Par Stanislas Drapeau, Québec, 1863, pp. 17, 18.

some time, of the greater number of those upon the North Shore as well, in their practical monopoly of the industry, for so many years, and in the remarkable condition, amounting practically to serfdom, in which they held their employes, the only parallel furnished by the previous history of this country was that of the fur trade and the Hudson Bay Company.



*Dr. John M. Clarke*

Enormous success attended the Robin enterprise. Its commerce grew by leaps and bounds, and branch establishments were founded at Percé, Caraquet, Arichat, and other points.

In the middle of last century its annual export of fish to Spain, Hayti, and Brazil, amounted to 40,000 quintals, and twenty ships were employed in its foreign commerce.

Sixty years after the founding of the Paspébiac establishment, a former clerk of the Robins, Mr. David Lebouthilier, established a rival house on the coast, and after an existence of a quarter of a century, his exports of dry cod fish amounted to 25,000 to 30,000 quintals annually.

#### DR. CLARK'S DESCRIPTION OF THE ROBINS.

By far the best sketch yet published of these big Jersey fishing establishments has been furnished by Dr. John M. Clarke, of Albany,<sup>1</sup> from whom we take the following:

“It was not until after the fall of Quebec that capitalists from the Channel Islands became interested in this Gaspé fishing, and among the first of these were members of the Robin family, of Jersey. The Robins were established on Bay Chaleur in 1764, and probably on Cape Breton as early, doing business in the latter place under the firm name of

<sup>1</sup> *Sketches of Gaspé* by John M. Clarke, Albany, 1908, p. 58, *et seq.*

Philip Robin & Co., and in the former at Paspébiac as Charles Robin & Co., Philip and Charles being brothers.

“When Charles Robin came to Gaspé”, says Dr. Clarke, “the fishing was scattered in small establishments and without organization. Though his purpose was to seek locations for new establishments on the capital he represented, yet the outcome was the development of a concern with interests so wide upon the coast and influences so commanding upon the greater part of the fishing industry as to practically consolidate and control the entire business without serious competition for nearly a century, and to set the pace for all future undertakings along this line. The firm name was changed with time, but till 1886 it was Charles Robin & Co. It then took the form of C. Robin & Co., Ltd. A few years later Collas & Co. amalgamated with the old firm and the title became the Charles Robin-Collas Co., Ltd. Up to this time the capital of the business was all in Jersey, and the entire transaction of the fishing was carried out in accordance with orders from across the sea. In 1904 Collas & Whitman, of Halifax, entered the company, and the business is now the C. Robin-Collas Co., Ltd., with headquarters at Halifax. To-day, with the main establishment at the historic location, Paspébiac, the company controls twenty-eight fishing stations all along the shores of Gaspé from Bay Chaleur to well up the mouth of the St. Lawrence, and on the north shore of the river and Labrador.

“When Robin arrived in Gaspé he found an establishment at Bonaventure controlled by William Smith, and with him entered into business relations, Smith gaining control of the stations up the bay, and Robin devoting his attention to acquiring or erecting new stations on the coast from Paspébiac down. Smith and Robin had a good many disagreements, and finally ceased to co-operate. Robin’s enterprises were proving fortunate when the American war broke out and his serious troubles began.

“It has been my good fortune through the favor of the General Manager of the Robin establishments, and directly

with the aid of Richardson Tardif, Esq., of Percé, to gain access to extracts from the letter books of Charles Robin, kept among the records at the Paspébiac house. The letters of the earliest years of the establishment seem to have been lost, and the first in the book is dated June 5, 1777, just at the commencement of his troubles with the Americans. Writing this month to his brother John, at Neirechak, he congratulates him on his narrow escape from capture and his safe arrival. They had apparently both started together on the return from one of many trips to Jersey, each in his own vessel, and the fleet accompanied by a convoy, but they were overhauled by an American freebooter, 'the same that ruined us last year in Neirechak,' and one of the vessels was captured. The sailing masters had been wise enough to take out French papers at Jersey, and with the help of the French flag, completed their disguise and got clear, though his brother was separated from the rest of the fleet during the attack. Just about a year after, June 30, 1778, he writes to his brother Philip, at Jersey, an account of the capture of his vessels, the Bee and Hope, at the station at Paspébiac. 'On the 11th instant, at about 11 o'clock at night two American privateers, schooners of about 45 tons, 2 carriage guns, 12 swivels, and forty-five men each, put alongside of the Bee and Hope and boarded them. There were but 3 men on board, she being the only vessel arrived for some time, was unloaded in a week, which obliged us to put her guns in her hold, as she would not bear them on deck without we had determined to make no fishing ourselves, an object of 2,000 quintals, which I thought was worth our attention. The Hope has 1,400 quintals fish on board, was to take 200 quintals more the next day, and sail for Lisbon in a few days. They (the privateers) sent her off on the 13th and began to take everything out of the stores and ship them on board the Bee. She was rigged and was going off the 15th; after which departure the Americans came to our habitation to take me away, but I had fled to the woods the night before, mistrusting it—however, that morning three ships appearing, viz., His Majesty's

ships Hunter and Viper, and Mr. Smith's ship Bonaventure, the latter was here the first and fired at them. On their approach the Americans took in their privateer all the dry goods they could come at and went away. I had concealed a little (a third of the goods) which they could not come at—they had found the best part of our furs, which they put on board, but having coiled the cable on them were obliged to leave them behind as well as the powder and ammunition, which I did not expect, neither that they would leave the ship without setting her on fire, both privateers having been taken since at Restigouche, so that I have recovered my goods to a trifle which they bartered with the Indians for canoes for their escape. I am to pay 1/8 salvage on the Bee.

“ 'I keep four shallops fishing and the Percé gang, but they don't absent themselves at night, the crew sleeping on board.' Nervousness and anxiety are written large all through this very disconnected letter, but the times had indeed become nerve-racking for one whose argosies were all on this coast. Very soon again he writes of more trouble:

“ 'July 25, 1778, Neptune left for Miscou to collect fish—was taken the next day by American privateer of 2 guns and 26 swivels, with 1,050 quintals of fish, which they put in their privateer and sank the shallop—they also took another shallop belonging to the place, which shallop has since been retaken by H. M. ship St. Peter, the privateer escaped. Although there are armed ships of war stationed in the Gulf, these small privateers find means to be along the shore.

“ 'The Bee is still fully manned, and you may be persuaded we shall do our utmost to defend ourselves and property—these are very embarrassing times and heavy charges upon my weary shoulders, this is no more a place for an Englishman, the inhabitants being all inclined toward the Americans.

“ 'Vessels to call at Falmouth for orders and how to proceed in case Jersey should be taken.' (War with France was then imminent.)

“Before the season was over his apprehensions got the

best of Robin and he returned to Jersey, where he remained till the summer of 1783. In April of this year he gives a letter of instructions to Capt. Georges Neil, of the brig 'Paix,' for his guidance on arrival at Paspébiac, telling him among other things to 'plant potatoes and May peas,' and he himself reached Paspébiac June 14th. Soon after he writes that 'war has impoverished this coast amazingly,' and complains that the Restigouche savages had broken into his store at Trocadiguess (Carleton) and had stolen all they could take off.



JAMES ROBIN (Died 1864).

*(Photographed for the author from an oil painting in Jersey, by courtesy of Mr. W. F. Hamon).*

“ What-  
ever may  
have been the  
m e t h o d s  
adopted by  
Robin in his  
previous busi-  
ness in deal-  
ing with his  
employees,  
this year,  
1783, with the  
renewal of his  
enterprises on  
the coast, he  
introduced  
the ‘ truck  
system,’ then  
in vogue in  
Newfound-  
land. This  
was payment  
to the fish-  
men for fish  
taken, half  
in cash and

half in goods from the company's stores. Doubtless this practice and its abuse laid the foundation for

the severe aspersions that have at times been made upon the relations of the employers to the fishermen, for the cash must of necessity in large part be spent in the company store. Thus the company's talent was returned to it with usury. The credit for goods led to advances to the men which in many cases made them almost serfs to the establishment, though by this practice of advances the company was certainly the loser. For 99 years this system was maintained in the Robin establishments, and still later in some of the other concerns.

“Charles Robin retired from the fishing in 1802 a very wealthy man, and was succeeded as head of the firm by his nephew, James, who died in 1864. When the Abbé Ferland was writing in 1836 he made some comments on the mode of administration of the Robin business, which had become the historic procedure. Charles Robin was then dead and the heads of the house were his nephews. I presume Ferland's account a faithful, as it certainly is an interesting picture of the conduct of the business.

#### ABBE FERLAND'S ACCOUNT OF THE ROBINS.

“ ‘Neither of the owners,’ he says, ‘resides on the property. The head of it (Philip Robin) travels in France and Italy, thence by letters communicates his plans and orders, which are carried into effect by the Jersey resident (James Robin). In Gaspé, the business is conducted by six commissioners, placed two by two (presumably at the three large establishments, Paspebiac, Grand River and Percé). These employees must be unmarried men, or if married they are not allowed to have their wives with them. Very strict regulations govern them, entering into the minutest details as to their conduct, even specifying what dishes are to be served each day at their table. If these rules were faithfully

carried out their cuisine would not be very costly. Although the emoluments of the commissioners are not great, nevertheless, no master was ever better served than are the MM. Robin.



*Abbé Ferland.*

“ Chosen at about the age of fourteen years and trained for some time by the heads of the concern, these employes are then placed in the establishment of Gaspé, where the interests of the company seem to become identified with their own. Every second year one of the commissioners of each warehouse spends the winter in Jersey in order to give an account of the state of affairs.

“ One of the most important principles of the MM. Robin is to allow no innovations. Many incidents are recorded relating to their attachment to the established order; I will cite only one. Their coasting vessels must always terminate in a long narrow stern. A few years ago their head carpenter, in making a brig for the coast service, thought desirable to give it a square stern, since the wood he was using necessitated that shape. Some months afterwards he received orders to alter it and make it over again with the elongated stern. To this order was added a solemn injunction always to maintain the ancient order.’

“ The strictures made by the Abbé on the effect of the Robin fishing trust on the settlements and their people may present a fair picture of the conditions seventy years ago, and in the light of the present it is interesting to read them.

“ The inhabitants of Paspébiac are completely dependant on the house of Robin. When the Government decided to make grants of land to the people, Mr. Charles Robin, who held absolute authority here, persuaded the fishermen that it

would be more to their advantage to have each but one piece of ten acres, for the reason that cultivation on a large scale would take their time from the fisheries. They allowed themselves to be so persuaded, and now repent of their folly. These small pieces of land furnish but a little amount of pasture, and the owners of them are obliged to buy everything at the stores of the company, who sell to them on credit, and to whom they are always in debt.

“ ‘When they endeavor to shake off their bondage and carry fish to other markets, they are threatened with a summons for debt before the tribunals, of which they have a great dread. They are forced to submit to the yoke and expiate their effort at emancipation by a long penance.

“ ‘The regulations imposed on the agents forbid them to advance anything to the fishermen before a certain set time; the stores may be full of provisions, but not a biscuit can be given out before the hour set. As the fishermen are only paid in goods they can not lay by anything for the future, when they have been furnished with whatever is necessary, their accounts are balanced by objects of luxury. So it comes about that the girls here wear more finery than the grand people of the faubourgs of Quebec.

“ ‘Schools are proscribed. “There is no need of instruction for them,” wrote Mr. Philip Robin to his commissioners. “If they were educated, would they be better fishermen?”

“ ‘The fisherman is always in debt to the proprietors, always at their mercy, liable whenever his debts have got to the point where they can not be paid by the fisheries, to be put on board any of the ships of the company to make a voyage to Europe as a sailor. So frequently one finds fishermen who have made a voyage to Jersey, Lisbon, Cadiz, Messina, Palermo.’

“ ‘Then the loyalist refugees began to come into the country from the new States, and with the aid of Governor Cox were to find settlements about Paspébiac and thence up the bay. The vessels brought 200 families in July, 1784, and returned for 300 families more, and in view of this impending

invasion Chas. Robin appeals to Governor Cox to leave enough land for the use of the fishermen, whose benefit is immense not only in point of introducing wealth in the Kingdom, but also in contributing to the British Marine in a very great measure, since it is allowed by all persons that after the coal trade the fishery makes or nurses up the most seamen.

“Repeatedly his request was urged upon Governor Cox, and two years later we find him writing to the Hon. John Collins, Quebec, his views of what should be done to improve the condition of the inhabitants and picturing the great values of the fisheries of Gaspé. ‘This bay,’ he says, ‘together with Gaspé and the whole coast between the two places produces at present about 50,000 quintals of fish and about 1,000 tierces salmon.’

“An interesting note from Robin’s letters is the following, under date of August 12th, 1783: ‘The Guernsey men have settled at Grand Grève.’ These early settlers on the Grande Grève coast must have been independent fishermen selling to the Robins, for no establishment was organized on that shore till 1798, when the Janvrins established the business now conducted by the Wm. Fruing Co., Ltd., from Grande Grève as a centre with a considerable number of stations along the coast.

“I have not attempted to give any details in regard to the competitors of the Robin interests which have developed on the coast during the past half century, of the Hymans, Lebouthilliers Bros., Marquand & Co., Capy et Le Bas, The Percé Fishing Co., C. Biard & Co. Some have gone and some remain. It is common conviction on the coast, often expressed, that the fishing is not as good as it was in bygone years, that the cod are fewer and the bait scarcer, but in old Denys’ story of the fishing during the half century ending with 1672 there are occasional growls over scarcity of bait, and, if one considers how the fishing stations have multiplied on the coast, and how many more men are employed in the business than ever before, then it is but natural that the share falling to each man is palpably slender in comparison. Mr. Dolbel,

for years the manager of the Fruing Co., has estimated for me that the number of fish taken at his stations amounts to an average catch of three to four millions, and if this is a fair figure, certainly the entire Gaspé coast must afford from twenty to thirty millions of cod every year. The wonder is that after these nearly three hundred years of fishing there is a cod left in all the Gulf. Perhaps no one could find a more effective illustration of the profluence of that *alma mater* of all life—the sea.”

### WALRUS FISHING AT MAGDALEN ISLANDS.

Captain Crofton, in his *Report of the Fisheries* in 1798<sup>1</sup> gives some interesting details of fishing on the Magdalen Islands. Prior to the war with America, the fishing rights had been leased to Colonel Richard Gridley, of Massachusetts—a fact which is also noted by Sir Joseph Banks in 1766. During the war, Gridley played an important part in the American Army, laying out the works at Bunker Hill, and afterwards becoming the head of the Engineers' Department under Washington. Lorenzo Sabine says he had not been able to learn whether Colonel Gridley retained his grant of the Magdalens after the war. Captain Crofton, however, reports:—

“That the only British fishery on the Islands is carried on by Mr. John Janvrin, of Jersey, who has but one boat and three men. He bought a house, etc., from Mr. Gridley, of Boston, who had been resident here many years before and since the last war. Mr. Gridley carried on the Sea Cow fishery, and was then in partnership with Mr. Read, of Bristol, but by what authority he established himself here since the war I cannot learn, as he received all his stores and provisions from Boston, in New England, and sent the produce of the Islands thither in return. I was much surprised at finding a British merchant's establishment here, on so small a scale, but am informed that the Island has been so much re-

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Gosling in his *History of Labrador*.

sorted to lately by American vessels that it has discouraged Mr. Janvrin from extending his commerce. This year the number of American vessels drying fish at the Magdalens amounted to thirty-five, and more than two-thirds of them have cured their fish in the harbour of Amherst, and occupied so large a space as to almost exclude Mr. Janvrin or any British Adventurer from pursuing the fishery in an extensive way. The Americans having met with no interruption, have lately had the presumption to build several fishing stages and flakes; they have not yet left any person to remain the winter, but in the spring bring two crews for each vessel, one of which remains on shore to cure the fish. The Americans having finished their fishery for the season, I therefore only observed to them that I was of opinion that it was improper for them erecting flakes, etc., and so many vessels resorting to one harbour, supposing that my admonishing them would now be too late to produce any effect this season. Before leaving the Magdalens, I am extremely sorry to acquaint you that the Sea Cow fishery at those Islands is totally annihilated, not one having been seen for many years."

After the war of 1812-14, negotiations for a renewal of American fishing privileges in British North America waters were entered upon and a convention signed in London in 1818 which considerably limited the privileges accorded by the Treaty of Paris in 1783, as will be seen by Article 1 of the Convention, which reads, in part, as follows:

"The inhabitants of the United States shall have for ever, 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 from Cape Ray to the Rameau Islands, on the western and northern coast of Newfoundland from the said Cape Ray to Quirpon Islands, on the shores of the Magdalen Islands, and also on the coasts, bays, harbors, and creeks from Mount Joly on the southern coast of Labrador, to and through the Straits of Belle Isle, and thence northwardly indefinitely along the coast, without prejudice however, to any of the exclusive rights of the Hudson Bay

Company, and that the American fishermen shall also have liberty for ever 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 coasts of Labrador.”

### AMERICAN INVASION OF CANADIAN FISHING RIGHTS.

The Convention of 1818 had scarcely been signed when bitter complaints were made of the infringement of the Treaty of 1818 by American fishermen in the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

Robert Christie, Esq., M.P. for Gaspé and author of a well known history of Canada, testified as follows before a Special Committee of the Legislature in 1823:

“I have knowledge that the British establishments in that district complain loudly of the decay of the fisheries in that quarter, which they attribute to the advantages granted to the Americans by the Lake Treaty of 1818, and who they assert are in the daily habit of infringing upon it, by exceeding the limits assigned them, to the ruin of the British stationery fisheries. A letter written by a gentleman, concerned in the house of Messrs. C. Robin & Co. (who carry on the fisheries in the Bay of Chaleurs and at Percé on a great scale), addressed to Captain Bouchier, of His Majesty's Ship Athol, in September last, with a view of drawing the attention of His Majesty's Government to the subject through that gentleman, has been put into my hands, by a friend to that concern. I now lay it before the Committee, as a document which may throw more light on the subject than any information of my own can afford to the Committee.”

“To Henry Bouchier, Esq., Commander of H.M. Ship Athol, at anchor in Paspébiac Roads.

“Sir,—It is with pleasure we comply with your request of yesterday to commit to writing what we had to say respecting the state of the Cod Fishery, and the American Fishing Craft.

“The decrease of the Fishery in the Bay of Chaleurs, since the late peace with the United States is so great, that at Tracadiah (Carleton), and Cascapedia (New Richmond) where the fishermen used to make it worth their while to carry on regular fisheries, they have of late caught very little more than for their own consumption, the rest came far short of paying their out-fit. At Bonaventure, New Carlisle, Paspébiac, Nouvelle, and Port Daniel, the fish is yearly decreasing. Out of the Bay (to the northward and eastward) towards Percé, etc., since the above period a sensible decrease in the fishery has also been experienced, though not in as great a degree as in the Bay. It is generally supposed by persons who have practised the cod fishery in this bay, both in schooners and boats, that it receives (the Bay) its chief supply of fish from the southward on the Orphan Bank.

“It is beyond any manner of doubt ascertained, that many hundred American craft (chiefly schooners) catch their load of fish in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and chiefly on the Orphan Bank, and many close to the Islands of Miscou and Shipagan; as soon as the Gulf is free of ice, the American craft take their station, so that before the 30th May there are generally several hundreds on the Orphan Bank only, and its vicinity, this year their fishery on these banks has not been very abundant, so that next year more of them might go to the northward than this year.

“Thus, without their bounds, the Americans load their vessels with fish, to the great prejudice and annoyance of His Britannic Majesty’s faithful and loyal subjects; for the First Article of the Treaty of Commerce, clearly and evidently prescribes their bounds, ‘from Cape Ray (Newfoundland) to the Rameau Islands, from said Cape Ray to the Quirpon Islands, or to the shores of the Magdalene Islands, and along the coasts, etc., from Mount Joli, on the southern coast of Labradore, and thro’ the Straits of Belle-Isle, and thence Northwardly, indefinitely along its coasts, etc., etc.’ Further in the same article of the Treaty, it is said: ‘And the United States hereby renounce for ever any liberty heretofore enjoyed

or claimed by the inhabitants thereof, to take, kill, or cure fish, on or within three Marine Miles of any of the coasts, bays, creeks or harbours of His Britannic Majesty's Dominion in America, not included within the above mentioned limits, &c., &c.' From the above extract of the First Article of the Convention concluded at London, on the 20th October, 1818, between Great Britain and the United States of America, it is evident that since that period the American fishermen have acted in direct violation of this Treaty by arrogantly and obstinately transgressing the generous bounds thereby allowed them, for it is too well known and felt that they continue to fish on the coasts of Nova Scotia and the coasts of New Brunswick, to the very great prejudice and annoyance of His Britannic Majesty's faithful and loyal subjects of these Provinces, tho' as before stated, the American States have renounced by the Treaty for ever any liberty heretofore enjoyed or claimed by the inhabitants thereof to take, cure, &c. We are sorry the Americans should be allowed to fish in any part of the Gulf, yet it is far from our intention to scrutinize or presume to fathom the causes which have occasioned His Majesty's Government to allow them such generous bounds, from Cape Ray, &c., as above noted; but we must earnestly entreat that His Majesty's Government would oblige the Americans to keep within the limits allowed them by Treaty—it is grievous to every British subject, who reflects for a moment, that if the Americans (who are on the progressive, in every respect) continue the Cod Fishery, as they have done of late, the British Merchant engaged in that still extensive and valuable branch of trade, will be obliged to abandon it; and that thereby it will fall to the lot of the Americans, to the great prejudice of thousands of His Majesty's faithful and loyal subjects, and also to the prejudice of His Majesty's Government, by lessening the revenue, and destroying that highly prized and valuable nursery for hardy seamen: on these ruins the Americans would build a magnificent, commercial and political edifice. We humbly

submit the above to your consideration, and have the honour to be with the most profound respect, &c., &c.,

(Signed) C. ROBIN & CO.''

Paspébiac, 4th September, 1822.

The Robins and Mr. Christie were not by any means the only ones to complain of the alleged invasion of the Canadian Fisheries by the Americans.

Mr. E. I. Man, of Ristigouche, stated in 1823 that great complaints were made that the Americans encroach on our shores contrary to law. He claimed to have seen a representation signed shortly before at the Baie des Chaleurs by a large number of respectable merchants and inhabitants concerned in the cod fisheries, fully explaining the various abuses of those fisheries in the Gulf of St. Lawrence; which representation, he understood, was submitted to His Excellency the Governor-in-Chief.

Mr. James McTavish testified about the same time of the grievances caused by the Americans to the fishermen of the North Shore. He said that the Treaty of Ghent allowed the Americans to fish within a league of the shore from the Gulf of St. Lawrence including the Banks as far as Mont Joli on the North Shore, and Fox River on the South Shore; but they go beyond these limits as far as River St. Johns on the North Shore, to the injury of the lessees of the Mingan Seigniory Company. He said that they had even entered the Natashquan River in 1822 to take salmon. He asked that a regulation should be made to prevent the Americans from anchoring and fishing on the Banks of the principal rivers on the Seigniory of Mingan, because by doing so they prevented the salmon from entering these rivers, while their practice of throwing the offal from the cleaning of the cod fish over the side of their vessels was particularly destructive to salmon. He added that the Americans had been in the habit of carrying on this trade for the twenty preceding years, that from twenty to twenty-five vessels were engaged in it, often making two trips a year. These vessels were schooners from 60 to

80 tons, manned by from 10 to 18 men each, and they anchored quite close to the shore.

The Rev. Mr. Painchaud, who had resided for eight years as a missionary at the Baie des Chaleurs, endorsed, in the strongest possible manner, the complaints which were current in 1823 concerning the injury to the fisheries of the Gulf caused by American fishermen.

### THE FISHERIES OF A HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

There are still in existence partial statements of the amount of fish exported from Quebec, Gaspé and New Carlisle during the early years of the last century.<sup>1</sup>

Amongst the exports from Gaspé in 1811 were 11,552 quintals of cod fish; in 1812, 500 quintals; in 1813, 8,585; in 1815, 13,581; in 1816, 12,171; in 1817, 10,235; in 1818, 13,089; in 1819, 20,523.

From New Carlisle in 1811, 15,139; in 1812, 7,810; in 1813, 12,904; in 1815, 17,330; in 1816, 32,206; in 1817, 17,951; in 1818, 17,253; in 1819, 24,433.

In the year 1820 the exports from Quebec were 2,044 casks of dry codfish, 191 boxes of the same, and 455 quintals.

Gaspé exported in 1820, 114 casks and 15,799 quintals of dry codfish, 8 barrels of salmon, 44 of codsounds, 24 of herrings, and 11 of trout. From the same port in 1821 the shipments of codfish were 224 casks and 24,048 quintals, of salmon 62 barrels, of green fish 121 barrels, and of herrings, 25. In 1822 the shipments were 200 casks and 8,323 quintals of codfish.

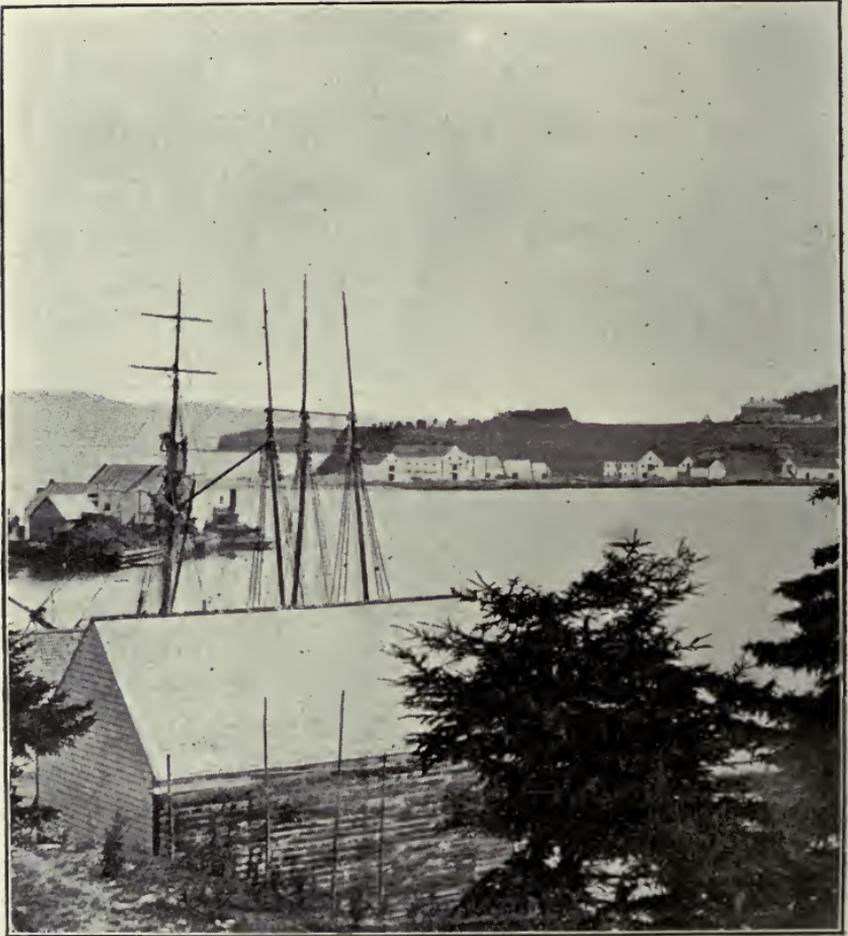
The shipments from New Carlisle were 27,652 quintals of codfish in 1820, 20,556 in 1821, and 22,356 in 1822. Of herring New Carlisle shipped 542 barrels in 1820, 991 in 1821, and 205 in 1822.

Most of the fish referred to above as exported from Quebec came from the district of Gaspé. From that section of country, large shipments were received for both export and

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<sup>1</sup> See the *Journals of the House of Assembly*.

local consumption, of dry and green codfish, barrelled and smoked salmon, mackerel, green and smoked herring, codfish oil, whale oil and cod sounds. The greater part of the dry cod was exported from Quebec to the West Indies, as was also



PART OF GASPE BASIN.

most of the salted salmon. Not much of the herring was exported, in fact much smaller quantities than in previous years, because the fish had been so badly salted and packed that it was constantly found to be spoiled. Mr. J. O. Brunet, the merchant of Quebec, who gave the above facts to a special

committee of the Legislature, before which he appeared in 1823, testified that he had repacked several barrels after washing and resalting the fish. The herring so treated reached the West Indies in very good condition and brought a much higher price than usually paid. He testified further that three qualities of dry cod were exported from Quebec and were known as Merchantable, Madeira and West India.

Similar information was given to the committee by Mr. Jeremiah Leacraft, of Bermuda, who also explained that large quantities of fish, chiefly dry codfish, were exported from Lower Canada to Bermuda and other islands. The salmon and codfish were equal and perhaps better than from any other country, but he complained that the pickled fish, and particularly the herring, were exported in bad condition.

Many complaints were made in 1828 of the abuses which existed in the packing of fish for export, arising from the lack of inspection, and it was urged by several witnesses who testified before the special committee of Parliament, above referred to, that properly qualified inspectors, disinterested in the fish business, should be stationed at Carleton, Bonaventure, Paspébiac, Gaspé and Percé, who should be instructed to classify the codfish intended for export, as Mr. Robin did at that time, and as was done in Newfoundland, dividing it into three qualities, and assorting it into "Merchantable," to be sent to Spain and Brazil, "Madeira," to be sent to the island of that name, and "West India," to be shipped to the West Indies.

Grave complaints were also made before the committee of the abuses existing in regard to the herring and the capelin fisheries. Both of these fish were then being extensively used for manuring the ground, causing at times a scarcity of bait for codfish, and driving away by the stench from the shore the swarms of fish which heretofore were generally found close to land.

In 1823 herrings were very abundant between River Ouelle and Isle Verte, and there were also several fisheries for porpoises, shad and salmon. Many sturgeon were also taken

there. Below Isle Verte were many cod and salmon fisheries. Mr. John Macnider maintained fisheries at Grand and Little Metis for cod, salmon, herring, halibut, eel, and fish of other descriptions. Mr. Macnider testified in 1823 that successful fisheries for salmon, herring and cod might be established at Matane, Cap Chat, Rimouski, Bic, and Trois Pistoles.

Mr. Vincent Bonenfant, a merchant of Quebec, also declared in 1823 that a number of successful fisheries might be maintained between River Ouelle and Rimouski.

Mr. Remi Quirouet stated that in 1810 he carried on two fisheries for two years in partnership with Messrs. Chapais and Daine; one at River Ouelle and the other at Cap-au-Diable, at Kamouraska. The chief product was shad and herrings, but sardines, salmon and sturgeon were taken in lesser quantities. In the first year of the fishery they took many hundred barrels of fish, and in the following year over six hundred barrels, of which the greater part was shad. The price of shad was then double that of herrings, and these fish were chiefly sold to merchants for export to the West Indies.

Messrs. Quirouet and Chapais visited Green Island and came to the conclusion that between River Ouelle and that place it would be possible to take a great many more fish than could be saved.

Mr. Charles Taché, merchant, of Kamouraska, testified in 1823 that he carried on ten fisheries within the Islands of Kamouraska, together with the Messrs. Paschal Taché, father and son, J. B. Taché, François Dechene and Charles Taché, senior. He stated that they had salted that same year 1,000 barrels of herrings and three or four hundred barrels of sardines, besides having taken two hundred to two hundred and fifty boat loads of other fish, and that three thousand barrels of fish might be salted there every year. He added that between Kamouraska and Trois Pistoles as many as 20,000 barrels of fish might be taken in any ordinary year, chiefly shad, salmon, herring, sardines, eels and cod.

On the North Shore of the St. Lawrence there were fish-

eries in the early part of the 19th century for salmon and porpoises at Isles-aux-Coudres, St. Paul's Bay, Murray Bay, Tadoussac, Mille-Vaches, Mingan and elsewhere. The cod fishery commenced at the Godbout and continued eastward at intervals, as far as Blanc Sablon.

Several vessels were fitted out annually at Quebec in the early twenties of the last century for Labrador and other fishing coasts in the Gulf, and the fish taken by them was brought back to this port for export.

In 1823, a bill "for the better regulation of the Fisheries in the Inferior District of Gaspé" was introduced into the Legislature by Mr. J. T. Taschereau, M.P., the father of the late Cardinal Taschereau and of the late Judge Jean Thomas Taschereau, and the grandfather of the Hon. Alexandre Taschereau, Minister of Public Works and Labor of the Province of Quebec. This bill



was referred to a special committee, composed of Messrs. *Jean Thomas Taschereau, Sen., M.P.* Taschereau, Quirouet, Davidson, Bourdages, Lagueux, M'Cullum and Taché, and of this committee Mr. Taschereau was the chairman. It heard a number of witnesses, the testimony of some of them having been already referred to and quoted from on previous pages. After due deliberation, the committee reported to the House as follows:—

#### REPORT OF SPECIAL COMMITTEE.

"Your committee are of opinion, that from the foregoing evidence, the state of the fisheries, and of the trade in fish from this Province, may be sufficiently understood to enable the House to form a just idea of the importance of the subject to your committee, and of the urgency of Legislative interference to rescue from impending ruin a neglected though

most profitable branch of the Provincial trade with Europe, the West Indies and South America.

“It appears to your committee that the principal fisheries in this province are the whale, the porpoise, the seal, the cod, the salmon and the herring fisheries; mackerel and shad have hitherto been taken in such small quantities as to be of little account.

“The whale fisheries are chiefly carried on in the Gulf and River St. Lawrence, as far up as Green Island. The seal fishery is principally carried on on the North Shore of the St. Lawrence, and at the Magdalen Islands. The cod fisheries (not including those of the Banks) are carried on at Gaspé and the Bay des Chaleurs to a great extent, and along the Banks of the St. Lawrence within the Inferior District of Gaspé, and upwards, on the same shore, to Great and Little Metis, as well as at some places lower than the Seven Islands, on the North Shore, and at the Magdalen Islands. The principal salmon fishery is at the River Ristigouche, at the head of the Bay des Chaleurs; there are others in the different rivers falling into the Bays des Chaleurs and Gaspé, and at most of the rivers from thence up along the St. Lawrence to the South River, which empties into the St. Lawrence at St. Thomas, on the South Shore; and on the North Shore, from Malbaie downwards, at every considerable river. The herring fishery is carried on throughout the district of Gaspé, and along the South Shore of the St. Lawrence as far up as Kamouraska, and at the Magdalen Islands. That of the porpoise is chiefly in the River St. Lawrence, between the River Ouelle and the River du Loup, and at Murray Bay, or thereabout.

“The places to which the fish are for the most part exported are as follows:—

“Codfish to Europe and the West Indies, a part to the United States by the Inland Navigation, and to Upper Canada.

“Salmon is exported principally to Europe and the West Indies. Herring also to the West Indies. A great part of

the product of these fisheries is consumed in the different parts of the province, including the Eastern Townships. The oils are chiefly consumed in this province, the exports being very inconsiderable. Codfish is also brought into this province from New Brunswick, Newfoundland, the Labrador, and sometimes from Nova Scotia.

“These fisheries (the whale fisheries excepted, which are of recent date, and, with a little encouragement from the Legislature might become of great importance to the export trade) were much more considerable and successful formerly than at present; their falling off may be attributed to the following, among other causes:

“1st.—The great destruction of fish, resulting from the want of sufficient regulations, and the disregard shown to the existing laws, and to Treaties actually in force.

“2nd.—To the inattention to the fisheries, principally arising from the discredit of our fish in foreign markets, owing to the total want of regulations with respect to inspection previous to their shipment; in consequence of which fish of all qualities are indiscriminately sent abroad without control.

“Your committee have satisfactorily ascertained that the commerce in fish is susceptible of great extension, and may become one of the most considerable and profitable branches of the trade of this province, and that new fisheries might be established to advantage in many places hitherto overlooked or neglected, along the South and North Shores of the St. Lawrence, if suitable encouragement were given for the purpose.

“To promote this desirable object your committee report and recommend as follows, viz. :—

“1st.—That the Bill for regulating the fisheries in the Inferior District of Gaspé, be amended, containing regulations to prevent the wasteful and unnecessary destruction of fish, particularly of salmon.

“2nd.—That His Majesty’s Government be most earnestly entreated to adopt speedy and effectual measures to oblige

citizens of the United States, and the subjects of His Most Christian Majesty the King of France, fishing in the Gulf, to respect and conform to Treaties, as far as the same relate to the boundaries assigned them, respectively, for carrying on the fisheries in the Gulph St. Lawrence, and if possible to prevent their throwing the offal or gurry of the fish upon the fishing banks, a practice alike pernicious to the interests of the people and of the three nations concerned in the Gulph fisheries.

“3rd.—That at the special request of several merchants of Quebec, interested in the fisheries and in the exportation of fish, inspectors be appointed at Quebec and Montreal, in virtue of an Act of the Legislature to be passed for that purpose, and that all fish intended for exportation be duly inspected, culled and branded previous to shipment, and that for these purposes, a separate Bill be passed. Your committee report herewith the draught of a Bill prepared for that purpose by their directions.

“4th.—That a moderate premium or bounty be allowed upon the exportation of fish, and that a drawback be allowed upon salt to be used and consumed at the fisheries actually established, or that might hereafter be established in any part or parts of the Counties of Cornwallis or Northumberland, above the limits heretofore by law fixed, authorizing a drawback on salt, and that this be also provided for by a separate Bill, of which your committee also report a draught prepared by their directions.

“5th.—That a drawback of the duty of two and a half per cent., imposed by the Act 53d Geo. III., Cap. 11th, be allowed on all fishing materials going from Québec or Montreal for the use of the fisheries in the said Inferior District of Gaspé, or in the Counties of Cornwallis or Northumberland, and that fishing materials, when imported into the said Inferior District, directly from the United Kingdom, for the use of the fisheries in that District, be exempted from the duty aforesaid, and that this be also provided for by a separ-

ate Bill. Your committee also report the draught of a Bill for this purpose, prepared by their directions.

“The diminution which the Revenues of the Province might experience, by adopting these measures which your committee think it their duty to recommend, would be trifling in amount, and, contrasted with the beneficial results it must produce, your committee are of opinion that it is scarcely possible to devise means by which an equal sum could be employed to better purpose. The Legislature owe it to the hardy and enterprising men engaged in our fisheries, and whose toil and industry are intimately connected with the commercial prosperity of the Province, to afford every succour, however small, that may tend to their comfort and encouragement. To know even that they are objects of the solicitude of the Legislature, must in itself have a tendency to promote the fisheries, by stimulating the perseverance and cheering the hopes of that useful class of men.

“Your committee also recommend to the attention of the House the great and serious inconvenience felt by the coasting trade, in the grievous charges exacted at the Custom House on vessels sailing from Quebec for that purpose, as appears by the evidence offered to your committee by merchants of respectability of Quebec, and which appear to your committee to be such as almost to amount to a prohibition to navigate small craft, or vessels of the size and tonnage in which the coasting trade is, and only can be, conveniently carried on. This your committee are of opinion might be remedied by an Address to His Excellency the Governor in Chief, requesting that His Excellency will be graciously pleased to take such measures as may remove the grievance complained of.

The whole, nevertheless, respectfully submitted.

J. T. TASCHEREAU,  
*Chairman.*”

## LEGISLATION OF 1823 AND 1824.

In keeping with the recommendations of the committee, given above, an Act of the Legislature was passed in 1823 to provide for the inspection of fish and oil exported from Quebec and Montreal. The preamble to this Act set forth that "The Trade of the Province" would be essentially promoted if such fish and fish oil as are well cured and prepared and fit for foreign markets, were distinguished from such as are imperfectly cured and unmerchantable, by an inspection made in virtue of, and under the authority of an Act of the Legislature.

The Act in question provided for the appointment of one or more inspector or inspectors of fish and oil in each of the cities of Quebec and Montreal. The duties of these inspectors were to inspect and classify all fish and oil intended for export, and to mark the result of their inspection and classification on the outside of the barrels or casks in which they were contained. All ship captains were prohibited from accepting for export, any fish or fish oils not inspected and branded as provided by the Act, or any fish otherwise packed than as provided by the Act. Dried codfish, for instance, was to be packed in good and substantial hogsheads or casks made of oak with heads and butts of pine, spruce or other soft wood proper for the purpose, and to be branded on the hogshead or cask with the word "Madeira" if of first quality, and with the words "West India" if of second quality. The hogshead or casks of the first quality were to be 42 inches in length of stave, the heads and butts 32 inches in diameter and to contain at least 8 quintals of fish. The casks of the second class were to have heads and butts of 28 inches in diameter and to contain at least six quintals.

In 1824 many of the suggestions made by the Legislative Committee of 1823 above referred to in regard to the fisheries of what was then known as Lower Canada, were enacted into law by the Act 4, George IV., entitled "An Act for the better regulation of the fisheries in the Inferior District of

Gaspé, and in the Counties of Cornwallis<sup>1</sup> and Northumberland.<sup>2</sup> This Act provided amongst other things that all His Majesty's subjects, shall peaceably have, use and enjoy the freedom of taking bait, and of fishing in any river, creek, harbour or road, with liberty to go on shore on any part within the Inferior District of Gaspé, and in the County of Cornwallis, and in such part of the County of Northumberland as lies to the eastward of Cape Tourmente, for the purpose of salting, curing and drying their fish; to cut wood for making and repairing stages, flakes, hurdles, cook-rooms, and other purposes necessary for preparing their fish for exportation, or that may be useful to their fishing trade, without hindrance, interruption, denial or molestation from any person or persons whomsoever. Provided such river, creek, harbour, or road, or the land upon which such wood may be cut, doth not lie within the bounds of any private property, by grant from His Majesty, or other title proceeding from such grant by His Majesty, or by grant made prior to the year one thousand seven hundred and sixty, or held under and by virtue of any Location Certificate, or Title derived from any such Location Certificate, or in virtue of any title derived under any Act of the Legislature of this Province.

The same liberty of fishing and taking bait had been accorded to His Majesty's subjects, as early as 1788, but only for the purpose of codfishing, and with the right to go ashore for salting, drying and curing their fish on that part of the coast only between Cape Cat (Cap Chat) on the south side of the St. Lawrence and the first rapid in the River Ristigouche "above the islands that lie higher up than the New Mission in the said River."

The preamble to the Act of 1788 declared that "Whereas the Fisheries have ever been found beneficial to the trade of

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<sup>1</sup> What was then known as the County of Cornwallis, included all that part of Lower Canada on the South Shore of the St. Lawrence east of Ste. Anne de la Pocatiere.

<sup>2</sup> What was then known as the County of Northumberland, included all that part of Lower Canada north of the St. Lawrence to the east of the County of Quebec, with the exception of the Isle of Orleans.

the mother country, and as several large vessels have been fitted out and equipped therefrom to carry on the cod-fishery in the Bay of Gaspé, at the Island of Bonaventure, at Percé, and in the Bay of Chaleurs in this Province, in order to encourage that valuable branch of trade, it is enacted by His Excellency the Governor and the Legislative Council," etc.

In the interests of British and Canadian fishermen it was also enacted, by the legislation of 1824 already referred to, "that the Master or Commander of any vessel fitted out from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, or the Dominions thereunto belonging, as well as all other subjects of His Majesty, may take possession of so much of the unoccupied beach, within the aforesaid Inferior District of Gaspé, and in the County of Cornwallis, and in such parts of the County of Northumberland as lies to the eastward of Cape Tourmente, as may be necessary for curing his fish, and preparing it for exportation; and to retain and enjoy the same, so long as he shall not leave it unoccupied for the space of twelve calendar months; in which case it shall be lawful for any person or persons to take possession thereof, in part or the whole, for the same purposes, and on the same condition. Provided that such beach be not private property, by grant from His Majesty, or other title proceeding therefrom, or by grant prior to the year one thousand seven hundred and sixty, or held under and by virtue of any Location Certificate or Title derived therefrom, or in virtue of any Title derived under any Act of the Legislature of this Province. Provided also, that such new occupier shall, when thereunto required by the preceding possessor or his lawful Attorney, the demand being made within one year after possession taken, pay him *à dire d'Experts*, for such parts of the flakes and stages as such new occupier shall have taken possession of. And provided further, that the said preceding possessor, not having been paid as aforesaid, may remove any building, or other improvement, erected or made by him on the unoccupied beach as aforesaid, so that such removal be not made during and before the close of the fishing season, in which the new occupier shall have taken possession."

By the same Act the throwing overboard of "fish-guts, offals or gurry" within the distance of six leagues from the shore was entirely prohibited.

#### FOR THE PROTECTION OF SALMON.

As early as 1807 it was declared illegal for any person or persons to set any nets or haul any seine above the first rapids in the River Ristigouche, or above the first rapids in the Great River Cascapedia, or to assist the Indians to do so, either directly or indirectly.<sup>1</sup>

As long ago as the date of that enactment it was found that the practices therein prohibited, together with a number of others were responsible for a rapid destruction of salmon not only in the rivers mentioned, but also in the estuaries of all the rivers flowing into the Baie des Chaleurs.

Much havoc had been wrought in the rivers in question by the spearing of salmon by torch-light by the Indians. This was entirely prohibited by the Act of 1824, though it still permitted them to take salmon for their own use by spears in the day time. It also rendered illegal the use of weirs or *nishagans*.

Other practices highly prejudicial to the salmon fisheries were frequently resorted to up to that time, such as placing or fastening sunken floats, shingles or billets of wood, or branches of trees in the main channels of rivers, so as to turn the salmon from their ordinary course up the several channels of the rivers, and by that means to drive them thence into the nets. This method of capturing the parent fish while on their way to the spawning grounds was also prohibited by the Act of 1824.

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<sup>1</sup> See Act 47, George III., Chap. 12, Sec. 14.

## FROM 1825 TO 1840.

In 1825 Quebec exported 1,546 casks and 1,414 cwt. of codfish; 416 tierces and 401 barrels of salmon; 435 casks pickled fish; 523 barrels and 165 boxes herrings, and 145 casks of oil. In the same year there were shipped from New Carlisle 28,915 cwt. codfish; 5,475 gallons oil. From Gaspé in the same year 39,053 cwt. codfish and 269 barrels of the same.

In 1828 Quebec exported 1,791 casks of codfish, 434 tierces, 191 barrels salmon, and 612 barrels, 40 half barrels pickled fish, 1,233 barrels herrings. From Gaspé in the same year 27,600 cwt. codfish, and from New Carlisle 21,706 codfish and 269 barrels of salmon were shipped.

In 1830 Gaspé exported 33,731 cwt., 120 barrels, 48 firkins of codfish, and from New Carlisle 16,377 cwt. of codfish, 351 barrels of salmon, and 471 barrels of herrings were exported.

In 1831 Gaspé exported 171 barrels, 48 kegs, 35,216 cwt. codfish; and New Carlisle in the same year, 20,084 cwt. codfish, 47 kegs cod sounds.

In 1833 there were exported from Gaspé 26,751 cwt. and 152 casks, 79 packages of codfish, and 14,018 gallons of fish oil. From New Carlisle in the same year, 20,852 cwt., 55 barrels, 44 half barrels, and 62 kegs of codfish, 610 barrels of herrings.

In 1835 exports from Gaspé were: codfish, 35,144 cwt., and pickled codfish, 105 barrels. From New Carlisle in the same year, codfish, 22,279 cwt., 60 barrels of salmon, and 10 barrels of herrings, 62 barrels pickled codfish.

In 1837 at Gaspé, exports of codfish were 52,544 cwts., 694 barrels, 52 bundles, and 10 boxes. New Carlisle exported in the same year 42,797 cwts. and 45 barrels of codfish, 66 barrels of salmon.

The fisheries of those times on the North Shore still retained considerable proportions. Admiral Bayfield relates in

his journal, under date of June 22nd, 1833<sup>1</sup> in Little Natashquan Harbor: "It is said there are 300 vessels employed in the fisheries on this coast averaging 75 tons each, and manned by 50 men to each six vessels, equal to 2,500 men. Of these one half are French, one fourth British and the rest Americans. Each vessel takes away on an average, 1,500 quintals of codfish, at 112 pounds per quintal. The fish average about four pounds each in weight, being small on this coast."



*Admiral Bayfield.*

#### LABRADOR, 1835-1840.

An apparently well drawn picture of the conditions of affairs on the coast of the Canadian Labrador, three quarters of a century ago, has been left us by Mr. Samuel Robertson, at that time a resident of Spar Point, Labrador. In a paper which was read for him by Dr. Morrin, afterwards Mayor of Quebec, before the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec, on the 16th of January, 1841,<sup>2</sup> though it bears internal evidence of having been prepared some six years previously, —Mr. Robertson said

"For the last ten years there has been a considerable increase both in produce and settlers. There is now in the first hundred and fifty miles from the Province line, about fifty establishments, more or less extensive, chiefly sedentary

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Captain J. G. Boulton, R.N., in his paper on Admiral Bayfield, read before the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec, 4th January, 1909.

<sup>2</sup> Published in the Society's Transactions, Vol. IV., Quebec, 1856.

seal fisheries; of these fifty, or nearly half are in the neighbourhood of Bradore, which is only three miles from Blas Sablon (Blanc Sablon) river, the eastern extreme of the Province.

“Indeed, for some years back, the fisheries have been so crowded thereabouts as to seriously annoy each other, and endless quarrels are going on. So far there has been no blood spilt, but, if government does not soon interfere and enforce some regulations, there is no saying what may happen in a country where the total absence of every mark of authority has bred a contempt for government and laws — where violence is the best title, and *audace* confers most right. To understand the matter I shall describe what a seal fishery is:—

#### ROBERSTON'S DESCRIPTION OF A SEAL FISHERY.

“Seals are migratory animals, issuing out of the north, in the month of December, to winter in the Gulf and River St. Lawrence and returning in June. While on their voyage, they generally congregate in shoals of thirty to one hundred, and commonly touch on several parts of the coast in passing. When a seal fishery is to be established, houses and stores are built, fixtures erected, craft, with nets, hawsers, leads, anchors, etc., to be procured; these, with tools, utensils, and provisions, cost several hundred pounds, sometimes thousands. A solid frame of nets is fixed in a convenient place, into which the seals enter, get entangled among the nets, drown, and are taken ashore in boats. This is the process of seal fishery, as practised in and above the Straits of Belle Isle; now if a very trifling net is placed before the aforesaid frame of nets, it will effectually bar it off as a stone wall; if another frame is placed too near, it will, either partially or wholly do the same. By this it will be seen that all the seal fisheries require a berth of limit.

“The ancient French government decided that this berth should be several leagues, which is much too great, and would

in a great degree, hinder the settlement of the Coast. Now-a-days there are some who say that a few yards is a sufficient berth. However, the old settlers do not choose to submit to these self-made legislators, and thence the cause of the quarrels I mentioned before,—one wishing to retain the profits of his capital and industry, and the other insisting on a part of the harvest which he neither laboured for nor sowed. The foregoing remarks equally apply to the salmon fisheries in the rivers.

“I shall now offer some observations on that part of the coast occupied by the Hudson Bay Company. First, the King’s Domain, properly so called, being leased to the highest bidder by Government for a certain term, ever since the year 1732. This district stretches from the parishes on the North Shore to Cape Cormorant, about 90 leagues, or 270 miles. The lessees from the first have only occupied themselves with the Indian trade and two or three salmon fisheries. The number of establishments in this tract are six, viz. : Tadousac, Portneuf, Jérémie, River Godbout, Seven Isles, and River Moisie. The number of people employed, about twenty, who are servants of the company, and occupied in trading with the Indians. The next tract, usually called the Mingan Seigneurie, which, the occupiers say, extends from Cape Cormorant to a river named Oroman, about 80 leagues or 240 miles (it appears from Bouchette, that the Seigneurie originally extended only to the River Goynish, this is 20 leagues shorter). However, as this Seigneurie, like all others, was granted under certain conditions, which, if not fulfilled, the land should return to the King as if never granted, it is as clearly the King’s Domain now as what is above it, because the Seigneurs have not only not fulfilled their conditions, but have exerted every effort to prevent it; instead of conceding and peopling the Seigneurie, they strive, by threats and otherwise, to keep off all intruders, as they call British fishermen and coasters who touch on these inhospitable shores, and as the lessees of the Domain have also generally held the Mingan Lordship, the two have always been confounded as if held

under the same tenure. The number of establishments on this last tract are four, viz. : Mingan, Napisippi, Natashquan and Musquarow, employing about twenty men. Here we have upwards of 500 miles of coast in the path of the commerce of Quebec, comprising half of the seacoast of the Province of Quebec and its chief harbours, locked up and held desert for the only object of enabling a few adventurers to cheat the miserable aborigines living on this tract, for it cannot be called trade where no competition is allowed.

“I suppose there is no difference of opinion in the policy of having these 500 miles settled as soon as possible, and, as the lease will expire in a year or two, the Government may immediately have the tract surveyed and marked off in lots for location; taking care to retain the chief landing and watering places in the harbours as public property. Some of the west parts, I suppose, may be available for the purposes of agriculture, but by far the greatest part being nothing but granite, can only be valuable as fishing stands—I think half-league lots will not be too large for land of that description. Some of the lots will be taken up immediately, and in due time every place where a boat can be secured will be settled. In a maritime point of view, were these parts settled, it would be highly beneficial to the commerce of the St. Lawrence, while, as a source of produce for export, it would add considerably to the trade and wealth of the Province.”

#### ROBERTSON DESCRIBED BY ABBE FERLAND.

The Abbé Ferland has left us an interesting picture of Samuel Robertson, the author of the lines describing the seal fishery of the North Shore, as he was at the time he visited it in 1858. Robertson was then still living. “A Scotchman by birth,” says Ferland, “Robertson brought to bear upon his business the intelligence and the perseverance which distinguished his countrymen.” It was Adam Lymburner, the old Quebec merchant, who assisted Robertson to establish

himself at Tabatière at the time that he was giving up his own business on the coast. Robertson established there quite a large fishing industry. Seals were so numerous upon the coast at that time that on one occasion he took more than four thousand. He was quite an eccentric character and occasionally ventured upon enterprises which had little more than their peculiarity to commend them. Having noticed that schools of whales frequently passed between two small islands near his post, he made an effort to stop them or at least to check them in their course, so that they might be the more easily killed, by stretching monster nets in the narrow passage. Notwithstanding all his precautions and the strength of the nets and of the cables that held them, the very first whale that came that way carried away with him the whole of Mr. Robertson's costly paraphernalia, as if it had been so much cotton thread.

Robertson's hope that the lease of what was then known as the King's Posts, forming the best part of the Canadian Labrador coast, would not be renewed when it expired a year or two later, was doomed to disappointment.

In 1822 it had been leased to John Goudie, ship builder, of Quebec, and others, who composed the company to which Robertson referred; and in 1842, when this lease expired, the property was re-leased to the Hudson Bay Company for twenty years, at a rental of £600 currency per year, with the exclusive right of trading with the Indians and of fishing for seals.

#### LAWLESSNESS ON LABRADOR.

The condition of lawlessness upon the coast of Labrador which was so bitterly complained of by the Newfoundlanders at the time that the whole coast was under the jurisdiction of the Government of Quebec, showed no improvement under the administration of the Governor of the Island Colony. In fact it would almost appear that the object of some Newfoundlanders in obtaining the control of the coast line of Labrador

east and north of Blanc Sablon was simply to dispossess the Canadian fishermen who had settled on the coast or who might attempt to do so in the future, of everything which they possessed.

Several facts in support of this view are officially on record.

Antoine Talbot, of Berthier, County of Bellechasse, purchased in 1838 at Forteau, on the coast in question, an establishment for the fishing of cod, seal and herring, from one James Dumaresq, for the sum of £40, which was paid in cash. He occupied this property and carried on fishery operations there every year from 1838 to 1846, during which period he was fully recognized by all the fishermen of the coast as the sole proprietor of the station in question. During a good part of this period he made a profit of over £300 per annum, and at the end of eight years he had so much improved his property that it was worth, together with his fishing outfit, fully £1,800. In the spring of 1846, he left Berthier, as usual, for Bradore, taking with him twenty-three men whom he had engaged to work for him.

Upon his arrival, he found one William H. Ellis in possession of his establishment. Ellis had forced the doors of his buildings and chased away his guardian. Talbot called upon him to give up to him his property and his effects; but in return he received only threats. He was even struck by Ellis and told to get out of the way unless he wished to lose his life. Ellis had some sixty men with him. There was nothing left for Talbot to do but to take his men with him on board his schooner. It looked like a case of highway robbery and the plunderer being the stronger, was necessarily left in possession.

In the hope that Ellis would at least leave him his establishment and buildings at the end of the season, he went down early in the following spring, with the men whom he had engaged to help him, and took possession of his buildings, which were not then occupied. He made the necessary repairs and was about ready to commence fishing oper-

ations when Ellis arrived with a number of men and again drove him away. He made an effort to resist and to enter his establishment, but was threatened with instant death by a member of the Ellis band, armed with a gun.

In the spring of 1848, the same thing was repeated, and in August of that year, Talbot boarded H.M.S. Alarm, which happened to be in the locality, to demand justice. The "Alarm" was commanded by the Hon. Granville Gower Loch, C.B. After investigating the complaint, Captain Loch condemned Ellis to replace Talbot in immediate possession of his establishment, and to return to him his effects, which had been taken away. This order was never obeyed, for H.M.S. "Alarm" had left the neighbourhood of Bradore as soon as the hearing of the case and the rendering of the judgment had been completed. It was useless for Talbot to look for justice on the coast, for the nearest law court to Bradore was then at St. Johns, Newfoundland.

The above facts were all sworn to by Talbot before Mr. Louis Fiset, at Quebec, on the 5th of January, 1849, and also presented as evidence before a special committee of the Legislative Assembly.<sup>1</sup>

#### NOT AN ISOLATED CASE.

In addition to the testimony above referred to in the case of Talbot, it was declared that nearly all the owners of fishing vessels in the district of Quebec who had possessed fishing establishments on the Labrador coast were successively compelled to abandon them because of the robberies and violence of all kinds to which they were constantly exposed from the many foreigners who visited the coast every summer; and that although these fisheries were very profitable, it was next to impossible to operate them without being exposed to an almost certain danger of being robbed and perhaps murdered.

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<sup>1</sup> See *Journals of the Legislative Assembly of Quebec*, Appendix L. L. L. L. 1849.

The late Mr. Justice J. S. N. Bossé, then a practising lawyer in Quebec, informed the Parliamentary Committee above mentioned that it was not possible at that time for Canadian fishermen to prosecute their industry on the Eastern portion of the Labrador coast, because they were subject at all times to robbery and other deeds of violence at the hands of foreign fishermen from Newfoundland, St. Pierre and Miquelon, Nova Scotia and the New England States. As Mr. Bossé so well said, no prudent man would risk his capital under such conditions; the consequence being that the ordinary inhabitants of the Labrador coast remained in a state of great poverty, notwithstanding the fact that they had at their door an inexhaustible supply of riches. In concluding the information which he communicated to the committee, Mr. Bossé expressed his belief that Quebec should look to the fisheries of the Gulf, where employment could be found for thousands of people who were then emigrating to the United States, rather than to the timber trade, which was only exhausting the products of the country.

Frs. Buteau told the committee that for several years he had done a large business in the fish which he had brought to Quebec from various parts of the Gulf, chiefly from Labrador, for export to the West Indies, to Spain, to Italy and to South America. He had employed each year a capital of about £6,000. From 1826 to 1837, he had sent each year eight or nine ships and ninety to one hundred men to the fisheries of Labrador. He declared that it was impossible, however, to pursue the industry to due advantage, because of the absence of proper protection. In consequence of this want, he had lost a whole cargo of fish because his men were chased by foreigners from a fishing post which they had occupied for several years previously. He expressed the belief that with proper protection Quebecers would send more than 200 vessels from their district to engage in the rich fisheries of Labrador.

Other deeds of violence and robbery on the Labrador coast were complained of to the committee by François Blais,

who had lived for eight years at Etamamiou, by Michel Blais, by Magloire Gaumont, who had resided on the coast from 1834 to 1845, and by Louis Gaumont, who resided there from 1842 to 1844.

Abbé Ferland reported that Mr. Daniel Cronyn, one of the richest merchants of Halifax, had made a large fortune on the Labrador coast. He was rather a trader than a fisherman, however, sailing from post to post in his schooner, selling his merchandise of every kind and receiving in exchange the salmon, the oil, the seal skins, and the rich furs which were taken about the coasts. The Abbé regretted the fact that the merchants of Quebec had been less successful on the North Shore. He mentioned amongst other Quebecers, Mr. Victor Hamel, who had carried on an extensive trade with the people of Labrador, but without much financial success.

#### CONDITIONS IN 1849.

Mr. Moses H. Perley, in a report on the fisheries of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, which was laid before the House of Assembly in New Brunswick in 1849, gave the following interesting account of the then condition of the fisheries off the coasts of Lower Canada: "From seven to eight hundred sail of American fishing vessels enter the Gulf of Saint Lawrence annually; and scattering over the whole of its wide extent, with little heed of the limits to which they are restricted by Treaty, pursue their business unmolested, and but rarely leave their stations without full and valuable fares.

"The Jersey merchants also prosecute these fisheries with great zeal and assiduity, and, as it is believed, with much profit. They have permanent establishments and fishing stations in Gaspé, Labrador, and Newfoundland, and three or more establishments in New Brunswick; but they by no means confine themselves to any particular locality. They employ upwards of one hundred vessels almost exclusively in carrying the rich products of the deep to various foreign

markets, besides the smaller craft required upon the coast. Two of the leading Jersey firms, Messrs. Robin & Co. and Nicolle Brothers, are supposed respectively to afford employment, directly or indirectly, to nearly one thousand persons.

“The inhabitants of those shores of Cape Breton and Nova Scotia which are within the Gulf, pursue their fisheries in their immediate neighbourhood to a moderate extent; and a few of their vessels visit the Magdalen Islands and the Labrador coast during the season.”

Mr. Perley realized that the cod of the Baie des Chaleurs are the finest in the world, and said, in his report:

“The Baie des Chaleurs cod are more prized in the markets of the Mediterranean, and will, at all times, sell there more readily, and at higher prices, than any other. They are beautifully white; and being very dry, can better withstand the effects of a hot climate and long voyage, than a more moist fish. The peculiarity of their being smaller than the cod caught elsewhere is also of great importance as regards the South American market, for which they are packed in ‘drums’ or tubs of a peculiar shape, for reasons hereafter explained.”

He emphasized very strongly the great damage that was being caused the cod fishery by the wasteful destruction, for use as manure, of the capelin and the herring, upon which the cod chiefly feed.

“There has been great complaint of late years,” he said, “in the upper part of the Baie des Chaleurs, of the falling off in the cod fishery, which is reported to be every year decreasing. At Carleton, Maria, New Richmond, and other places on the Gaspé shore, the fishing establishments are deserted and going to ruin. At these places there was formerly an abundant supply of fish; but the inhabitants now barely catch enough for their own winter store. . . . The decline of the cod fishery in the upper part of the Bay is attributed to the wanton destruction of the proper and natural food of the cod—herring and capelin—which are taken in immense quantities; not for immediate eating, or for curing, or for bait—but for manuring the land!

“In a representation made to the Canadian Legislature by a fisherman of Gaspé, it is stated that this fisherman had seen five hundred barrels of capelin taken in one tide, expressly for manure; and that he had also seen one thousand barrels of herrings caught at one time, and not taken away, but left to rot upon the beach!

“It has been remarked in the Baie des Chaleurs, that owing to this waste of the smaller fish, the cod fishery recedes as agriculture advances. The lazy farmer who thinks he can increase the fertility of his land by a single sweep of his seine, does so at the expense of the fisheries, although a bountiful Providence has furnished the shore with inexhaustible quantities of kelp, seaweed and other valuable manures, which really enrich the soil, while it is admitted that the use of fish greatly deteriorates it.

“The vessels of Gaspé frequently resort to Anticosti, off the eastern end of which island cod are often taken in great abundance and of good quality.”

Describing the fishing methods in vogue in 1849 on the Labrador coast, he said:

“The excellent fishery on the Labrador is prosecuted almost wholly by the Americans, and by vessels from Newfoundland, Canada, and Nova Scotia. The vessels usually employed are schooners of 70 or 80 tons burthen, and they arrive on the coast about the end of May. Every part of the coast is frequented by fishing vessels during the season, from Mount Joli, at the southern boundary of Labrador, to the northern extremity of the Straits of Belle Isle. On reaching the coast the vessel enters some snug harbour, where she is moored, and there remains quietly at anchor until a full fare or the departure of the fish requires the master to seek another inlet, or return home.

“The fishery is carried on entirely in boats, and the number found most useful is one for every thirty tons of the vessel; there are two men to each boat. If fish are in plenty and not too distant from the vessel, they are expected in good weather to get two loads each day. The return of

the boats with fish is the signal for the dressing crew, who remain on board, to commence their operations. If it is intended that the vessel shall remain on the coast until the fish are ready for market, they are taken on shore as caught, and there dressed, salted and dried before being put on board the vessel. But it is the more common practice, especially with vessels from the United States, to salt the fish on board, and take their cargoes home in a green state, drying them after arrival."

Further details in regard to the fisheries of the Baie des Chaleurs were furnished by Mr. Perley in a report laid before the New Brunswick House of Assembly in 1850, as follows:—

#### IN THE BAIE DES CHALEURS.

"Between Maguacha Point, at the entrance of the Ristigouche, on its northern side, and Tracadegash, on the Gaspé shore, a distance of about fifteen miles, is Carleton Bay, which is well sheltered, with eight fathoms water, muddy bottom, and good holding ground. Ordinary tides in this Bay rise and fall eight feet, spring tides ten feet. At full and change of the moon, it is high water at three o'clock.

"Mr. Joseph Marr, the Postmaster at Tracadegash, stated that the cod fishery was formerly prosecuted extensively in Carleton Bay, from the beach, but it has fallen off very greatly. The buildings formerly occupied as "fishing rooms" yet standing, are now deserted, while of others the foundations only are seen. Large quantities of capelin were accustomed to strike in here, but they were used extensively for manure, and but few are now taken. Immense quantities of herrings were also used on this coast for manure, but this has been prevented during the last four years, by an order of the Municipal Council of this division of the County of Bonaventure.

"There are not so many cod now in the upper part of the Baie des Chaleurs (above Bonaventure), as formerly, but more haddock.

“Mackerel of the finest quality were taken off Tracadegash Point during the past season, but only in small quantities, from want of the requisite skill and outfit. Mr. Marr was of opinion that 20,000 barrels of mackerel might have been taken during the season in Carleton Bay by those who understood the fishery. The herring fishing commences here on the 20th August and ends the 20th September; the fish are taken almost at the doors of the inhabitants. This herring fishery could be prosecuted much more extensively than at present if under proper regulations.

“Large numbers of white porpoise were seen in the Baie des Chaleurs the past season, which was an unusual occurrence, none having been seen there for thirty years previously. Their presence was supposed to have had an injurious effect upon the salmon fisheries of the Bay generally, as the white porpoise destroys great numbers of salmon, chases them in all directions, and breaks up their “schulls.” These fish are quite common in the River Saint Lawrence, where they are taken sometimes of the length of 18 feet, in weirs set up for the purpose. They yield much oil of fine quality; their skins are dressed for traces, and the Canadian sail bags are made of them. Mr. Marr exhibited some of these bags, which were very white, thick and soft; they stand much chafing, and effectually resist the wet.

“Mr. Marr stated that the American fishing vessels which frequent this Bay are in the habit of trading at Port Daniel; that they injure the cod fishing by throwing over the bones and offal of the fish they take; and that it would be better to allow them to land, for the purpose of cleaning and curing their fish, as they would then do less injury to the fisheries. The Jersey houses on the coast, he said, discouraged the herring fishery, and all other fisheries, except that for cod.

“Mr. Edward Mann, who resides at Tracadegash, was prosecuting the herring fishing while the writer was there, in September. Mr. Mann is a person of much intelligence and information, and he cured his herrings in a proper manner.

Immediately on being caught the head of each fish was cut off, which allowed all the blood to escape; they were then gutted, cleaned and salted at once. These fish were very firm, admirably white and delicate, and possessed a fine flavour. All the fish which Mr. Mann would thus put up during the season, were engaged at £1 7s. 6d. per barrel, thus affording the most convincing proof that attention to curing alone, was quite sufficient to ensure a market and a high price for these herrings. They were, when caught, precisely the same as the Caraquet herrings, which, from carelessness and mismanagement, are without value.

“Mr. Mann’s herring net had a mesh of two and a quarter inches, and his mackerel net a mesh of three inches; with thick twine the mesh requires to be a little longer. These nets were one hundred meshes deep; but the imported nets, which are one hundred and sixty meshes in depth, are considered the best for fall herrings.

“While the writer was at Tracadegash a fishing schooner arrived from Labrador, having on board three hundred quintals of dry cod, and one hundred barrels of herring. This schooner was intended to return immediately to Labrador to bring back another cargo which had been left there, the fishing having been unusually successful on that coast during the past season, many vessels, as in this case, having made double fares.

“On the beach at Bonaventure Harbour, Messieurs George and Ferdinand Boissonault, natives of Canada, have a neat store and fishing establishment; and the Jersey houses have buildings for receiving and storing dry fish.

“The Messieurs Boissonault stated that there were about one hundred and twenty boats, with two men each, engaged in the cod fishery on the coast between Tracadegash and Bonaventure; and that the catch of these boats would average one hundred quintals of dry and pickled fish each during the season. Not many capelin are now seen at this place, owing to their having been formerly used largely as manure. Several thousand barrels of herrings are yet used annually

at this settlement for the like purpose, and in consequence the cod fishing has greatly fallen off at this place; fishermen who formerly caught three hundred quintals of fish during the season now only get one hundred quintals.

“Several American vessels were off this place during the season, and obtained full fares of mackerel; they injured the cod fishing materially by depriving the fisheries of their bait.

“Messrs. Boissonault strongly advocate the appointment of a Government Inspector, to inspect and brand all fish; as well to give character to the article as to prevent the gross frauds sometimes practised. They mentioned the fact of barrels of fish being sold as containing mackerel, the ends of which only contained that fish, the centre part of each barrel being filled with herring.

“The entrance to Bonaventure Harbour is between two long narrow bars of gravel, one extending from a high bank on the south side, and the other from the flat on the north, upon which stands the village of Bonaventure. There is sufficient depth of water in the gully to admit vessels of two hundred tons at high water. Inside the gully there is an extensive basin, and vessels lie directly against the gravel bank, with three fathoms at low water. The Bonaventure River is about sixty miles in length; it is called by the Indians the ‘Wagamet,’ or ‘Clear Water,’ from the exceeding purity and brilliancy of its waters. There are but few salmon in this river, or fish of any description, which is supposed to arise from the very extraordinary clearness of its waters;<sup>1</sup> and this absence of fish in the Bonaventure distinguishes it from every other river in the Baie des Chaleurs. It may be said to be ‘the exception that proves the rule.’

“Large quantities of sea trout enter the basin of Bona-

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<sup>1</sup> However correct this statement may have been in Perley's time, the conditions now are entirely different from those described by him. The Bonaventure is one of the finest salmon rivers of the continent. Moreover, clear water is favorable to salmon, and in the Grand River of Gaspé, one of the best on the coast, almost every salmon in the pools may often be seen and counted.—E. T. D. C.

venture from the Baie des Chaleurs with every flood tide, and go out again with the ebb; these fish have been designated 'tide trout.' They are of large size, and are readily taken by fly fishers from the sides of the gully, just as the flood begins to make. The sportsman, standing on the bar amid kelp and sea weed, may here have excellent sport for about an hour each tide, until driven off by the advancing waves. He may then follow the fish up to the basin, taking them at every cast, and perhaps conclude the fishing for that tide under the stern or alongside some large vessel loading in the basin. Again, on the ebb tide there is good fishing for a short time, but it is more difficult then to hit off the fish, as they all appear to move out to sea in a body. The writer tried this



HARBOR OF PASPEBIAC.

fishing successfully on the 18th September; the fish were brilliantly white, and in fine condition, very firm and well flavoured. It was stated by an old fly fisher from England, who lives at Bonaventure Beach, that in the early part of the season he took many of these fine fish of the weight of three pounds and upwards. It is said that salmon had been occasionally taken at this place with rod and line, while fishing for tide trout.

“Paspébiac is sixty miles from Dalhousie, and derives its name from an Indian word signifying ‘The Great Landing.’ This landing is a long, curved, gravel spit, which stretches out into the Baie des Chaleurs nearly three miles, forming on one side a tolerable harbour, and nearly enclosing between it and the main land, a barrachois or lagoon, very convenient as a shelter for fishing boats and shallops.

“On the beach at Paspébiac is situate the depot of the wealthy and well known firm of Charles Robin and Co., of Jersey, which was first established here in 1768 by the late Charles Robin, the founder of the firm, and has since gradually increased to its present extent. This excellent establishment comprises a great number of well finished buildings, stores, warehouses, forges, sail lofts, and workshops for every variety of purpose connected with the business, all kept in the neatest possible order. Each building of the establishment is numbered or lettered, and appropriated to a specific purpose; on no account is it permitted to be used for any other. An extensive stock of valuable goods is kept here; and a neat battery of six-pounders is always in good order, and ready for instant use, to protect the establishment. There is a ship yard here, at which the firm have always built one vessel annually, for more than half a century, and from the care taken in selecting the timber, and in building, these vessels have become noted for their extraordinary durability.

“Every spring a whole fleet of ships and brigantines belonging to the firm arrive at Paspébiac from Jersey with double crews, and all the necessary stores for the season. These vessels are moored in front of the beach, their sails are unbent

and stored, their topmasts and yards are struck and housed. The whole of the vessels are placed in charge of one master and crew, who take care of them during the summer, and issue the salt, with which they are ballasted, as it is required. The rest of the masters and crews are dispatched in boats and shallops to various parts of the Bay to fish, and collect fish from those who deal with the firm. When the fishing season is over these vessels depart with cargoes for the West Indies and Brazil, but more frequently to the Mediterranean—to the ports of Messina and Naples. After disposing of their cargoes, they thence take fruit or other freight to England; and fitting out again at St. Heliers, in Jersey, where the heads of the firm reside, they return to Paspébiac in the spring, to resume the business of the season.

“The admirable plan of systematic arrangement at this establishment, the great characteristics of which are ceaseless industry, frugality, and caution—and especially the strict enforcement of the rule that no person shall be retained about the business who cannot be profitably employed—have long secured it the most solid prosperity, and enabled the intelligent and enterprising founder of the firm to bequeath to his family a great amount of wealth.

“On the same beach, adjoining the establishment of Robin & Co., is that of LeBoutillier Brothers, of Jersey, which, though not so extensive as the other, is well and neatly arranged, and kept in excellent order. The three brothers LeBoutillier were trained by the house of Robin & Co., and conduct the fishing business in the same systematic manner as that house, trading to the same ports, and with equal success and profit, but on a less extensive scale. Their whole export of dried fish for the year 1849 was expected to fall little short of 20,000 quintals.

“Mr. LaPerelle, the chief agent of the establishment of Robin & Co., stated that their house would export from 40,000 to 45,000 quintals of dried cod in the season of 1849 to the Brazils and Mediterranean ports. The fish for the Brazils are packed as already mentioned, in ‘drums,’ into

which they are pressed by a powerful screw. Each drum contains exactly 128 lbs. of dry fish, that being the Portuguese quintal; and the drums are shaped to suit the convenience of the Brazilians, who transport them into the interior of South America, slung in pairs upon mules. For the Mediterranean markets, the fish are stowed in the holds of the vessels in bulk, and seldom receive damage, such is the excellent manner in which they are cured and stowed. The best and whitest of the cod are required for the Neapolitan market; for even the lazzaroni of Naples are very particular as to the quality of their fish.

“Mr. LaPerelle said that capelin struck in abundantly at Paspébiac the past season, and were used largely as manure. Herring do not come in here in sufficient numbers to be used for that purpose. At one time during the past summer there were five American schooners at anchor, about a mile from Messrs. Robins’ establishment. They fished at the distance of three miles from the point of the beach for mackerel, and obtained full fares; some of the vessels had nine hundred barrels; while they were fishing they destroyed the shore fishery for cod, as the fishers could not catch a sufficiency of mackerel for bait.

“Among the standing orders of the house of Robin & Co. for the regulation of their fishermen, is one that they shall not split or clean their fish on the fishing grounds, but always bring them to the shore before performing these operations. These people in their own employ are obliged to comply with this order strictly, and they endeavour to induce all others to be guided by it. They conceive it very injurious to the fisheries to throw bones and offal among the fish, and the opinion of the firm on this point, from their long experience and knowledge of the subject, must be deemed quite conclusive.”

#### ABBE FERLAND ON LABRADOR.

The Abbé Ferland visited the coast of the Canadian Labrador in the summer of 1858, and wrote a very pictures-

que account of the country, the people and the fisheries. These interesting details are found in a letter, in the Archbishop's Palace at Quebec, addressed by M. Ferland to the Bishop of Tloa, then the Administrator of the Diocese of Quebec. He stated that up to forty years before his visit there was not a single woman of European origin on the coast of the Lower Canadian Labrador. Most of the men on that coast were fishermen, arrived during the first twenty years of the century from Berthier, *en bas*, and were either unmarried, or had left their wives and families behind, sometimes returning home for the winter, and in some instances endeavouring to save enough to make a home on the coast for those dependent upon them. At the time of Abbé Ferland's visit, he met some forty of these families established on the coast, all of whom were from the South Shore. Only shortly before his visit, there had been quite an immigration to Labrador from the Magdalen Islands.

The deplorable conditions of the land tenure on these Islands, introduced by Admiral Coffin in 1798, and perpetuated by his heirs, entailed such misery upon the land holders that many of them preferred expatriation to the continuance of a life of servitude. A special commission investigated the land tenure conditions of the islands in 1864, but it was not until the passage of the Act 58 Vic., chap. XLV, in 1895, by the Legislature of Quebec that such a measure of relief was accorded to the occupants of lands on the islands as to constitute them the real proprietors of their own lands and homes. Twenty Acadian families from these Islands had come to Pointe des Esquimaux about 1855 and were engaged in fishing and a little farming on their own account. A similar colony consisting of about fifteen families settled at Natashquan in the following year and were expecting to be followed by others.

Faucher de St. Maurice, nearly twenty years later, reported that no less than 300 heads of families had left "Le Royaume du Poisson" as the Magdalens were picturesquely

called, for Kegashka, Natashquan and Esquimaux Point, and that every year others were leaving to join them.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. W. S. Wallace, however, believes that the squatters from the Magdalen Islands on the North Shore did not exceed eighty families.<sup>2</sup>

The Messrs. LaPerelle, the heads of one of the large Jersey fishing establishments had already opened a post at Natashquan and were furnishing employment to some thirty men from Berthier, and other points on the South Shore prior to Abbé Ferland's visit. These men fished on commission. They were boarded and supplied with fishing boats (berges) by the firm and were paid a certain percentage on each hundred of cod caught by them and landed on the shore.

In the early days of each succeeding spring, these pioneer settlers on the North Shore were accustomed to reap a plentiful harvest from their seal hunts on the ice floes of the Gulf. Though extremely dangerous, this occupation was most exciting and exhilarating.

In the very year of Abbé Ferland's visit, two schooners set out from Natashquan in the month of April on the usual sealing expedition. Each carried a crew of sixteen men, one from each of as many families. After sailing for sixty miles, they saw in front of them large fields of ice, literally covered with seals. Having moored their vessels to the ice field, it was only the work of a few minutes to climb on to it and to commence their destructive operations. Armed only with a thick stick, they approached the nearest seals, which were easily killed by a single blow over the nose. Care has to be taken in these seal hunts to dispatch the animals nearest to the edge of the ice, for if any of these take to the water, the remainder of the herd endeavour to wobble after them. So long, however, as the seals in front remain still, on the ice, whether in life or death, those behind them remain practically motionless, and thus a whole herd may often be

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<sup>1</sup> *Promenades dans le Golfe Saint-Laurent, par Faucher de St. Maurice.*—Quebec, 1874.

<sup>2</sup> Introduction to Grenfell's *Labrador.*—New York, 1910, p. 31.

come the prey of the hunters. For two days the crews of these two schooners continued their hunt, until they had loaded both vessels with as many of the carcasses as they could possibly hold. Though they carried away with them 18,000 dead seals, several thousands were left alive on the ice. The hunting party reached port in safety after an absence of twelve days, the extent of their triumph being only limited by the carrying capacity of the schooners, and by the fact that some of their oil was wasted because of an insufficiency of casks at the settlement to contain it.

At least three varieties of seals frequent the waters of Newfoundland, Labrador and the Gulf of St. Lawrence, the harbor or bay seal (*phoca vitulina*), of an average length of three or four feet; the harp seal (*Phoca Groenlandica*), averaging five to six feet long, and the hooded seal (*Phoca leonina*), this latter often attaining a length of nine feet and more. The harbor seal is common in the mouths of the rivers flowing into the Gulf and lower St. Lawrence, and is often taken in nets. Commercially it is of small importance.

The harp and the hooded seal are the objects of the great spring seal hunt; the more common, and at the same time the more valuable being the harp seal. It is so called from its broad curved line of connected dark spots proceeding from each shoulder, and meeting on the back above the tail, forming a figure something like an ancient harp.

The hood seal is much larger than the harp. The male, called by the hunters "the dog-hood," is distinguished from the female by a singular bag or hood of flesh on his nose. When attacked or enraged, he inflates this hood, so as to cover the face and eyes, and it is strong enough to resist seal shot. When thus protected, he can only be killed by shooting him in the neck and the base of the skull. The dog-hood fights desperately in defence of his mate and young ones, and, if they are killed, he becomes furious, inflates his hood, while his nostrils dilate into two huge bladders. His appearance is now terrific, and with uncouth, floundering leaps he rushes on his foe. Instances have occurred where a fight between

an old dog-hood and five or six men had lasted for an hour, and sometimes a hunter is fearfully torn, and even killed, in the encounter.

In illustration of the enormous quantities of herring which were taken off the North Shore, Abbé Ferland mentions the fact that at Gros Mecatina he saw four to five hundred barrels of them captured at one haul of a seine.

The Abbé also described the killing of a large sulphur-bottom whale which he saw towed into Tabatière. It had been killed from a schooner by Captain Coffin with a single blow of the lance and was eighty feet in length. It was expected to furnish eighty barrels of oil, which was then selling at \$12.00 to \$16.00 per barrel.

At the time of Abbé Ferland's visit, five or six whaling vessels frequented the Labrador coast. The captains and first officers of these boats belonged to Gaspé, and were the second generation of these hardy men who had been engaged in the hazardous industry for sixty years before. Their vessels were large and strong schooners, capable of riding out a heavy storm, and carried with them, suspended at their sides, two whaling boats ready to be launched at the first view of a whale. When the waves were high it was sometimes necessary to abandon the whale which may have been killed, for fear that its great weight would cause the loss of the schooner. Before sending it adrift, it was usual to fasten a cable round its body and to attach the other end to a buoy, to assist in finding it again. Notwithstanding this precaution, it often happened that the whale was lost through the breaking of the cable in storms, or through drifting away beyond recovery.

#### FISHERIES PROTECTION SERVICE.

In 1852 Dr. Pierre Fortin was appointed in charge of a new service known as that of "Fisheries Protection." He was given command of an armed steamer—the *Doris*, which was afterwards replaced by the armed schooner *La Canadienne*. In the latter mentioned vessel he was wrecked

during a severe storm on the North Shore of the St. Lawrence in 1861.

Dr. Fortin was a native of Vercheres and an M.D. of McGill University. He was one of the physicians on duty at the Quarantine Station, Grosse Isle, during the ship fever years of 1847-48.

Appointed Stipendiary Magistrate for Lower Canada on the 20th April, 1852, at a salary of \$600 per annum, the amount of his stipend was gradually increased, as the importance and value of his services became appreciated, until 1856, when it was made \$1,200. Down to the year 1860, Dr.



*Hon. Dr. Fortin.*

Fortin's expenses were paid through the Provincial Secretary's Department and the Board of Public Works, and even after that date, the care and fitting of the vessels used in the service, and the control of expenses attending the same remained with the Department of Public Works, while certain extra duties as Stipendiary Magistrate were performed by him under orders from the Provincial Secretary's Department. Subsequent to 1860, Dr. Fortin's du-

ties were largely increased. Besides being Stipendiary Magistrate, charged with enforcing the special provisions of the Fisheries Act, supplying magisterial authority throughout the unorganized portions of Lower Canada, aiding both the customs, as Preventive Officer, and also the local authorities, keeping down illicit traffic in ardent spirits and maintaining order amongst the maritime and fishing population and the foreign fishing vessels frequenting the Gulf of St. Lawrence, it became his duty as a Fishery Officer to issue season fishery licenses and licenses of occupation as they were then called, and to collect the fees, adjudge differences, maintain order at the fishery stations, protect the Crown lessees and licensees, visit the Indian settlements, procure statistics of

fish and the fish-oil trade, and of the condition of settlers and fishermen in the various fishing districts, etc.

In 1860 he utilized the steamer *Napoleon III.* for his spring and summer trip in connection with the lighthouse service, which it performed for the Board of Public Works. The autumn trip was again per schooner *La Canadienne*. It was while returning in the month of November of the following season, on board the same vessel, from taking the census on the North Shore, that *La Canadienne* was wrecked.

From 1867 to 1874, and again from 1878 to 1887, Dr. Fortin represented the County of Gaspé in the House of Commons at Ottawa, and from 1887 to the time of his death in 1888, he was a member of the Senate. He also represented the County of Gaspé in the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Quebec from 1867 to 1878, and was Speaker of that House from 1873 to 1876. From February, 1873, to September, 1874, he was also Commissioner of Crown Lands of the Province of Quebec.

#### ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FISHERIES BRANCH.

Meanwhile, in 1858, the Fisheries Branch of the Department of Crown Lands of the Old Province of Canada was organized, with Mr. W. F. Whiteher at its head, authorized to conduct the entire business relating to fisheries and riparian lands, islands, beaches, deep water lots, rivers, etc., disposable in connection therewith, throughout Upper and Lower Canada.

This original Fisheries Branch of the Crown Lands Department was organized in virtue of the Acts 20 Vict., ch. 21, and 22, Vict., ch. 86, assented to on the 10th June, 1857, and the 16th August, 1858, respectively, the latter of which authorized the Governor-in-Council to grant special fishing leases and licenses on lands belonging to the Crown, for any term not exceeding nine years, and also to make necessary regulations for the better management and protection of the Fisheries. The appointment of superintendents of Fisheries

for both Upper and Lower Canada was duly authorized by both Acts, and provision was also made in the Act of 1858 for the payment of fishing bounties.

The Hon. Joseph Cauchon was the father of the Fishery Act of 1857, and the Hon. L. V. Sicotte of that of 1858.



*Hon. L. V. Sicotte.*

Mr. Whitcher was first appointed to the permanent staff of the Crown Lands Department on the 1st April, 1847, at 5s. 6d. per diem, his salary being gradually increased to \$1,060 at the time of his appointment as head of the Fisheries Branch. He continued to occupy this position until several years after Confederation, having been attached to the Dominion Department of Marine and Fisheries at its formation in 1867.

Mr. S. P. Bauset, who had served in the Deputy-Surveyor-General's Branch from the 24th of April, 1854, was transferred to the Fisheries Branch in May, 1861, as draughtsman, copyist and French translator.

Messrs. John McCuaig and William Gibbard were given charge of the fisheries in Upper Canada, so far as field work was concerned.

Mr. Richard Nettle had been appointed Superintendent of Fisheries for Lower Canada on the 15th June, 1857, under the act of that year at a salary of \$1,200 per annum. For the first few years of his connection with the Department, Mr. Nettle visited many of the North Shore salmon rivers, including the Godbout, Bersimis, Moisie and Mingan, as well as those of the Gaspé district and several of the inland lakes. In May, 1860, a division of labor was, however, made by a departmental order, for the purpose of obviating confusion and for further efficiency and economy. The Superintendence of the Gulf Division from Pointe des Monts to Cap Chatte, Gaspé, Baie des Chaleurs, etc., was assigned to Captain Fortin, and the Upper St. Lawrence tributaries in Lower Canada, its interior lakes, etc., to Mr. Nettle.

## MR. RICHARD NETTLE.

Of English birth, Mr. Nettle first saw the light of day in 1812. He died in Ottawa in May, 1905, at the age of 93. He was an angler from his youth, and his first salmon was killed in the Devonshire Tamar, before the drainage from mines in the vicinity had killed off all the salmonidæ inhabiting that beautiful stream.

Entering the Royal Navy at an early age, he first visited Quebec on H.M.S. Hastings, which conveyed Lord Durham and suite to Canada. He returned to Canada in 1842, taking up his residence in Quebec as a school teacher, and early in 1857, the year in which he was appointed Superintendent of Fisheries, he published his attractive book on "The Salmon Fisheries of the St. Lawrence," which was dedicated, by permission, to the Governor-General, — Sir Edmund Head, Bart., himself much interested in the then existing necessity for adequate protection of our Salmonidæ, and also an enthusiastic salmon fisherman.



*Sir Edmund Head,  
Governor-in-Chief.*

Embodied in Mr. Nettle's book is an admirable paper on "The Decrease, Restoration and Preservation of Salmon in Canada," which was read before the Canadian Institute in 1856 by the Rev. Dr. Adamson, then Chaplain of the Legislative Council of United Canada, and an eminent authority on salmon problems, who was also the author of "Salmon Fishing in Canada," edited by Col. Sir James Alexander, and published in London in 1863.

## HON. JOSEPH CAUCHON AND THE FISHERIES.

In the same year that Mr. Nettle's book appeared, the Hon. Joseph Cauchon, then Commissioner of Crown Lands, drew public attention to the importance of the Canadian fisheries in his annual report to the Governor-General.

“In a country like Canada,” he said, “presenting so many facilities and inducements to agricultural industry, it is not surprising that her fisheries should attract little attention excepting in particularly favorable localities, but they are of more importance than is generally supposed, and the enactments from time to time for their protection indicate a sense of the danger of their destruction and the necessity for their preservation: . . . . .

“In Lower Canada, by the census of 1851-2, the number of barrels of fish cured was 80,306, of these, 63,932 barrels were cured in the County of Gaspé. This quantity evidently includes the dried cod fish of which each cwt. would be equal to a little more than a barrel, 6,354 in Bonaventure, to which should be added about 40,000 cwt. of dried fish, 6,423 in Rimouski, and 1,466 in Kamouraska, shewing the comparative fishing advantages of these counties lying in the Gulf and salt water portions of the River St. Lawrence.

“In the County of Sherbrooke 970 barrels were cured, in Saguenay 443, in St. Hyacinthe 165, and in Montmorency 156 barrels; leaving 397 as the total number cured in the remaining twenty-eight Counties.

“Apart from the fisheries of the sea board and Lower St. Lawrence, the quantity of fish cured in Lower Canada is not so great as might have been expected.

“The products of the Salmon Fisheries of Lower Canada have been steadily decreasing. The total number of barrels of salmon taken on all the coasts of Canada in the Lower St. Lawrence and the Gulf, including the Canadian Coast of Labrador, during the year 1856 did not exceed 2,500 barrels. The decrease in this branch of the fisheries has been very great. To give a striking instance, the River St. Paul, on the coast of Labrador, which at one time yielded fourteen hundred barrels of salmon in a single year, now yields only ninety barrels.

“It is evident that if measures be not taken of a more effective nature than any that have hitherto been adopted, for its protection, this valuable branch of fishery will come to an end.

“The enactment of laws will avail nothing unless they provide such superintendence as will be sufficient to carry them into effect.

“For the preservation of our fisheries of every kind, it is desirable that such superintendence should be established and organized in such a manner as to ensure the law being carried into effect in all parts of the Province where there are fisheries of any considerable value. Our cod, mackerel and herring fisheries as well as our salmon fisheries require such supervision for the preservation of the fish and the checking of unlawful fishing.

“Our salmon fisheries have become so reduced on some of our rivers from the scarcity of the fish as to render it advisable to adopt the system of artificial fish-breeding as a means of restoring them to their former value. As the application of this system is simple and has been attended with success in European countries, it might, under the superintendence proposed, be carried out with equal success in our rivers.

“To assist in forming an idea of the value of the fisheries of the coasts of Canada on the St. Lawrence and Gulf, I would remark that during the summer season six or seven hundred American schooners resort to our coast on the Gulf to carry on various fisheries, especially that of mackerel. These schooners are about eighty tons average burthen (carrying ten men), and are worth from six to seven thousand dollars each.

“Besides these, from three to four hundred schooners from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick resort to the Magdalen Islands and the Canadian coast of Labrador, chiefly to carry on herring and cod fishing.

“To these may be added the six hundred resident seal fishers on the coast of Labrador who take about seven thousand seals annually.

“The value of the fisheries prosecuted on our coast is probably about \$400,000 annually.”

It was during the session of Parliament at which the

Report just quoted from was laid upon the table of the House, that Mr. Cauchon introduced the Fishery Act of 1857.



*Hon. Joseph Cauchon.*

Largely, no doubt, as a result of Mr. Richard Nettle's agitation of the matter in the press and otherwise, and of the abuses which he signalized in his book,—published in the early part of 1857— and also because of the strong personal interest taken in the matter by the Governor-General, and by the Hon. Mr. Cauchon, Commissioner of Crown Lands, Parliament was inundated with petitions from various parties in different parts of the country, praying for the enactment of a law for the protection of salmon and trout in the River St. Lawrence and its tributaries.

Père Arnaud, the well-known missionary to the Montagnais Indians, and some of his flock, were among the signers of a petition to this effect, dated from Escoumains, while the Hurons were not behind their Montagnais cousins in the matter, and forwarded a similar petition signed by Paul Tahourhenché and others.

Père Arnaud's influence with the Montagnais Indians was enormous, and though he has now been living in retirement at the house of the Oblats in St. Sauveur, for many years, and is eighty-six years of age, his name and his memory are held in great veneration by the native tribes of Labrador, among whom he has lived and labored for well over half a century, enduring for the greater part of a long lifetime, the hardships, in all extremes



*Rev. Père Arnaud, O.M.I.*

of weather of the roving savages, in order that he might have the opportunity of ministering to their spiritual necessities.

Mr. Joseph K. Boswell, of Quebec, who controlled the salmon fishing of the Jacques Cartier River for so many years, and who was one of the leading sportsmen of Canada, Mr. John Nairne, Seigneur of Murray Bay, Mr. Arch Campbell and others signed petitions similar in import to those above mentioned, while Mr. Randall Jones prayed for an additional coast guard on the Canadian Labrador, claiming that American fishermen, in violation of the treaty of 1854-5, between Her Majesty's Government and that of the United States, had inflicted great injury upon his fishing property and industry on the North Shore of the St. Lawrence, for which he demanded compensation.



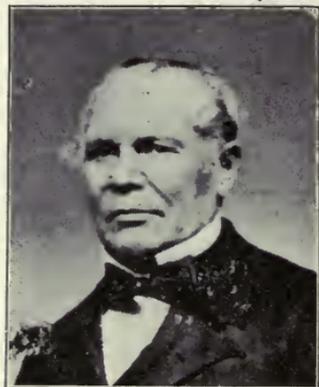
*Mr. Joseph K. Boswell.*

Commander Fortin, as Stipendiary Magistrate for the protection of the fisheries and fishermen of the Gulf and Lower St. Lawrence from the interference of foreigners, and for the maintenance of law and order in those waters and on the adjacent coasts, had also urged in his report of his operations for 1856, the passing of a general law to regulate the fisheries throughout the Province.

Mr. M. H. Perley, perhaps one of the most enlightened authorities on matters pertaining to fish and fishing which New Brunswick has produced, had published, it is true, several years previous to the appearance of the Hon. Mr. Cauchon's report and of Mr. Nettle's work, almost equally strong appeals for the protection and restoration of the salmon fisheries, in his very valuable reports on the fisheries of that province; but his work made no reference to the salmon streams tributary to the St. Lawrence.

## THE FIRST CANADIAN FISH HATCHERY.

Not only because he was the first Superintendent of Fisheries for Lower Canada, nor yet alone because of his authorship, is Mr. Nettle's personality of interest to friends of the salmonidæ and of the preservation of their Canadian species. He will be better remembered as the father of fish



*Sir E. P. Taché.*

culture in Canada. In the year of his appointment as Superintendent of Fisheries (1857), he established and successfully operated the first Canadian fish hatchery. Permission to incur the necessary expense for this work was given him by Sir E. P. Taché, Prime Minister, in answer to written application therefor. It was at first a small affair. One, who saw it, wrote to the writer of this report that it was not more than twice as large as a billiard table. It was situated in a house near the corner of St. Ursule and St. John Streets, in the city of Quebec. From this small beginning dates the history of fish culture in the Dominion of Canada. Seven or eight years after Mr. Nettle's first successful experiments, others were made by Mr. Samuel Wilmot, who subsequently became also an officer of the Fisheries Department, and in 1876 was made Superintendent of fish breeding.

Mr. Nettle planted several different lots of fry in the lakes and streams in the vicinity of Quebec, in 1857 and following years, his first successful experiments having been made within four years of those of Dr. Theodotus Garlick,—the first successful hatcher of fish fry in the United States. The first edition of Dr. Garlick's book on fish culture, containing an account of his experiments, was issued in 1857, the same year as Mr. Nettle's, and from the paper, reprinted in it, which Dr. Garlick read before the Cleveland Academy

of Natural Science, Feb. 17, 1854, we learn that some of the first eggs with which he experimented, were obtained by him in 1853 from Port Stanley, in Canada.

Nettle, like Garlick, was an extremely modest man, and were it not for the protests of his friends, who were acquainted with the facts of his fish-cultural work, the fame, which is justly his, would have gone to others. Wilmot developed and did much to further the work of fish culture in the Dominion, but Nettle and not Wilmot was the father of Canadian fish culture. Mr. Livingston Stone is authority for the statement that Seth Green was the father of American Fish culture, and undoubtedly he was the first to succeed, in 1867, with the hatching of shad. But his earliest fish cultural operations, which were conducted at Caledonia, N. Y., dated only from the early sixties, and were consequently subsequent to those of both Garlick and Nettle

Nettle, in his younger days, was quite a famous angler. As a devotee of Izaak Walton, the waters were few around, above



*Paul Tahourhenché.  
(See next page.)*

or below Quebec which knew him not. It may sound strange now-a-days to hear that the River St. Charles, which joins the St. Lawrence at Quebec, was one of his favorite haunts, and that many a lordly salmon fell a victim of his rod between Scott's Bridge and the Lorette Falls, though the former is only a mile from the city limits, and the Falls not more than seven. But this was over half a century ago.

The Indian Tahourhenché told Mr. Nettle that his grandfather generally killed 150 to 200 salmon during the season in the St. Charles, with the fly, while an old resident on the river claimed that his average catch was about seventy during the season. Since that time the salmon had apparently deserted the river, but had evidently not been completely exterminated, for about the year 1850 they again appeared, though not by any means in their former abundance, and the greatest number Mr. Nettle killed during a summer, fishing some three evenings in a week for a month or less, was from fifteen to eighteen.

In 1896, Mr. Nettle sent the following account of his early fish-cultural operations to the writer of this report:—

“In 1857, previous to my first inspection of the fisheries, I wrote to the Government for the necessary authority to construct an Ovarium (or Hatchery) in a building attached to my office in Quebec. On my return from the Gulf in the fall, I found official letters awaiting me at the Saguenay, with one dated 15th August, from Sir Etienne Taché, Premier and commissioner, sanctioning the construction of these novel works. It was late in the season before the Ovarium was completed, hence came the difficulty of procuring ova to stock the spawning boxes. By dint of perseverance, however, I was enabled to procure some very healthy trout, from the Jacques Cartier, between St. Catherines and the bridge at



*Mr. Richard Nettle.*

'Dery's.' The ova from these fish was carefully impregnated and deposited in the spawning boxes. These boxes had been carefully prepared with sand and gravel, and the water from the Aqueduct was made to flow over the boxes, from a fall of about one foot; thus giving to the ova, the aeration so essential to vitality. From the boxes the water flowed over an artificial pass, and thence to the pond, where shells, rocks and aquatic plants, gave to the young fish a hiding place and shelter.

"Anxiously day and night did I watch the progress of the first experiment in pisciculture in Canada, and I left no stone unturned to lead to its successful issue. With the aid of a powerful microscope, I was enabled to view the various changes in the ova, and the formation of the embryo, into the developed fish.

"With what delight did I first observe the formation of the eye, the vertebræ, the fins and the blood vesicles, until at the expiry of sixty-four days, the first of the ova burst into life—strange looking objects, that bore but little resemblance to the 'thing of beauty' that they afterwards became.

"I need scarcely say that this novel experiment attracted all classes of people to the 'Ovarium,' among whom were many skeptics, and not until I brought the half-formed embryo under the powerful lens and showed them the pulsations of the fish, did their skepticism abate. They then became as zealous as the most ardent.

"For the first month but little perceptible change could be observed in the 'nondescript,' if I may so call them and they remained almost dormant, half imbedded in sand and gravel, nor was it until the absorption of the umbilical sac, the nourishment from which, gave life, vigor and change of form, that the fish clearly developed. They could then be seen, darting eagerly, from one place to another, evidently in search of food which I had taken the precaution to prepare for them, consisting of hard-boiled (Pulverized) liver, and later on, the small worms from the half rotten tan-pits.

. . . . . The most interesting sight was to see the little

'fry' wending their way up the fish-pass, holding their own, against the stream that flowed from the boxes. The growth of the fish was very slow for the first three months, but afterwards they grew more rapidly, and when in the fall I had to prepare for the salmon ova, I gave the young trout to the late John Gilmour, Esq., to stock some waters at Marchmount, near Quebec. Some of the fish had attained a growth of three and a half to four inches and they were almost as broad as they were long, owing to care and good feeding.

"For the first season's operations, I had endeavored to procure salmon spawn from the river Moy in Ireland, but the good offices of a kind friend, Mr. Holliday, the proprietor of the Salmon fisheries on the 'Moy' were rendered abortive, by circumstances beyond control, and the ova reached me in an imperfect state, to our great disappointment.



*Mr. John Holliday, Sr. (1)*

"In the fall of 1858, having had the Ovarium perfectly cleansed from all impurities, and having made some slight alterations in the 'fish way,' I made preparations to procure salmon ova, from the lower reaches of the Jacques Cartier, near 'Les Ecureuils.' I engaged a very intelligent habitant, who lived near the river, to watch the fish and notify me

when he saw the salmon preparing their beds. The man entered heartily into his work, as he had seen the season's operations with the trout spawn. It is needless to give a detailed statement of the various seasons' operations. Each

<sup>1</sup> Mr. John Holliday, Senior, whose picture appears on this page, leased the fishing rights in the tidal waters of the Moisie River in 1859 and remained connected therewith up to the time of his death, the fishing rights in question being thereafter controlled by members of his family up to 1912. Mr. Holliday, Senior, who had had considerable experience of Salmon rivers in Ireland, conducted a hatchery on the bank of the Moisie for the purpose of maintaining a regular supply of fish in the river.

fall I procured ova and milt from very fine salmon, taken at Les Ecureuils, and the boxes were well stocked with healthy and carefully impregnated ova, which I transferred by steamer from Portneuf to the Ovarium, as being safer than land carriage and less liable to friction. The success with the salmon ova, each season, was everything that could be hoped for, and at least seventy per cent. of the spawn vivified and became young fish. There was an exception, however, in one season's operations, and it baffled my every endeavor to discover the reason of ill-success. Whether it arose from natural causes or from any deleterious matter that might have found its way into the spawning boxes I was unable to determine. The conditions of the whole operations were the same as in former years, the water was kept flowing continuously into the boxes, and up to a short time before, the spawn looked very healthy and full of life, and the percentage of loss from 'parasites' was even less than at any other season. The time of incubation had fully arrived, and I became very anxious. I waited some time after the usual period and then examined the spawn through my powerful microscope, bringing the ova under its full power, in a glass dish covered with water. The result of our observations led to the conclusion that one of two things had happened, viz., that either the metal lining of the boxes had acted injuriously on the ova, or that lime water had, by some mysterious means, found its way into the boxes, and had tended to harden the outer shell of the spawn. Such was the opinion formed after a close examination with the microscope, and to test the matter I performed the 'Cesarian operation' by piercing the outer shell with a sharp pointed needle, taking care not to puncture any vital spot. By this means I liberated quite a number of little prisoners, but still there was a large percentage of loss, as many of them were dead 'before delivery.'

"This partial failure of the ova to mature, under the favorable conditions they were in up to the last stage of maturity and the dread of some other similar occurrence caused much anxiety. I began to realize the fact that, under

no conditions could success be assured, neither from accident nor from any other cause, and I hesitated to incur the risk of another mishap. Fortunately the operations of the Fishery Act were such as to give every hope of the rivers soon becoming well stocked with salmon. The purpose I had in view in drafting the Fishery Act, was, by careful legislation and by strenuously carrying out the provisions of the law, to restore the salmon fisheries and to bring about order where chaos reigned supreme.

“The reports that I had received from the overseers and others were very favorable, one of them, in 1861, wrote me as follows:—

‘Knowing that your best endeavors are used to increase the fishing in various rivers, I am happy to inform you that the salmon fishing in my district (the Mingan division) has been splendid, especially in the St. John and the Magpie, and exceeds anything that had taken place in these rivers within the recollection of the oldest fisherman, and the people are inclined to think that the abundance is the good effect of the fishery laws, which prohibits the capture of the salmon on their spawning beds, while the fishermen begin to perceive with gratitude that the law was made for their benefit.’

‘Sir Edmund Head, who had given much attention to the subject of the protection of the fisheries both in New-Brunswick and in Canada, a short time before he left Quebec, said: We have fished the Mingan this season, and I am glad to say you have affected a great change in the salmon river; the fish are in abundance’; while Dr. Adamson, the *primus* of amateur fly fishermen on his return from the Godbout, in 1862, exclaimed, ‘Nettle, the rivers are full of fish and the salmon fry are in myriads.’ The river Moisie that in 1859 had only yielded some 300 barrels of salmon, in 1862 gave a return of 800 barrels. Reports from other rivers were



Rev. Dr. Adamson.

equally favorable. This satisfactory state of things was only what had been anticipated, and the value of the Act and the great benefits that had accrued from its operations had been acknowledged far and near.

“In 1859 came the advent of the Government from Toronto to Quebec, and our then Commissioner, the Hon. P. Vankoughnet, wished me to invite the Members of Parliament to visit the Ovarium and to see the process of the Artificial Propagation of Salmon, so that they might be able to give their constituents some idea of the ‘Modus operandi.’ All the members took a lively interest in the operations and watched the proceedings with something akin to enthusiasm.

“Among the frequent visitors were the Hon. James Ferrier and his son, and they asked me if I could oblige them with some of the salmon ova to place in their aquarium in Montreal. I had great pleasure in complying with their request, and a few days after, I sent two or three hundred by rail to Montreal, where they arrived without injury, and were placed by Mr. Ferrier in one of their beautifully prepared aquairia each of which was planted with various Alga and stocked with many species of fish. In acknowledging the receipt of this novel consignment, Mr. Ferrier stated that the morning after their arrival the most of the ova had burst their bonds, and were swimming about quite lively. I was pleased to find that they had arrived safe, as it was the first attempt to transport the ova to any considerable distance.

“And now comes a most singular affair. About two months after I had sent them, I received a letter from Mr. Ferrier, Jr., stating that all the pet salmon which had been doing so well had been devoured by a large gold fish, that was kept in an adjoining Aquarium. Each Aquarium (and there were more than a dozen), was divided by glass walls, so to speak, which were about three feet by four feet, with a depth of some twenty inches. We must presume that seeing the young fry each day through the glass division, reason, or instinct, if you will, led the gold fish to devise a scheme for

their capture. Voracious to a degree, he leaped from his own aquarium into that of the young fry and made a clean sweep of them, with one exception, and that one was minus a pectoral fin. On my visit to Montreal a short time after, the little fish, minus the fin, was shown me by Mr. Ferrier, in a globe, where it was kept as a curiosity.

“Another very curious incident occurred while I was procuring salmon ova in the Jacques Cartier River in 1859. My men were engaged in procuring ova, and they called out to me that there was a large trout following the salmon, which at my request they captured and brought on shore. I thought from its bulk that it had been preying largely on the salmon ova, and I immediately ripped it up with care, over a tub in which there was a quantity of salmon milt. The trout had swallowed from three to four hundred salmon ova, a large portion of which was not at all injured, or appeared not to be. These were carefully manipulated, the injured ones removed, and the rest placed by me in a separate receiving box in my Ovarium at Quebec. In due course of time these with others, when they became young salmon, were placed in the River St. Charles, where in some seasons I had taken as many as twenty salmon in a week, one of them nineteen pounds weight, with the fly.”

#### FISHERY GUARDIANS APPOINTED.

Under the authority of the Fisheries Act (22 Vict., cap. 86), fifteen local agents or guardians, along the coasts of the Lower St. Lawrence and Gulf were appointed in 1859, 1860 and 1861, at salaries ranging from \$40 to \$100 per annum.

Mr. Nettle, in one of his first reports as Superintendent of Fisheries, urged the cancellation of the then existing fishing rights in the territory known as the King's Posts, and the leasing of individual fishing stations therein, and in fact on the whole of the North Shore, for a term of five years, by public competition and tender.

The fishing in the rivers on the King's Posts had been leased to the Hudson Bay Company in 1852 for a term of 21 years, but the lease was terminable after a notice of eighteen months. This notice was given to the Company on Mr. Nettle's recommendation, and in 1859 new leases to the number of 163 were granted for net fishing stations on the North Shore, and a few angling privileges were also sold for a term of years.

Up to this time the condition of the salmon fisheries of that Shore were most deplorable. The monopoly enjoyed by the Hudson Bay Company was a most unpopular one. The Superintendent of Fisheries complained of the destructive methods of the Company's employes. The Company's officer in charge of the Mingan station wrote that "the salmon fisheries in 1858 have completely gone to the bad. All the rivers have been entered and held by force of arms. Some of the people at Chicaska threatened to shoot Mr. Doré for endeavoring to prevent them from setting their nets across those of the Company." Mr. Nettle declared that "the many hundreds of nets that have been placed in the rivers and bays, together with the vile practice of spearing, have almost totally destroyed them."

He realized the fact, however, that with the withdrawal of the Hudson Bay Company it was necessary to provide some protection for the salmon rivers of the coast, and hence his suggestion, wisely adopted,—for a system of individual fishing leases. In support of this suggestion he wrote as follows:—

"Unproductive and wasteful as their mode of fishing is, *the protection the Hudson's Bay Company affords is the only present safeguard for the existence of Salmon in Canada.* I am persuaded that *were that protection withdrawn for ONE SUMMER, without the substitution of some other as effective, this noble fish would be utterly exterminated from our country.* Fishermen from Gaspé, Rimouski, New Brunswick, Labrador, Newfoundland, the Magdalen Islands and the United States—whose numbers and skill would enable them to

do thoroughly what the servants of the H. B. C. from their paucity and inexperience do ineffectually—would swarm up our rivers, and with nets, spears, torches, and every other engine of piscine destruction, would kill, burn and mutilate every fish that ventured into the rivers. Already has this been attempted. For the last two or three years schooners from the United States have regularly arrived in the salmon season at the Bay of Seven Islands, their crews well armed, and have set their nets in the river Moisie, in spite of the officers of the H. B. C. Similar circumstances have occurred at other fishing stations in the tributaries of the St. Lawrence; no means, that I am aware of, having been resorted to for punishing the aggressors or preventing a repetition of their outrages. The River Bersimis has, this year, (1856) been altogether in the hands of a speculating and rapacious American, who employed the spear of the Indian to furnish him with mutilated salmon, several boxes of which he brought to this city, in the month of September, when they were out of season, unfit for food and flavorless, having previously glutted the markets of Portland, Boston and New York with more palatable fish.”

In March, 1861, the Hon. P. M. Vankoughnet, then Commissioner of Crown Lands, made the following reference in his annual report to the beneficial effects of the leasing system upon both the salmon and deep sea fisheries:—

“It is alike satisfactory and remarkable, as one of the practical results anticipated from the application of this system to the salmon fisheries, that it has caused a greater amount of attention to be paid to the deep-sea fisheries. The withdrawal of numbers of ready and experienced hands from



*Hon. P. M. Vankoughnet.*

a comparatively idle, desultory and unproductive branch of fishing, as it had heretofore been conducted, and the transfer to a more steady and lucrative one, have at once stimulated the working of abundant but neglected sources, whilst affording some measure of rest to the almost exhausted river fisheries.

“I regret that an obstinate hindrance to the due restoration of this valuable fishery is still presented in the practice of spearing the breeding salmon by Indians and others. Hitherto the chief inducement held forth to the Indian inhabitants, has been the facility with which speared fish could be disposed of amongst petty traders. Notwithstanding that the purchase and possession by these persons have been visited with extreme severity whenever detected, it is in practice found to be exceedingly difficult to deter any parties concerned from violating or evading the law. Its evasion is also rendered the more easy because of certain exemptions in favor of Indian tribes. Such is especially the case within the districts watered by the River Ristigouche and tributary streams; and, owing to the peculiar position of that neighbourhood and the immediate proximity of different jurisdictions, it had become almost impossible to effect any due protection and fair use of the fisheries in the waters which divide the two Provinces.”

#### AFTER CONFEDERATION.

The system of protection practised under the Government of the old Province of United Canada up to the time of Confederation (1867), was practically maintained under the Federal Department and Minister of Marine and Fisheries. Thereafter, up to the year 1883, the Province of Quebec exercised no control whatever over the fisheries within its limits, and consequently not the slightest reference to them is to be found in any of our Provincial Departmental reports prior to 1883.

The judgment of the Supreme Court, in the case of the *Queen vs. Robertson*, in 1882, gave to the provinces the fish-

ing rights in waters bounded by Crown Lands remaining in their possession, and then, for the first time, the Province of Quebec may be said to have come to her own in the matter of her valuable fisheries.

Hon. W. W. Lynch, under whose administration as Commissioner of Crown Lands of the Province of Quebec, the granting of leases of fishing rights by the Government of the Province was inaugurated, made his first official reference to his department's control of these rights in his annual departmental report of the 17th March, 1884, addressed to His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor, and in the following terms:



*Hon. W. W. Lynch.*

“By a judgment of the Supreme Court, rendered the 28th of April, 1882, it was finally decided that the right of fishing in inland waters belongs to the owners of the lands in front of or through which such waters flow. In virtue of this judgment, our province became vested with such rights wherever the land remained the property of the Crown. The possession of these rights, which are likely soon to attain a considerable degree of importance, involves some rather heavy expenses of management. Nevertheless, the direct and indirect advantages to be derived from them are such that we should not be justified in neglecting them.

“Having been by the Act 46 Vict., chap. 8, charged with the administration of these rights and privileges, I instituted a new service for that purpose conjointly with the conduct of affairs connected with mines; which I confided to the immediate direction of Mr. D. C. Mackedie, one of the older employes of my Department.

“In the course of the year, after setting in operation the organization appropriate to this service, Mr. Mackedie was sent to inspect a number of the principal rivers of the Gaspé

peninsula in order to collect as much information as possible respecting the value of these rivers with regard to fishing privileges, and the course it would be most advisable to adopt in dealing with them."

Mr. Mackedie's report shows that he left Quebec on the 6th July, 1883, and stopping at Rimouski, Amqui, Casupscull, Matapedia (Campbellton), Carleton, New Richmond, New Carlisle, Port Daniel, Pabos Mills, Little Pabos, Grand River and Gaspé; ascending the rivers Ristigouche (38 miles), Cascapedia (50 miles), Bonaventure (15 miles), Grand Pabos (11 miles), and Dartmouth (about 12 miles), took notes and information about these and other rivers on his way, and returned to Quebec on the night of the 24th of August.

After describing the then existing conditions of the various rivers visited by him, Mr. Mackedie made the following recommendations in regard to the proposed leasing of angling rights, and supported them, as will be seen below, by carefully considered arguments and thoughtful reasoning:—

#### MR. D. C. MACKEDIE'S RECOMMENDATIONS.

"The present value of several of the rivers visited, if not absolutely NIL, is much lower than it might be if efficient guardianship had been maintained. A few years' neglect seems sufficient not only to ruin a salmon river as such, but also to induce a belief among the inhabitants of the vicinity, that they are at liberty to do as they please with every fish they see in it. Private guardianship is, however, likely to be much more effectual than any instituted by the Government. It would therefore seem advisable, apart from any question of revenue, that every river should be leased and in such a way that each lessee would have a particular interest in guarding his river during the whole term of his lease, more especially if it be only for a single year. As leases are now made to expire on the 31st of December, a lessee who is uncertain as to whether he can have the same river next year, or who may not wish to retain it, has (es-

pecially in the latter case), no strong inducement to protect it at the very time when protection is most necessary, that is, during the spawning season, in the months of September, October and November; while if they were made to run from the beginning of the close season to the end of the angling season in the following year, lessees would have a personal interest in protecting for their own benefit. Unless, therefore, the Government is disposed and prepared to maintain really efficient guardianship over all public rivers, and to put down poaching and illegal fishing with a firm hand, it would seem advisable that leases be made to run from the 1st of September to the 31st of August following. I think this opinion of the case is supported by the fact that application for leases for next year have already begun to come in.

“The prospective value of most of these rivers for angling purposes depends very much upon the course that may be pursued with regard to them. If re-stocked where re-stocking is necessary, and well protected for a few years by the Government, or leased under a system that will ensure their protection by the lessees, there is no doubt that being easy of access they will be in great demand. The number of applications made to the Department this year for rivers is sufficient to indicate this. From the strong desire to secure rivers expressed by parties whom I met on my trip and the prices that some told me they would willingly pay, I am of opinion that all the rivers now under lease would fetch much higher rents if put up to competition.

“In considering the question as to whether it is expedient in the interest of the province to continue the system of leasing or to substitute the policy of selling the lands to which fishing rights pertain, it must be borne in mind that there are other interests almost as intimately connected with the rivers of the province as salmon fishing, and the possibility of clashing between these separate interests should be foreseen and guarded against. It may be assumed that in the surveyed lands where settlement has made any progress, very few lots of any value on account of the fishing rights which pertain to them remain undisposed of. The public, or some individual

members of it, have got ahead of the Department in this matter. Where any such lots do remain in the hands of the Crown, as on the Ristigouche River, the greater portion of which is already in private hands, I think it would be advisable to offer a certain depth of land for sale at such upset price as would represent the capital of the rental the same lands would fetch if leased. The lands being thus disposed of, the Government would be relieved from any responsibility with regard to protection, and disputes such as have already arisen as to how far the respective rights of parties holding lands on opposite sides of the river extend would have to be settled among the parties themselves without the Government being called upon to intervene. There is, however, one objection to this course being pursued with regard to the lands on the Ristigouche, which it may seem undignified to refer to but which has been made and is likely to be made again. That is, that the lands would almost inevitably be brought up by citizens of the United States to the exclusion of Canadians.

“In the case of a river flowing between lands still undisposed of on either side, and in which both sides would be disposed of to the same person, it would, I think, materially lower the value of the lands in rear for colonization to allow the whole river front to pass permanently into the hands of a private individual, with whom settlers would have to make arrangements regarding access to the water. Trouble would also be likely to arise between the purchaser of a long stretch of river front and the holder of timber limits in the vicinity, and the Government be obliged to pay an indemnity to one or the other. This would be obviated by the Government retaining possession of the lands or the power to resume possession of them at any time.

“It may be said that it would not be necessary to sell the whole water front of the lands bordering on a river in order to convey the fishing rights, but the enjoyment of fishing rights implies power to protect them and guard the river at other places besides those where fishing is legitimately practised.

“To define and convey strips of land at such places it is needless to say, would be impracticable. The holder of fishing rights in a river must have power to guard such river in its whole length, or as far as it may be frequented by salmon as long as they remain in it, otherwise his rights are likely to be seriously interfered with, and the value of the river much impaired. In leasing lands such power can be given and the use which may be made of the land clearly defined, while any desirable reserve may be made by the Government in connection with other interests, more effectually, it appears to me, in a revocable lease than in a sale.

“On the whole I think it would not be advantageous to adopt the policy of selling instead of leasing fishing rights, more especially as these privileges appear to be increasing in value, and are likely soon to yield a much larger revenue than has hitherto been derived from them.”

As shown by the subsequent policy of the Government of Quebec, Mr. Mackenzie's recommendations have been carried out almost in their entirety.

#### RESULTS OF PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION.

The results of the Provincial administration of the fisheries have been extremely gratifying. The history of this administration and the results obtained from year to year will form the object of a later report. Suffice it, for the present, to say that the revenue of the Provincial Fish and Game Branch, which was only \$3,232.50 in 1884, amounted, for the year ended the 30th June 1912, to over \$116,000.

The Hon. Mr. Lynch, who organized this Branch on a small scale in 1883, was succeeded as head of the Crown Lands Department by the Hon. P. Garneau. Then followed in turn the Hon. Messrs. Duhamel, Flynn, Parent and Turgeon.

In 1905 the Fisheries and Game Branch was detached from the Crown Lands Department and made part of the new Department of Colonization, Mines and Fisheries, of which the Hon. Jean Prevost was Minister from July, 1905, till October, 1907. The Hon. Charles R. Devlin, the present Minister, has been the official head of the Department since the 17th October, 1907.

The late Mr. E. E. Taché, Deputy-Minister of Crown Lands up to the time of his death in 1912, had the active surveillance of the provincial fish and game branch, under successive Ministers, from the time of its establishment in 1883 until it was made a part of the new Department of Colonization, Mines and Fisheries in 1905.

Mr. Sergius Dufault, the present Deputy-Minister of Colonization, Mines and Fisheries has occupied the position ever since the formation of the Department in the year above mentioned.

Mr. Mackedie was succeeded as Superintendent of Fisheries by Mr. J. N. Proulx, and he by Mr. Honoré Chassé. Mr. Chassé was followed by Mr. L. Z. Joncas, Ex-M.P., who died in 1903 and was replaced by the present Superintendent, Mr. Hector Caron.

#### PRESENT MARKET VALUE OF THE FISHERIES

Rather more than 12,500 men are now employed in the commercial fisheries of the Province, which have a total market value of from \$1,500,000 to \$2,000,000. In 1911-12 the last year for which at present writing there are complete returns, their total value was \$1,868,136. They are undoubtedly capable of much greater development. And in this connection, will it be deemed inappropriate to quote a part of the language employed by the late Noel H. Bowen, Esq., of this city, nearly sixty years ago, when in speaking, in the city of Quebec—in the course of a lecture on Labrador<sup>1</sup>—of the wealth of fish contained in the waters of the Province, he said: “And yet, knowing the riches with which a bountiful Providence has lined our shores, and having this countless treasure within our grasp, will it be believed that not even one vessel sails hence during the year to participate in these fisheries? The ships of other nations flock to the banks like

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<sup>1</sup> See Transactions of the Quebec Literary and Historical Society, Vol. IV., p. 340. Quebec, 1856.

vultures around their prey, while we look on with shameful indifference. Are we then too rich or too indolent to appreciate our natural advantages?"

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(In subsequent reports, an effort will be made to deal more fully with the history of the fisheries of the Province of Quebec from the middle of the last century—which has necessarily, been but lightly touched upon in the preceding pages—and also to describe and to trace the history of the principal salmon rivers and other important inland waters of the Province.—E. T. D. C.)

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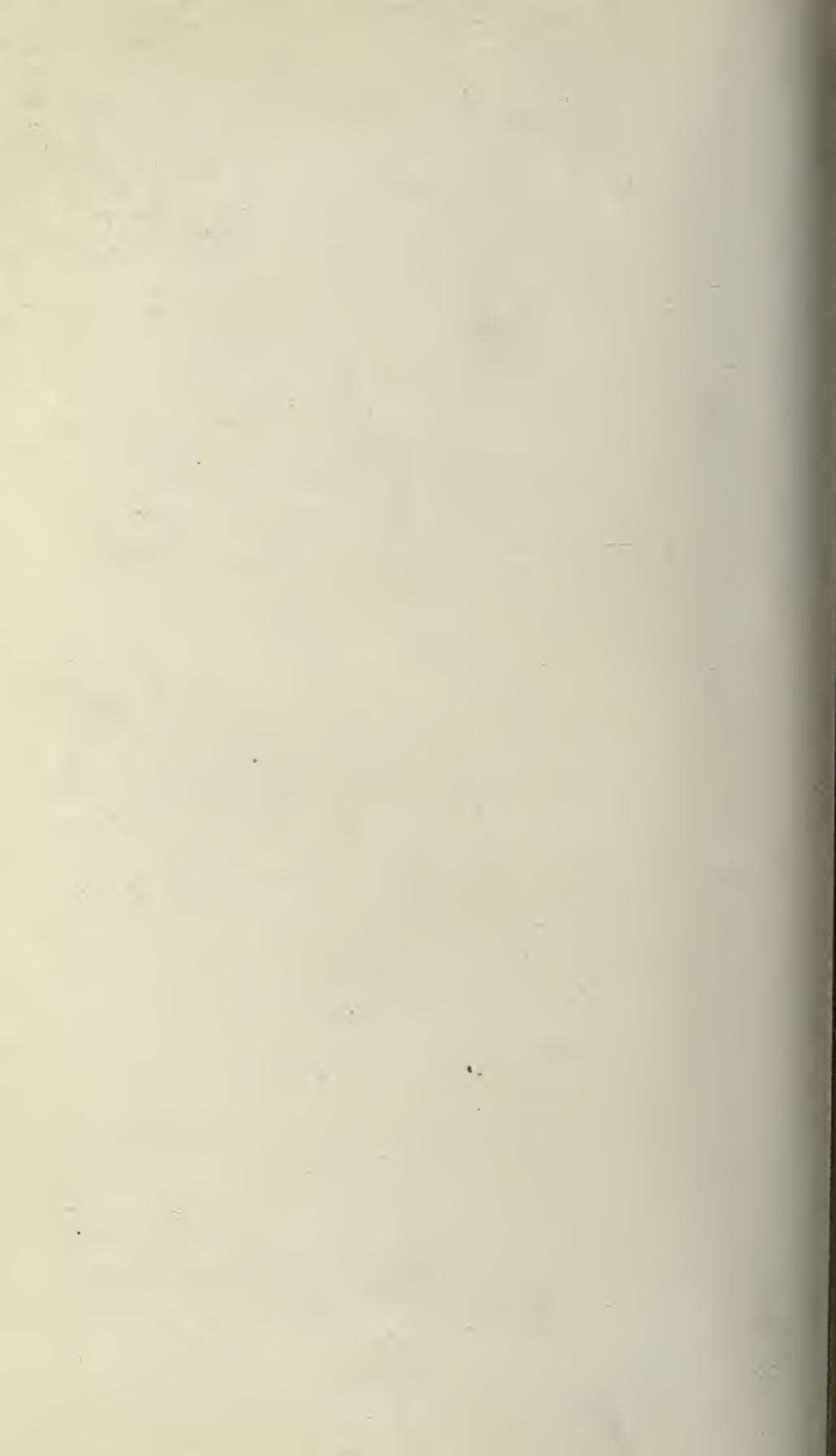
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