

as the loss of many lives, and of much valuable property, must inevitably result from the various inaccurate charts which would appear to be in general use.

Connected with this subject is one which has been anxiously discussed, I believe, by the gentlemen hitherto charged with this branch of the public service. I mean the erection of a light house on Sable Island.

Opinions are divided as to the propriety of such erection.

Those who oppose the measure conscientiously believe that a light house would induce vessels to run for it, which now keep clear of the Island altogether, and thus lure them amid shoals and sand bars that would otherwise be avoided.

It is also urged that a light house would be of little use, as, from the very slight elevation afforded by any solid part of the Island, it could not be seen very far at sea.

As Mr. Cunard, the senior commissioner of light houses, and Captain Darby, the commander of the cutter, both entertain these opinions, I urge my own, in view of their great experience, with much diffidence, and yet very strongly advise that a light house should be erected on some suitable site near the central station upon Sable Island, for the following, among other reasons :

Because vessels not bound for Sable Island, or not driven there by currents or stress of weather, would no more run for it than they do now. They would keep clear of it.

Because it affords no safe harbor of refuge. Vessels outward bound would not require a new point of departure, and homeward bound vessels have the main-land all before them.

Vessels driven near the Island would find a light invaluable. If the weather was thick and they could not see it they would not be worse off than they are now. If seen, it would at once indicate their true position, and if made to revolve from west to east, would show in what direction the bars lie, and by what course a station could be approached for assistance, when required.

To the "Daring" and other vessels employed on government service, a light would be of great use.

Though we had soundings in the evening we ran five miles past the station in the night. A light would have guided us directly to our anchorage. Had we not got back in time we should have encountered the very severe gale of the 8th September. Captain Darby was driven to sea after we landed. In beating back to the station, had he approached the Island in the night, a light house would have been a guide, and an additional means of security. The same may be said of four or five schooners fishing around the island, and which were also compelled to run to sea. A revolving light would not only have aided them to make the Island again but have shown them where to make it.

As the fishery around Sable Island is annually becoming of more importance, it may fairly be presumed that a larger amount of tonnage will be similarly exposed.

Having little or no practical knowledge of the subject, I make these suggestions with great diffidence, but would respectfully suggest that to both of them your excellency would be pleased to call the attention of his lordship the naval commander-in-chief.

Next to the importance of defining the position of the Island, and rendering it less dangerous to navigators by the erection of a light house, it becomes worth while to consider whether it may not be made a more desirable abode for human beings, or at least a more productive and less burthensome piece of public property. Its capabilities in these respects have never been properly estimated. We have been accustomed to regard it as a barren sand bank, dangerous to approach, and destitute of resources.

I was agreeably surprised to find it covered, for nearly its whole length of five and twenty miles, with natural grass and wild peas, and sustaining by its spontaneous production, five hundred head of wild horses, and ten or twelve head of cattle.

A moment's reflection will shew then, that, as a mere grass farm, it is capable of sustaining throughout the year more animal life than any four or five of the best farms on the main-land. Any individual owning Sable Island, and paying ordinary attention to raising stock alone, would, with light labor, become rich. Any four or five industrious families, dividing it into convenient stock farms, could live in comfort and abundance, without even resorting to the fisheries around them.

If the duties of humanity could be overlooked by the government, this experiment might be tried with success: and as population increased, employment would be found in fishing and maritime pursuits for the hardy race which this stern nursery would foster; and the natives of a new Nantucket might yet build havens and breakwaters, and make what is now but an oasis amidst the solitudes of ocean, a cultivated centre of mechanical and maritime industry.*

The risks to be run in trying this experiment are—that discipline might be impaired by the introduction of persons not under the control of government—that the obligations of humanity might be disregarded by mere voluntary settlers; or that the temptations to plunder the unfortunate might prove too strong to be resisted by such a population when the hand of authority was withdrawn.

Assuming that for these reasons your excellency will determine that the existing establishments shall be maintained upon their present footing, it remains to be seen how they can be rendered more efficient, and the Island, as government property, more productive. Looking at the Island as a farm, I would suggest, that if horses are to be considered its staple production, more attention should be paid to the improvement of the breeds. The prairies of the west and the deserts of the east produce splendid horses.

The scenery of Sable Island presents to the eye the rolling prairie without a tree. There is not a stone, a stump, or a hole on the Island, to injure the feet of young horses. The absence of shelter and the constant exposure to the rigors of a northern climate, will probably always have a tendency to reduce the size of those bred on Sable Island; but there are many there now of fair proportions, and attention to judicious breeding would counteract this tendency.

A few unsuccessful experiments have been tried, and the tame horses being let loose, have been killed by the wild ones. I would recommend that at least two stallions, the best that can be purchased in Nova Scotia for fifty pounds a piece, should be sent to the Island early in the spring and kept in the superintendent's stable, the mares at the proper season being driven into a paddock to receive them. The new blood would then become speedily and safely mixed with the old. To export or geld the old stallions, (who, if the intruders were let loose, would certainly fight for the possession of their harems,) might render the infusion of the new blood more rapid, but as these leaders of gangs are generally the boldest and most powerful horses on the Island, it would be better to cross with their stock than to destroy them.

I may be mistaken, but my present impression is very decided, that if proper attention is paid to this branch, fifty horses, worth from £15 to £20 each, may be annually shipped from Sable Island, yielding from £600 to £700, instead of the unproductive cargoes which now are sold at from 20s. to £5 a-piece. These horses should not be sent off, as they are now, entirely unbroken, and in such quantities as to glut the market and destroy competition.

The price is now largely reduced by the cost and trouble of breaking these animals. If a few strong bits were sent to the superintendent, the animals intended to be shipped could be broken before they left the Island; and if a few were shipped, as opportunities offered, to the most promising marts, they would be sure to bring such prices as would fairly represent their intrinsic value.

While, however, every pains should be taken to improve the breed of horses, and render them a source of revenue, I would advise that prompt measures should be adopted to ascertain

* NANTUCKET.—A small crescent of pebbly soil, just lifting itself above the level of the ocean, surrounded by a belt of roaring breakers, and destitute of all shelter from the stormy blasts which sweep over it; there is nothing about it "but doth suffer a sea change;" its inhabitants know hardly any thing but of the sea and sky. Rocks, mountains, trees, and rivers, and the bright verdure of the earth, are names only to them, which have no particular significance. They read of these as other people read of angels and demi-gods. There may be such things or there may not. But dreary and desolate as their Island may seem to others, it realizes their ideal of what the world should be, and probably they dream that Paradise is just such another place—a duplicate Island, where every wind that blows wafts the spray of the sea in their faces.—*Hunt's Merchant's Magazine.*

tain whether the Island would not produce a very much larger proportion of cattle, sheep, and swine. Sheep thrive upon most islands along the coast, where there is some herbage and plenty of kelp.

There is no kelp or other seaweed upon the shores of Sable Island, and the rank grasses which it yields are altogether unlike the short bite which sheep prefer.

Whatever may be the reason, there is an impression on the island that sheep, though they appear to thrive for a time, do not live. The want of shelter may be the chief cause. Experiments should, however, be fairly tried, and the facts recorded.—If sheep would do well they would be the most profitable stock that could be kept, and several thousands might be added to the resources of the Island.

Swine, in any number, may be raised, and would feed themselves throughout a great portion of the year. When vessels laden with coarse bread-stuffs run upon the coast, a portion of damaged cargo might often be purchased cheap and used for fattening hogs, or a sufficient supply could be annually sent down in the "Daring." Barrels of pork are purchased every year for the supply of the establishments. At least the whole quantity required should be raised.

Though it is assumed that young calves do not do well on Sable Island for the first year, there is no doubt that once past that age cattle thrive abundantly. There are some cows now on the Island as fine as any to be found on the main-land, and a pair of fat cattle, quite equal in proportions to the best which took the prize at the recent Truro fair.

If the stock of horses was somewhat diminished, I have no doubt that one hundred milch cows could be maintained on Sable Island. But, which is probable, should a dairy so extensive interfere with other necessary labors, an equal number of neat cattle might be substituted.

If yearling calves from the best farms were shipped to the Island next spring, I have no doubt that the cost would be repaid with a profit of two or three hundred per cent. in a very few years. Fresh beef, raised on the Island, is described as singularly juicy and fine flavored. There is a doubt, however, whether it bears salting as well as that which is stall-fed.

As the Island lies eighty miles to the southward of Nova Scotia and in the immediate neighbourhood of the gulf stream, the winter is comparatively mild. There being no forests, and the soil exceedingly porous, snow soon melts or blows off, leaving the herbage exposed throughout the year. Upon this the wild horses feed, without care or attendance, and barely sufficient is cut and housed to fodder the working cattle.

If stock is increased and rendered more valuable, a stack yard of hay should be accumulated, to serve as a resource in the event of peculiarly hard winters being experienced. This could easily be done, by the employment of some extra labor for a season or two, and by the use of the horse rake in all seasons. This valuable implement is unknown on the Island, yet I have never seen a soil better adapted for its use. There being neither stumps, nor stones, the horse rake would pass unobstructed over every portion of the surface; and one man and horse would do more work with it in a day than could be performed by six men in the usual manner.

Before quitting this branch of the subject, I would strongly recommend that a series of experiments should be tried to ascertain whether trees will not grow upon the Island. If these were successful, not only would the scenery be diversified and improved, but greater stability and fertility given to the soil, while grateful shade would be secured to man and beast.

Sable Island is not more incapable of improvement in this respect than the sandy coasts of England, France, and Belgium, many portions of which, where now the richest cultivation is sheltered by the finest trees, were formerly as naked and unpromising as the least inviting portions of its surface. The basket willow, I have no doubt, would grow upon the shores of the Salt Lake, or around the fresh water ponds; and, if it did, could be wrought into panniers for the horses, which would, in many ways, facilitate transportation, while basket work might be added to the light labours of the Island. The elm should also be tried, and the live oak, which delights in sandy soil and the neighbourhood of the sea.

Cranberries of large size, and fine flavour, grow in abundance on Sable Island. A few barrels of these are generally picked in the autumn, but the cranberry, as a source of income, or a means of employment, has scarcely ever been thought of by our people. Yet, in the neighbouring States, it is successfully cultivated, on bogs, and waste lands subject to flowage. It forms a branch, in fact, of New England agriculture. A bushel of wheat is worth in Boston 6s. A bushel of cranberries, retailed inside of Quincy market, brings \$4. Thirty bushels to the acre form a bountiful crop of wheat. An acre will yield eighty-five bushels of cranberries.

Thousands of acres in Nova Scotia, which would not grow wheat, would grow cranberries; and many of our south shore farmers, who have cleared the hardwood hills, and regard the bogs by which they are surrounded as valueless and impracticable, have yet to learn that, acre for acre, the latter may be made to yield twice the income of their uplands. On Sable Island the cranberry grows spontaneously in many places, and by a little care, the crop might be largely increased. The American rake, by which the fruit is gathered, and the seive, by which the bruised or decayed berries are separated from the sound, should be at once introduced.

Passing from the agricultural capabilities of Sable Island, it becomes my duty to invite your excellency's attention to the value of the fishery upon its coast.

The countless schools of mackarel, which in spring pass our shores on their way to the eastward, and which annually resort to the gulf, pass between Sable Island and the main land. In going, as in returning, they often trim its shores in vast quantities. The fall fish are very fine. During the three days I remained on the Island, except when they were driven off by the storm, there were seldom less than five or six schooners in sight, catching these fish with the hook and line. All the vessels similarly engaged this season, made, I believe, full fares. The superintendant informed me that a few days before the "Daring" arrived, the mackarel crowded the coast in such numbers that they almost pressed each other upon the sands, and I saw an unbroken school, extending, near the landing place, for a mile in length, within good seining distance, besides others at various points, indicating the presence, in the surrounding seas, of incalculable wealth.

With a good seine, or two, I have no doubt that the Island crew could, on the day I landed, or on the day I left, have stopped one thousand barrels, and, if so, it is clear that no salvage obtained from wrecks, and no profits from pasturage, or the cultivation of the soil, would yield to the government so rich a return for a little judicious outlay, as this valuable fishery. There was no seine upon the Island. One can be purchased for £100, and would, I am persuaded, pay for itself in a single season, five times over.

The extent to which a fishery could be carried on must depend upon the experiments to be tried in a season or two. The outfit required for these would not be all lost if they failed. If they succeeded, as I confidently anticipate, as many hands as could be profitably employed should be drafted to this service from the regular Island force, or engaged as sharesmen during the fishing season. Salt should be stored, and barrels made on the Island. The chief difficulty to be encountered would arise from the waves, which, even in calm weather, roll, in endless succession, in upon the shores. In fine weather, however, they present, to the skilful, no insuperable difficulties; and mackarel could be dipped, and shipped, as easily as heavy chains and anchors are now hauled in and out of boats whenever wrecks occur.

The boat fishery should also be tried, and, if diligently prosecuted, which it could be with slight supervision, if the hands employed were interested in their own success, would yield a fair return.

Seals were so numerous around the Island, that, from every point which commanded the shore three or four could be seen within gun shot. They often land on the bars and beaches, and a small number are killed every year. Whether the seal fishery could or could not be carried on to any extent, I am not prepared even to hazard an opinion.

Turning to another branch of Island industry, it appears to me very important that some efficient motive power should be secured. There are no streams, and the absence of water power must be supplied by some other agent. A small steam engine which would turn

circular saws, a lathe, and other gear, would be invaluable. The consumption of fuel, where it must be supplied from casual sources, is the chief objection to the employment of the steam engine. Wind may be substituted with advantage. An ingenious mechanic, with the aid of such materials as can be commanded from the wreck, and drift stuff, upon the Island, would soon construct a wind mill which would saw lumber, firewood, staves, and furnish a motive power that might be turned to account in a great variety of ways. This should be the first step towards the erection of new and more comfortable station-houses, and such out-houses as might be required for the accommodation of an extended and improved stock.

The old buildings, which are worth preserving, might all be rendered more secure and comfortable, if sawing could be done by some motive power, more efficient and less exhausting than human labour.

When materials have been thus accumulated, a new house should be built at the station kept by Stevens. The old one is delapidated, and only held together by the newspapers pasted around the walls. A pen for pigs, on the improved labour-saving design of Mr. Phinney, of Massachusetts, should also be constructed, and all the old buildings on the Island might soon be either replaced or improved.

One good room, plainly but comfortably furnished, should also be fitted up in the superintendent's house, or some other near the central station, that women wrecked on the Island might have the seclusion and quiet which would often be indispensable to their restoration, and that the commissioners, the captain of the cutter, or other persons visiting the Island on duty, might use when it was not thus occupied.

It may be asked, where, on an Island without a tree, is the lumber to come from to furnish employment for the circular saws, and to make these improvements practicable? The answer is, upon the shores, which are often strewn for miles with the finest timber and deals, the supply being kept up by the wreck of some homeward bound timber laden vessel, generally before the old stock is exhausted, or even much reduced. Besides, the vessels themselves would furnish abundance of materials, which, with a well organized workshop, could be turned to good account.

Three large vessels are now lying, almost entire, upon the bars, and from many of the old ones, with judicious management, much stuff might yet be obtained. The process of breaking up vessels by hand is so laborious and slow, that they often drift to sea, or are sunk in the sands, before their materials can be saved. By employing gunpowder to blow them up, and seizing for such operations the moment when the tide was suitable, and the wind on shore, a great deal of valuable property might be preserved that would furnish employment to the force maintained by the government, and add greatly to the value of the public property.

In connexion with this branch of the subject, I would suggest that great care should be taken in selecting men for Sable Island. No hand should be shipped because employment was importunately demanded, or that an easy birth might be found for some person altogether unsuitable. Every man on the Island should be "able bodied" in the full sense of the term. An athletic and fearless boat's crew it is indispensable to have. If the selections are made from among our hardy shoremen, who combine fishing and farming, the best materials are ever at hand.

A blacksmith, not a bungler, but a skilful good workman; a carpenter, who could use a lathe, build boats, or repair buildings; and a shoemaker, who could also repair harness; are three mechanics that it is very desirable to have constantly on the Island.

There is old iron enough now upon it to furnish several years' employment to the first—for a year or two at least; the second could find or make work for himself; and the third, required almost every day by the wear and tear of the establishments, could fill up his leisure hours by making fishermen's boots, for which there is a market all along the coast.

No distinction is now made between the hands employed; for although Jackson performs the duty of second in command, he holds no rank as such, and gets no extra pay. A second officer should be appointed, wear a badge, and get £5 or £10 a-year more than the rest.

rest. To this birth the men would aspire, and the hope of its possession would supply a motive to activity and good conduct.

All which is most respectfully submitted by
Your excellency's most obedient
And very humble servant,

JOSEPH HOWE.

To his excellency lieut. genl. Sir JOHN HARVEY, }
K. C. B. and K. C. H., lieut. governor }
of Nova Scotia, &c. &c. }

Halifax, N. S., October 21st, 1850.

Wellesley, at Halifax, 24th October, 1850.

SIR—

I was favored with your excellency's note, conveying to me an extract of a report made to you by the hon. Mr. Howe, pointing out the discrepancy between the various charts which profess to lay down the position of Sable Island, and also the extent of the N. E. and N. W. banks, which are represented as extremely dangerous. I shall make known to the lords commissioners of the admiralty the pressing necessity of a survey of these perils to navigation, fatal to so many vessels.

With respect to the propriety of placing an elevated light on "some suitable spot near the central station," I consider the reasons adduced by Mr. Howe, in favor of the light, as outweighing the arguments of its opponents, believing that the light will be a safeguard to vessels which unintentionally, or through error in reckoning, find themselves accidentally in a dangerous position, whilst vessels acquainted with their course to their port of destination, would never go out of their way to seek for a warning light.

I have the honor to be,
Sir,

Your excellency's most obedient,
Humble servant,

DUNDONALD,
Vice admiral, commander-in-chief.

His excellency lieut. general Sir JOHN HARVEY, }
K. C. B., K. C. H., &c. &c., Halifax. }

Government house, Halifax, October 25, 1850.

MY LORD—

I have had the honor to receive your lordship's letter of the 24th inst., and cannot but feel gratified at the weight attached by your lordship to the suggestions contained in the communication made by me, and at the prompt attention which your excellency has paid to the subjects which I cannot but regard as important to our commercial interests.

I have the honor to be,
My lord,
Your lordship's most obdt. servant.

J. HARVEY.

His excellency the right honorable the }
EARL OF DUNDONALD, &c. &c. &c. }

Cumberland,

Cumberland, at Halifax, August 30th, 1851.

SIR,—

I beg to acquaint your excellency, that in consequence of the report of the honorable Joseph Howe, and of your application to the Earl of Dundonald, the lords commissioners of the admiralty have caused Sable Island to be surveyed by captain Bayfield, and the officers of the "Gulnair;" and the long bars which extend from its extremities, by commander Shortland, of the "Columbia." Captain Bayfield is employed in preparing and connecting the results of their survey, with which your excellency will be furnished on its completion.

I understand that the recent survey is likely to establish the position of the Island as given in the admiralty chart.

I have, &c.

(Signed)

G. F. SEYMORE,
Vice admiral and commander-in-chief.

His excellency Sir JOHN HARVEY, K. C. B., &c.

Cumberland, at Halifax, 8th September, 1851.

SIR—

Referring to my letter of the 31st ultimo, to his excellency Sir John Harvey, relative to the recent survey of Sable Island, I have now the honor to furnish you with captain Bayfield's report thereon, and containing his views relative to the erection of a light house on the Island, on which I had desired his opinion.

I have, &c.

(Signed)

G. F. SEYMORE,
Vice admiral and commander-in-chief.

His honor lieutenant colonel BAZALGEETE,
Administrator of the government, Halifax.

REPORT TO THE HYDROGRAPHER OF THE NAVY.

The position of the Island is as follows :

1st—The W. flag staff, at the principal establishment, lat. 43 d. 56. m. 33 s. N. Lon. 3 d. 32 m. 02 s. 8 E. of Halifax—Dockyard tablet. 11 d. 10 m. 15 s. 8 E. of Obs. Bastion, Quebec.

2nd—The E. extreme of the Grassy Sand Hills—see chart—lat. 43 d. 59 m. 05 s. N. Lon. 3 d. 49 m. 20 s. 5 E. of Halifax—Dockyard tablet. 11 d. 27 m. 33 s. 5 E. of Obs. Bastion, Quebec.

3rd—The W. extreme of Grassy Sand Hills—see chart—Lat. 43 d. 56 m. 52 s. N. Lon. 3 d. 26 m. 21 s. 8 E. of Halifax—Dockyard tablet. 11 d. 4 m. 34 s. 8 E. of Obs. Bastion, Quebec.

If we assume Halifax dockyard tablet to be in 63 d. 35 m. 19 s. 5 Wt. according to admiral Owen's determination from Cambridge observatory, the above named points will be in 60 d. 3 m. 16 s. 7 Wt. 59 d. 45 m. 59 s. Wt. and 60 d. 8. m. 57 s. Wt. respectively.

The east extreme of the sand hills alone remains unchanged for comparison with the observations of admiral Ogle's officers, and it is satisfactory to find, that there was not only no reason to find fault with their determination, but that their latitude and also the meridian distance from Halifax is the same as ours, within two or three seconds of space. About two miles of the west end of the Island have been washed away since they observed in 1828, and this reduction of the Island, and consequent addition to the western bar, is reported to have been in operation at least since 1811, and seems almost certain to continue. A comparison some years hence with the present survey, can alone show precisely the amount of waste in any given time, the correctness or otherwise of the reported shifting of the bars, and of the opinion that the Island is insensibly becoming narrower, &c. All agree that there has been no material change in the east end of the Island within the memory of any one acquainted with it, a circumstance of importance, with reference to the selection of a site for a light house, the utility of which I now proceed to consider.

The western bar can be safely approached by the lead from any direction, with common precaution, and the west end of the Island, wasting continually by the action of the sea, furnishes only an insecure site; I have therefore no hesitation in thinking a light there unnecessary for the general purposes of navigation, whilst at the same time I admit the correctness of the opinion, that a light at the west flag staff or principal establishment would be highly useful to the colonial vessels and fishermen that frequent the Island in annually increasing numbers. The length of the N. E. bar has been greatly exaggerated, but it is still a most formidable danger, extending fourteen miles from the Island to the depth of ten fathoms, and thirteen miles to six fathoms,—all within this last named depth being a line of heavy breakers in bad weather. Not far from the end of this bar, the depth amounts to one hundred and seventy fathoms, so that a vessel going moderately fast might be on the bar in a few minutes after trying in vain for soundings. This bar, moreover, is very steep all along its north side, and is, on these accounts, exceedingly dangerous. The reduction of this bar from its reported length of twenty-eight miles to its real length of fourteen miles, will greatly lessen one of the objections to a light on the east end of the Island, which can be plainly seen from the end of the bar. It is true that almost all the vessels wrecked upon the Island have come on shore in fogs, when a light could not have been seen, but on the other hand I was informed of two or three instances in which vessels have run ashore in clear weather, under circumstances which render it almost certain that a light would have saved them. The people of the Island frequently see mail steamers passing the Island, as well as other vessels, which, from their distance, were probably unaware of their proximity, and it is therefore probable that a light would be useful in such cases. There remains the objection, that a light might induce vessels to be less careful in avoiding the Island, but upon the whole I am of opinion, that a light on the hill which, in anticipation, has been named the light house hill, would be more useful than otherwise, for if it prevented only one considerable wreck in three or four years, it would more than compensate for the expense of its erection and support. I must not omit to inform you, that there are occasionally brief intervals in the fog, in which a light might be seen by vessels in the vicinity of the Island, and it is not improbable that some of those that have come on shore in fogs might have been previously warned of their danger had there been a light on the Island, and especially if there had been a heavy gun fired at intervals. Nevertheless, the question, whether the utility of a light on the Island, for the general purposes of navigation, is such as to render its erection expedient, is one which I submit to your superior judgment, after laying before you all the information respecting it which I have been enabled to collect.

I have, &c.

(Signed)

H. W. BAYFIELD,

Captain, surveying the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

No. 25.

(See page 92.)

MR. HOWE'S REPORT.

Though not specially charged to make any representation to the government of Canada on the subject of the fisheries, Mr. Howe begs to report, for the information of his honor the administrator of the government, that he deemed it his duty to avail himself of the opportunity offered by the recent conference at Toronto, to urge the importance of giving to them adequate protection, and has the honor to submit the copy of a memorandum agreed to on the 21st of June.

MEMORANDUM.

Mr. Howe, having called the attention of his excellency and the council to the importance and value of the gulf fisheries, upon which foreigners largely trespass, in violation of treaty stipulations, and Mr. Chandler having submitted a report of a select committee of the house of assembly of New Brunswick, having reference to the same subject, the government of Canada determines to co-operate with Nova Scotia in the efficient protection of the fisheries, by providing either a steamer or two or more sailing vessels to cruise in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and along the coasts of the Labrador.

It is understood that Nova Scotia will continue to employ at least two vessels in the same service, and that Mr. Chandler will urge upon the government of New Brunswick the importance of making provision for at least one vessel, to be employed for the protection of the fisheries in the Bay of Fundy.

JOS. BOURET, P. C.
JOSEPH HOWE,
E. B. CHANDLER.

Toronto, June 21, 1851.

[The foregoing report and memorandum were read and approved of in council this day.

W. H. KEATING, D. C. C.

Halifax, July 26, 1851.]

TO THE HONORABLE JAMES B. UNIACKE.

DEAR SIR—

Agreeably to your request, I submit for your consideration, my remarks respecting the fisheries in the British colonies.

From the first of July to the latter part of August the American fishermen seldom resort to the harbors on the south side of Nova Scotia for shelter, as they generally take their bait on the banks, which extend from George's Shoal to Sable Island Bank, Banke Quereau, Green Bank, &c. To these banks the American vessels resort early in the season, often taking two fares of codfish by the latter part of July.

These break the schools of fish that are making their way toward the shore soundings, which I think is the cause of the failure of the shore fisheries. From 1812 to 1818 fish were found more abundant about the shores of Nova Scotia than they have been since. A large portion of these vessels, after making one or two voyages of codfish, proceed to the Bay de Chaleur, from the east point of Prince Edward's Island to Shippegan Cape, Gaspe, the entrance of the St. Lawrence, as far as Point Demont's, and the Seven Islands, including Orphan Bank, Bradelle Bank, the coast about the Magdalen Islands, and the north side of Cape Breton. These comprise the chief fishing grounds for American vessels. The harbors

harbors to which they chiefly resort are the Strait of Canso, Port Hood, Sea Wolf Island, St. Peters, New London, Richmond, Cascumpeque, Shippegan, Miscow, Gaspe, Seven Islands, Magdalen Islands, &c. &c. The mackarel in the spring generally strike the south part of Nova Scotia; from the 18th to the 25th May they come from the southward, falling in with the Nantucket and St. George's Shoal; a large quantity come through the South Channel, and when abreast of Cape Cod shape their course towards the south coast of Nova Scotia. Being bound to Boston this spring, about the 18th of May, I met large schools of mackarel, about 50 or 60, to the westward of the South Seal Island; they appeared to be coming about from Cape Cod until nearly over to the Cape. Their course may occasionally vary in consequence of strong southerly and northerly winds; they generally fall in on the coast to the westward a few days before they do at Canso and Cape Breton. The chief places for netting and seining mackarel in the spring, are the Tusket Islands, the west side of Cape Sable, east side of Margaret's Bay, Little Harbor, White Head, St. Peters in Cape Breton, Antigonishe, and several other places. As there is no doubt but that the mackarel are bound to Chaleur Bay for the purpose of spawning, it would lead us to believe that when one fish is taken with the net or seine, thousands are destroyed which would otherwise likely come to maturity. Could the practice of taking fish with their spawn be abolished, it is likely they would be much more abundant. The mackarel, after passing the south coast of Nova Scotia, proceed to the northward, through the Straits of Canso, and to the eastward of Cape Breton, making their way northwardly until they are up to Shippegan, Bradelle Bank, Gaspe, Seven Islands, &c. After having spawned, they continue about those places as their feeding ground, there being large quantities of lants there which they feed upon, and consequently become fat.

As the season advances, about the month of October, the fish begin to make their way to the southward, and continue until the latter part of November. The practice of taking mackarel with the hook and line has not been long in operation in Nova Scotia; and I believe there never has been a voyage made with the hook and line on the southern coast of Nova Scotia, except at Sable Island, where there have been some good voyages made. The fish which resort here are of a different quality from those which go to the Bay de Chaleur, being much larger and fatter. In 1850 the fish were plenty and took the hook well, but in 1851 the fish appeared at times to be abundant, but would not take the hook. Mackarel here feed in shallow water, within the bars or shoal edges of sand which extend in different places near the Island. The vessels when employed in the mackarel fishery here lie at anchor in about 6 or 7 fathoms water, and I have been informed that mackarel have been discovered from the mast head of these vessels lying within the ridges of sand. They are chiefly taken in boats or flats, which go over the ridges when they sometimes appear to be lying on the bottom. Was there a light house erected on the north west end of the Island, I think it would be of great service to those who tend the mackarel fishery here, as they often have to cross the north west bar when they cannot ascertain the distance from the Island. As the season advances, the weather changeable, and the bars being dangerous to cross in rough weather, our vessels mostly leave after the last of September. —The American vessels which fit out for the hook fisheries are of a superior class from those in Nova Scotia. Their tonnage generally from 60 to 130 tons, very sharp built, well fitted in every respect; those they term the sharp-shooters are very superior sailing vessels. This enables them to reach the fishing ground and procure their cargo, while those of Nova Scotia are actually carrying sail to reach the fishing ground. Those vessels are likewise well manned, varying from 12 to 24 men, making an average probably of about 15 or 16 men to each vessel. In 1851 I was informed there were about one thousand sail of American vessels, which with an average of 15 men would give fifteen thousand. Some of these vessels, I heard, made three trips in Chaleur Bay for mackarel. Some, after having made one or two trips or fares of codfish, proceed to the Bay de Chaleur, well fitted, taking sufficient barrels to cure their fish in. These are partly filled with menhaden and clams, which are considered the best bait for mackarel; others are filled with salt and water, which make ballast; when required for use they are emptied of their contents and filled with mackarel; this keeps their vessels in good ballast. **They generally commence their fishing**

fishing about Bradelle Bank, Shippegan, and follow the fish northerly, until the season advances, when they return to the north side of Prince Edward's Island and Cape Breton; the crew of these vessels are nearly one-fourth belonging to Nova Scotia.—Some of these leave their homes in the spring of the year and take passage for the United States, for employment; others ship on board American vessels when they arrive in Nova Scotia. This may be a cause why American fishermen are found fishing within the limits.

The Straits of Canso being the chief passage that American vessels take, when bound to or from the Bay de Chaleur, they generally stop here, as they say, for the purpose of shelter, repairing damages, and procuring wood and water. Many of the places through this strait are so situated, that vessels may haul into the bank and discharge without being detected. As these vessels, bound on a fishing voyage, are nearly full of barrels, it would be nearly impossible to detect them if actually engaged in illicit trade. Some of the coves where they resort have fine streams of fresh water, with rum shops near by, which give them an opportunity of taking on shore a barrel of the American manufactured brandy, and bringing in return the pure fresh water; and as many of the crews of these vessels were actually residents of these places, they think they have the same privileges as those who sail in British vessels; and as they have been habituated to go on shore and purchase small stores, such as butter, potatoes, sheep, and such articles from the inhabitants, I found the inhabitants of the coast more favorable to the American than they were towards the Nova Scotia men. At some places I heard that the inhabitants would go out in their boats when the Americans were taking mackarel, and make fast to them and fish while they had them baited up. All this gives the inhabitants a favorable opinion of the Americans.

As to the mode to be pursued to prevent American fishermen from illicit trade, and going within the limits to fish, it is not easy to determine.

However, as Nova Scotia has so many harbors and places for vessels to resort to, and the Strait of Canso open for all vessels, it would be useless, in my opinion, to put on protective duties in Nova Scotia. The chief of those who remove to the United States, who go from Nova Scotia to sail in American vessels, are young men who would never leave Nova Scotia could they get employment at home. There are many of opinion, that protective duties would raise Nova Scotia to a level with other countries, but I believe this would never keep these young men in the province.

The fact is, Nova Scotia wants a market for its produce, and its greatest production is fish. Let us see how a protective duty would work: the fisherman of Nova Scotia calls on a merchant for supplies: if he has a little property it is likely the answer will be,—you can have such and such articles, but as there is a high tariff this year, for the purpose of raising you to a level with other countries, you must pay an extra price for every barrel of flour, and in the same proportion for every other article you may want or require. When his bill is made out, it has a large appearance; but when he considers we have protective duties which will enable him to pay his bills, he puts it in his pocket and commences his fishing voyage.

After making his voyage, hearing that fish are worth a fair price in the United States, he collects his fish on board his craft, and generally take them to the port whence he was supplied in the spring.

On making enquiry of the price of fish, he finds them very low; on asking the cause, he is told why the duties are so high, it takes about one-fourth, including freight, insurance, &c., to have them disposed of in the United States. With this reduction, the fisherman often taking his whole voyage to the merchant who supplied him, finds it will not amount to a sufficient sum to pay his bills.

What now is to be done? He calls upon his merchant and asks if the protective duty will not be of service to him; the answer is,—oh! no, that is to protect the mechanic, those who have factories, the farmers, &c. He has a little property, and that must go to pay the balance of his bills, and perhaps not sufficient left to supply his family through the coming winter. But how will those do who sail in American vessels? When arriving in the United States they generally procure good wages, or should they ship on shares, their fish is taken to a market in the United States, free of duty or expense. As these vessels

are generally bound to some port in Nova Scotia, those who are Nova Scotia men can take their little supplies for their families, and have them landed at their doors, nearly as low as they can be procured in the United States. When their voyages are accomplished, they either proceed on to the United States and receive their share, or, as the practise is in some places, a merchant supplies them with goods to the amount of their voyage. He then receives a draft, which is accepted by the owner of the vessel, payable in the United States. This answers the purpose of the fisherman, and likewise makes remittances for the merchants, who can step on board the packet and proceed to the United States, collect his drafts, make arrangements for a new supply for the coming season, and return. This appears to be the state of a large part of Nova Scotia at present. There has been a difference of opinion respecting reciprocal trade between the United States and the British Colonies. As regards the cod fisheries, it is my opinion, that American fishermen affect our shore fisheries more by being kept on the outer banks, when if they were admitted freely into our ports, our fishermen would be enabled to procure larger fares; I have no doubt that the convention between the Americans and British has been the cause of the American fishermen procuring theirs much sooner than they would have done had they been admitted freely into our ports. As regards the mackerel fishery, it is a question not so easily decided. There is but little doubt the Americans would enjoy some of the privileges which now belong to British subjects; but could we receive something equivalent for those privileges, by having the same privilege in the American market, our fish and produce going there free of duty, our coasters having the same privilege in American ports as they had in ours, this might have a tendency to bring Nova Scotia on a level with other countries, and prevent our young men from leaving the province. The means to be employed for the prevention of those who might trespass on the fishing ground, or are engaged in illicit trade, is a question of great importance at present. As to smuggling, perhaps that trade will never be entirely abolished; but much might be done if the officers and magistrates on shore would take sufficient interest to put down this trade. Persons commissioned on board of vessels have not the opportunity of detecting these things as those on shore, as vessels so commissioned are generally watched.

The course to be pursued to prevent foreign vessels from trespassing on the grounds reserved for British subjects, requires more talent and experience than I have, to decide. However, with the information which I have received, and the little experience I have, it appears that it would take a larger amount than the legislature of Nova Scotia would grant for the protection of the fisheries, when we take into consideration the extent of the coast on Nova Scotia and Cape Breton, which, in the latter part of the season, is completely lined with American vessels, from Cape Gaspe to Cape North, in Cape Breton. These vessels I have been informed, often fish within half a mile from shore, paying little or no regard to the limits stated in the national convention. In fact the day on which I seized the "Tiber," there were sixty or seventy sail in sight, which were nearly all within limits; but as these are fast sailing vessels, if they once get the start, and are out of gunshot, they feel quite secure. Were the British Colonies united, or was each colony equally interested in the fisheries, and would all come forward to protect the fisheries, it would be of great consequence. The coast cannot be protected from encroachment by foreigners, by sailing vessels, unless there are three or four in number.

A small steam vessel would likely be of great service to prevent foreigners from encroaching, but as the fishermen are generally fitted with good glasses, it is not likely a steam vessel would take them in the act of fishing within the limits. In the convention between the two nations, the words "curing fish" and "preparing the fish," it appears to me to require some further explanation; on the former the American fishermen believe the object was to prevent them curing or drying codfish on shore, as the hook mackerel fishing was not practised when that convention was made. I have seen instances where American vessels had been fishing the whole of the day, towards evening a gale springing up, they were forced to run for a harbor with fifty or sixty barrels of fresh mackerel on deck, and if salting those fish is understood curing fish, which I think is the only way mackerel can be cured, under those circumstances these people must cast their fish into the sea again, or run the

the risk of having the vessel and cargo seized. The words "preparing the fish," may be construed to what it was not intended.

When cruising in the schooner *Telegraph* last fall, being in Little Canso, an American vessel lay near; I discovered the men busily employed on deck, I manned my boat and boarded her; I found them employed grinding bait for mackarel; the captain appeared quite innocent, and said he had been so careful he had not taken a lobster while in the harbor. This might be understood preparing to fish.

That part of the convention which provides that American fishermen shall be admitted to enter the bays and harbors in the British colonies, for the purpose of shelter and repairing damages therein, of obtaining wood and water, and for no other purposes whatever,—if strictly carried out would not allow them, in my opinion, to do any more than is specified in the convention. I made some enquiry respecting the words "preparing to fish," from those who I thought might understand the subject, who gave their opinion, that laying the vessel to or putting her in a proper position to fish, was the proper meaning. Another question in my opinion requires some consideration—that is, that part of the law which requires that vessels after having been seized shall be left in charge of the officer of her majesty's customs in the first port which they may enter.

In case the vessel and cargo should be sold, they would not be worth near as much in some ports as they would in others. As regards Port Hood, there is not any safe place for a vessel to lie unless she has a crew constantly on board. The sixth question, referred to the law officers in England,—whether American vessels have a right to enter the harbors of this province for the purpose of obtaining wood and water, having provided neither of these articles at the commencement of the voyage in their own country, appears to be unrestricted by any condition expressed or implied. I believe it has been the practice of American vessels when bound to the Labrador to stop at some port in Nova Scotia to procure firewood, small spars, such as boats' masts, sprits, oar rafters, gaff handles, and such like things.

It is my opinion that persons commissioned for the protection of the fisheries, should have very explicit instructions: what would be a sufficient time for procuring wood, water, &c., and likewise how far the word "shelter" should extend. I have examined the report of the committee on the fisheries for 1851, and do not see any further explanation than the law officers in England have given. Their decision respecting the prescribed limits appears to be plain; but respecting the entering our harbours, in my opinion, requires some additional explanation.

I have, &c.

PAUL CROWELL.

February 10, 1852.

No. 26.

(See page 98.)

[COPY.]

No. 294.

Downing street, 9th December, 1851.

SIR—

I transmit herewith the copy of a letter from the board of admiralty, enclosing one from the judge advocate at Halifax, in which he represents the difficulty experienced by the court of vice admiralty, in protecting shipwrecked property, and suggests that he should be invested with a discretionary power, to guarantee the payment of the necessary official fees and disbursements.