

APPENDIX No. 50.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES.

The Committee on the Fisheries beg leave to report as follows—

At the last session your committee recommended that an address should be presented to her Majesty by both branches of the Legislature, with a view of having the evil results of the trawl or setline fishery brought to the notice of the Governments of France and the United States of America, and to endeavor to impress upon those governments the necessity of discontinuing this destructive mode of fishing. Your committee have had before them copy of despatch from the Lieutenant-Governor to the Duke of Newcastle on this subject, and a reply thereto, and they regret to observe that on the subject being brought to the notice of the French Government with a view to the appointment of a commissioner to investigate the causes of complaint, and to establish regulations for the prevention of the evils referred to, they declined to do so, and gave as their opinion that it would be more preferable to have each government to make such regulations as they might judge most suitable for the preservation of the fisheries. Your committee deeply regret the decision arrived at on this subject by the French Government, inasmuch as in the opinion of your committee, the united action of the three governments was necessary, in order to suppress this destructive mode of fishing, but they suppose that further negotiation with that government at present will be useless. Your committee, however, do not notice from the papers before them that any mention of the matter has been made to the Government of the United States, and would recommend that so soon as the troubles in that country shall have ended, the subject shall be brought to their notice, impressing upon them the necessity of uniting with us in making such regulations as will put a stop to the evil complained of, which, if persisted in, must ere long totally ruin the codfisheries of this Province. Your committee have also had before them despatches on the subject of difficulties with the inhabitants of Newfoundland on the coast of Labrador, and are pleased to notice that some steps have been taken to prevent those difficulties recurring in future. This being so valuable a fishery to the people of this Province, no pains should be spared to render its prosecution as free from difficulties as possible. The necessity for protection to the fishermen will be seen in the fact that at least ten vessels returned last season, having lost their voyages owing entirely to the lawless conduct of the Newfoundland fishermen. This subject was brought last year to the notice of the Admiral on the station, who promptly responded to the request made for an armed vessel to be stationed on the coast, but your committee are informed that the armed vessel sent down did not appear at the right place in the right season, and would recommend that the Admiral be requested to allow some intelligent fisherman (who has experienced the hard usage to which we have referred) to be put on board the armed vessel sent upon this service; and thus render almost certain the detection of those lawless men in their acts of aggression.

On the petition of certain inhabitants of the County of Inverness praying for a tonnage bounty on vessels engaged in the seal fishery, your committee agree in opinion with the report of the committee in the session of 1860, that this branch of the fisheries is not entitled to, or does not require any legislation different from the others.

On the petition of Wm. Mussels, praying for the enactment of a law to compel persons setting nets to do so only in front of their own premises, your committee believe it would be unwise to exact any such law, as it would exclude a large population from the right of fishing.

All which is respectfully submitted.

JOHN LOCKE,
HENRY BAILEY,
M. ROBICHEAU,
WM. ROSS,
B. WIER,
PETER SMYTH,
HENRY MARTELL.

Committee Rooms, March, 1862.

(A true copy.)

A. JAMES,
Clerk of House of Assembly.