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1870

OBSERVATIONS  
ON THE  
NORTHERN FISHERIES.

WITH A  
DISCOURSE  
ON THE  
EXPEDIENCY OF ESTABLISHING  
FISHING STATIONS,  
OR  
SMALL TOWNS,  
IN THE  
HIGHLANDS OF SCOTLAND,  
AND THE  
HEBRIDE ISLANDS.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,  
THE LAST REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE APPOINTED BY  
THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, TO ENQUIRE INTO THE  
STATE OF THE BRITISH FISHERIES.

.....  
BY JOHN KNOX,  
AUTHOR OF A VIEW OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE.  
.....

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M DCC LXXXVI.

PRICE THREE SHILLINGS.



## P R E F A C E.

**A**S the improvement of the Highlands, and the fisheries upon their extensive shores, is now become an object of Parliamentary attention, the following Plans and Observations may prove useful to such senators as shall give them a perusal.

The gentlemen of the Committee on the British Fisheries having closed their enquiries for this season, I have subjoined their last *Report*, by which means the public will be furnished, at one view, with the most material points that remain to be discussed in Parliament.

The reader will perceive some difference respecting Bounties, between the plan recommended in the following *Detail*, and that recommended in the *Report*. This arises from an idea conceived by some members of the Committee, that the appropriating a part of the bounty to the quantity of fish caught, will operate as a more effectual stimulus to industry among the fishers.

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This plan, it must be acknowledged, hath very considerable merit, and might, with some small Amendments, be rendered unexceptionable, if it could be carried into practice, on a distant and very extensive coast, without the hazard of speculation, collusion, and frauds.

Some objects of less import still await the attention of a future Committee, or of the Senate; which, when brought forward, will complete the most judicious System of Fishery Regulations and Arrangements that hath hitherto been formed in these kingdoms, and to which every senator, who shall take the trouble of investigating the subject, and its consequences, will, we hope, give his hearty support.

CONSI-

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# CONSIDERATIONS

ON THE

## NORTHERN FISHERIES.

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### SECTION I.

**O**F the business which claims the immediate attention of Parliament, that of the northern fisheries, though among the most important, seems to be the least understood; and it is in a great measure owing to this misconception, that the first nursery for seamen in the possession of any nation, hath at no time been carried to any considerable extent by the subjects of these kingdoms, while foreigners have for many ages, derived benefit from them, almost beyond the powers of belief.

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The British fisheries; her coasting, European, and North American trade, raise hardy and healthy seamen, on whom the defence of our country, the protection of our commerce, and distant settlements, solely depend. The trade to Africa, and the East Indies, hath also been represented as a nursery for seamen, but with less propriety, as it enervates and destroys considerable numbers of that valuable class of people annually, and requires constant supplies from those who navigate the temperate climates of Europe and America. The West India trade is also detrimental to the health of mariners, though in a much less degree than the African and Asiatic voyages.

Thus, it appears that our fisheries and home trade answer the double purpose of supplying the waste of those great branches, the trade to Africa, China, and both the Indies, while it enables us to man the most victorious fleets that the world hath seen.

It is a pleasing consideration, that notwithstanding the almost unequalled extent of our home trade, and the number and magnitude of the royal navy, sources are still in reserve



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serve by which these important objects may be carried to a greater height, and this envied island enabled to meet the combined force of its enemies, at least, on equal terms.

The first object is home colonization, by which I mean the bringing forward the northern part of the island, encreasing the number of useful active people, on those much neglected shores, whereby the general commerce would be greatly extended over the whole island, and at a small expence, compared to the enormous expenditure on precarious settlements abroad. Of this policy, the neighbouring nations, particularly France, Germany, and Russia, are setting examples with unremitting vigour. Every thousand persons thus brought into the line of action at home, contribute more to the strength of the empire than twenty thousand people settled, and protected, at a considerable expence, at the distance of some thousand miles from the centre; and if we can only add in the proportion of one third, or fourth, to the voyages carried on at present in temperate climates, the navy will be supplied with

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greater facility both in the commencement and progress of war.

But colonization is a work of time, and however vigorously we may apply to that object, it is to be feared that the evil day would come upon us, before we could derive any material benefit from it, even supposing that the Legislature should enter upon the laudable work during the present Sessions of Parliament.

The second, and also the most speedy and effectual measure, is the northern fisheries, which, to revive, extend, and confirm to the native subjects, may be considered as the grand work of the present period, and which may be carried into execution almost instantaneously, to the amazement and disappointment of those who may have already formed the plan of hostile operations.

The indispensable necessity of immediate attention to this nursery, will appear from the following statement of the progressive increase of men employed in the navy from the revolution in 1688, when England and Holland entered into an alliance of mutual defence, to the close of the last war.

The

## THE NORTHERN FISHERIES. 5

The war commenced in 1689,	employed	45,000
————— 1702,	—————	41,000
————— 1740,	—————	60,000
————— 1755,	—————	70,000
————— 1775,	—————	110,000

The late change in the political system of France from military to naval exertion, and the powerful acquisition of the Dutch navy to that of France and Spain, will in all probability require 200,000 men on the part of Great Britain; and when we recollect the difficulties, embarrassments, delays, disappointments, and heavy expences in raising from 41 to 110,000 men since the beginning of the present century, it is evident to a demonstration, that not only the protection of our trade and colonies depends chiefly upon the northern fisheries, but also the defence of Great Britain itself; which, were it invaded by the conjunct force of those powers, would receive a shock fatal to public credit, and to every department of which that credit is the main spring.

The vigorous preparations which France, Spain, and Holland are making in time of profound peace, and the well known dispositions of these powers for abridging the

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commerce of this country, leaves no room to doubt of some great design being in embryo, which may come upon us like a thunder bolt, unless we avert the storm by having always in readiness 200,000 seamen on whom we can depend, when wanted for immediate service. This is our sheet anchor, and to which all other modes of defence are only secondary aids. The insular situation of Great Britain and Ireland renders them vulnerable on every side along a coast of 3000 miles, lined for the greatest part with unprotected towns, shipping, dockyards and valuable merchandize. To raise fortifications sufficient for their defence would be the work of half a century, at an expence of many millions; and to garrison them completely, would require above 50,000 men, supported at an expenditure which these nations cannot afford.

Fortifications may however be necessary in a certain degree, as at the dock yards, and the entry into navigable rivers whose shores are populous and commercial: the erection of these works may be carried on with greater or less expedition, as the overplus revenue shall

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shall admit, because a well appointed fleet *will* answer the purpose of national protection for several years to come, before our supposed enemies shall be able to man all their ships,

In short, it is impossible to defend such an extent of coast by any other means than a powerful navy, which will always command respect, keep the enemy at a distance, divide their force, and perplex their councils. While it is the most effectual, it is also beyond comparison the cheapest mode of defence, and equally well calculated for commanding the attention of the enemy to their own shores. To this have been owing the peace and security of the centre of the empire while war hath raged in every quarter of the globe. From these considerations it would seem expedient, *in the first instance*, to provide an annual fund for keeping in home employ, a number of men sufficient to meet the enemy with that confidence which hath hitherto animated the breasts of English seamen, and led them to victory in almost every encounter, against equal numbers. The practicability of raising this number of men,

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and the comparative insignificance of the expence, will be the subject of another paper.

### SECTION II.

**T**HE number of seamen upon the peace establishment and in actual service,

is	—	—	14,400
And of marines	—	—	3,600
			<hr/>
		Men	18,000

The annual expence for each man	} £.	936,000
at 4l. per month for 13 months,		
is 52l. and the sum total for		
18,000 men	—	

Supposing a sum equal to one fifth of the above expenditure shall be appropriated annually to the northern fisheries, the number of men and boys thus employed, may be estimated thus, viz.

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## THE NORTHERN FISHERIES. 9

The eastern fishery between Shetland and Yarmouth \* will employ 300 buffes, carrying from 20 to 120 tons (but the highest bounty extending only to 80 tons as at present) the average burden 60 tons, at 40s. per ton bounty, and the average number of men in each bufs, 14.

£.	Men.
36,000	— 4200

The western fishery between Shetland and the Solway Firth, including the Firth of Clyde, and Lochfine, will employ 500 buffes equipped as above.

60,000	— 7000
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96,000	— 11,200
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\* The vessels fitted out on this side of the kingdom would also frequent the west coast occasionally both in the herring and white fisheries, and still more so when the proposed canals shall be finished.

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The eastern fishery will employ 3000 boats, each boat carrying 5 men and 1 boy, on an annual premium of 15l. per boat - - -	}	£.	Men
		45,000	— 18000

The western fishery will employ 4000 boats and wherries as above -	}	60,000	-- 24000
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Expence on 7000 boats, number of men	}	105,000	— 42000
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Ditto on 800 buffes — do.		96,000	— 11200
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Total expence and number of men - - -	}	201,000	— 53200
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But on account of some contingent expenditures, we shall suppose the net sum of 200,000l. will employ 50000 men only, in that case each seaman engaged in the fisheries, will cost the public 4l. per annum, being only a 13th part of the expence upon the seamen maintained on the peace establishment.

To illustrate this disproportion by another mode, let us suppose that war shall commence this day twenty years,

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## THE NORTHERN FISHERIES. 11

The expence of the 18,000 seamen and marines will have cost the public from the present time -	} £. 18,720,000
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And the same number of fishers during the same period, only }	1,440,000
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Difference in the expence upon equal numbers of men, in 20 years - - -	} 17,280,000
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And if we extend the calculation to the full number of fishers, the comparative expence will stand thus, viz.

On 18,000 seamen and marines	18,720,000
And on 50,000 fishers -	4,000,000
	14,720,000

Thus 18,000 seamen and marines kept on the peace establishment during 20 years, will have cost the public 14,720,000l. more than 50,000 seamen employed during the same period, on fisheries!

But however disproportioned is the expence of keeping in readiness these two classes of men, we cannot dispense with less than 18,000 seamen in actual service; and if to these we add the proposed number of fishers,

the

the general amount will be 68,000 men, ready to act as occasion may require, exclusively of all other sources, at the annual expence of 1,136,000l. ; being, when thus blended, (viz. the men at 4l. with those at 52l.) nearly 17l. per man for the whole number, so that it remains with the public to decide upon this matter, whether to keep in readiness only 18,000 men at 52l. each, or 68,000 at 17l. each.

As it cannot be supposed that any person who hath the smallest regard for the safety of his country, its commerce and distant settlements, will hesitate a moment on the preference due to the latter proposition, the mode of raising the additional 200,000l. for the peace as well as war establishment is next to be considered. On one hand, we perceive Government straining every nerve to raise the fund for reducing the national debt ; on the other hand, the people are already burdened beyond example with accumulating taxes ; yet, if this inconsiderable sum of 200,000l. shall be found essentially, if not indispensibly necessary for the further extension of our naval armaments, the Legislature must either  
weaken

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weaken the hands of Government, or make another call upon the people, or rather upon the luxuries of the wealthy. If amidst the numerous politicians of the present day, I might venture to give an opinion upon this alternative, it would be to leave Government in the full possession of the present revenue, and, at the same time, give every true patriot an opportunity of contributing 3s. or upwards towards the best of all national purposes, the keeping war at a distance, and the enemy from our gates; which contribution might be laid upon dogs\*, gentlemen's carriages, or any

\* Proposal for a tax on dogs.—Let every person who shall keep one or more dogs be obliged to take out a licence, specifying the number of dogs he shall so keep.

Let every person taking out such licence be obliged to pay for the said licence at the rate of three shillings for every dog, which the licence shall authorise him to keep.

Let a new licence be taken out at the end of the year from the date of the former licence.

Let the tax be payable for every dog that shall be more than eight days old.

Let it be declared that every dog shall have a collar of metal or leather, on which shall be marked in legible characters, the name of its owner, and the place of his or her abode.

All farmers who rent less than 25l. per annum to be exempted,

other

other article of luxury. Thus, the seasonable disbursement of a mere trifle, and that well applied, may be the means of averting greater requisitions, not only upon dogs, but on carriages, horses, servants, drefs, &c. which will be inevitable, unless all the constituent parts of that mighty bulwark, the British navy, shall be kept in constant readiness to combat the greatest naval force which may be brought against it.

But, admitting that the wealthy part of the nation shall take this further expence upon themselves, it may be doubted by some persons whether there be an absolute certainty of thus raising and employing 50,000 men in the northern division of the island. To this, it may be answered, that, should the given number of men fall short, the expence would be proportionably less, and 4l. for every man deficient, would remain in the Treasury. If, for instance, only 25,000 men should, upon an average of years, be employed in these fisheries, the expence would be 100,000l. and the surplus would constitute a fund for internal improvements.

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## THE NORTHERN FISHERIES. 15

I am very far, however, from having any doubts on that head; and it is the peculiar happiness of these kingdoms that there are no grounds for any. By a long and attentive application to the history of the northern fisheries, from the earliest accounts to the present time; by personal enquiries amongst the fishers themselves, respecting the number of vessels, boats, and men which have been, are, and might be employed, on the different shores of Scotland, as well as in the great northern ocean contiguous to that kingdom, I am inclined to believe that the seamen thus employed, might, instead of 50 be increased to 100,000, providing the bounty amounted to 6l. per man annually. So extensive are those seas, and so inexhaustible are the fish which they contain, that the number of seamen may be increased to any amount, or reduced to a few thousands as at present. The whole depends upon the aid given by Government towards encouraging these fisheries, as well as the mode of applying that aid. It is therefore at the option of the public, whether to raise and employ in this nursery, 25, 50, or 100,000 men: probably

bably the medium number will appear the most eligible on which to try the experiment. I shall only observe further in this place, that had France been possessed of such a channel whereby to equip her navy, that of Great Britain, together with its commerce, would probably have been annihilated long ago.

### S E C T I O N III.

**H**AVING stated the number of men which may be raised by the northern fisheries, the expence to the public, and the most effectual manner of applying that expence, an answer may be expected to some objections advanced by certain uninformed, speculative writers, respecting the proposed mode of bestowing the public aid.

Previously to the discussion of this subject, I shall give a retrospective sketch of the practice by which the fisheries were carried on in former times under the sanction or by the authority of the national councils.

It seems evident, from tradition and history, that the French and Spaniards frequented

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quented the western coasts of Scotland in very early times, where they traded with the natives for fish. By this it may be understood, that the Scots were the fishers, and that foreigners were the carriers.

It is probable, that this fishery was carried on by little open wherries or boats, such as the Highlanders generally use at the present day. The Scottish Legislature, in later times, laboured to enforce a more effectual and extensive method of carrying on the fisheries, by obliging not only the royal boroughs, but also the nobility, dignified clergy, and principal gentry, to fit out ships, buffes, and pink boats, with nets and all other necessaries for fishing, throughout the whole kingdom. Though the Hebrides, and the opposite shores, far removed from the seat of government, were, it may be supposed, scarcely within the reach of these laws, in rude ages, yet we find certain regulations in the reign of James III. respecting the Hebrides fishery.

During the reigns of James and Charles I. the Duke of Richmond, Lord Southampton, Sir William Monson, and other persons of

distinction, warmly recommended a vigorous prosecution of the fisheries; and in 1633, several of these persons embarked in the design of establishing a Hebride or north west fishery, which Charles honoured with his patronage, and encouraged by his bounty. He also ordered *Lent* to be more strictly observed; prohibited the importation of fish taken by foreigners; and agreed to purchase from the company his naval stores, and the fish for his fleets. Thus the scheme of establishing an extensive fishery began to assume a favourable aspect; but all the hopes of the adventurers were frustrated by the breaking out of the civil wars, and the very tragical death of their generous benefactor. It also appeared, upon a subsequent enquiry, that the company had sustained many losses and wrongs by their servants, throughout the whole business.

In 1654, a number of persons of considerable property in London, seemed earnestly to set about the herring fishery; and for their encouragement, the English commonwealth granted them an exemption from the duties on salt, and naval stores, to be used in the  
said



ſaid fiſhery. Collections were likewise made at London, and other parts, toward the erecting of wharfs, docks, and ſtore-houſes ; and for the purchaſing of ground for the making and tanning of their nets. The attempt being fruſtrated through Cromwell's uſurpation, nothing was done except the deſtroying the old fortification at Stronaway in the iſland of Lewis, by that uſurper, and his building another to bridle the inhabitants, who, notwithstanding this precaution, cut off his garrifon to a man.

In 1661, Charles II. the Duke of York, Lord Clarendon, and other gentlemen of rank and fortune, reſumed the buſineſs of the northern fiſheries with greater vigour than any of their predeceſſors. For this purpoſe the moſt ſalutary laws were enacted by the Parliaments of England and Scotland, in virtue of which, all materials uſed in, or depending upon, the fiſheries, were exempted from all duties, exciſes, or impoſts whatever. In England, the company were authoriſed to ſet up a lottery, and to have a voluntary collection in all pariſh churches ; houſes of entertainment, as taverns, inns, ale-houſes, were to

take one or more barrels of herrings, at the stated price of 30s. per barrel; and also, 2s. 6d. per barrel was to be paid to the stock of this company on all imported fish taken by foreigners.

Some Dutch families were also invited, or permitted, to settle at Stronaway: the herrings cured by the Royal English Company gave general satisfaction, and brought a high price. Every circumstance attending this new establishment seemed to be the result of a judicious and comprehensive plan, when, unfortunately, the necessities of the king obliged him to withdraw his subscription or bounty, which gave such umbrage to the parties concerned, that they soon after dissolved,

In 1677, a new royal company was established in England, at the head of which was the duke of York, the earl of Derby, &c. Besides all the privileges which former companies had enjoyed, the king granted this new company, a perpetuity, with a power to purchase lands; and also 20l. to be paid them annually, out of the customs of the port of London, *for every dogger or buss*, they should build and send out for seven  
I
years

years to come. A stock of 10,980*l.* was immediately advanced, and afterward 1600*l.* more. This small capital was soon exhausted in purchasing and fitting out buffes, with other incidental expences. The company made, however, a successful beginning; and one of their buffes or doggers actually took and brought home 32,000 cod fish; other vessels had also a favourable fishery.

Such promising beginnings might have excited fresh subscriptions, when an unforeseen event ruined the whole design. Most of the buffes had been built in Holland, and manned with Dutchmen; on which pretence, the French, who were then at war with Holland, seized six out of seven vessels, with their cargoes and fishing tackle; and the company being now in debt, sold, in 1680, the remaining stores and materials. A number of gentlemen and merchants raised a new subscription of 60,000*l.* under the privileges and immunities of the former charter. This attempt also came to nothing, owing to the death of the king, and the troubles of the subsequent reign.

Soon after the Revolution, the business was again resumed, and upon a more extensive scale; the proposed capital being 300,000*l.* of which 100,000*l.* was to have been raised by the surviving patentees, or their successors, and 200,000*l.* by new subscribers. Copies of the letters patent, the constitution of the Company, and terms of subscription, were lodged at sundry places in London and Westminster, for the perusal of the public, while the subscription was filling. It is probable, that king William's partiality to the Dutch fishers, the succeeding war, or both of these circumstances, frustrated this new attempt, of which we have no further account in the annals of that reign.

The Scottish parliament had also, during the three last reigns, passed sundry acts for erecting companies, and promoting the fisheries; but the intestine commotions of that country, and the great exertions which were made for the Darien establishment, enfeebled all other attempts, whether by collective bodies of men, or by individuals, within that kingdom.

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In 1749, at the close of a long and expensive war, his late majesty having, upon the opening of the parliament, warmly recommended the improvement of the northern fisheries, \* the House of Commons appointed a committee to enquire into the state of the herring and white fisheries, and to consider of the most probable means of extending the same.

All ranks of men were elevated with an idea of the boundless riches that would flow into the kingdom from this source, besides the advantages to the royal navy, which would derive vigour proportioned to the liberal encouragement given to this great nursery of seamen. The city of London and other corporations petitioned the House of Commons for an extensive fishery; and thus, the king, the parliament, and the people,

\* Hitherto the British Company fisheries had been chiefly confined to the Hebrides, or Western seas. it was now proposed to attempt the Shetland fishery, the great station of the Dutch, and other foreigners. These islands lie 100 miles due north from Scotland, and about the same distance from Norway. They were subject to the crown of Scotland, and now form a part of the British empire.

being unanimous in sentiment, a subscription of 500,000*l.* was immediately filled in the city, and 120,000 was actually lodged by a body of men who were incorporated for 21 years, by the name of, *The Society of the Free British Fishery*. Every encouragement was held out by government, both to the society and to individuals, who might embark in this national business. A gratuity of 3 per cent. *per annum*, was to be paid to the subscribers upon every 100*l.* actually employed in the fishery; and an annual bounty of 30*s.* per ton, during 14 years from the date of the charter, to the owners of all decked vessels or busses, of 20 to 80 tons burden, which should be built after the commencement of the act, for the use of, and fitted out and employed in the said fisheries, whether by the society or any other persons. At the same time, numerous pamphlets and news-paper essays came forth, all pretending to elucidate the subject, and to convince the public with what facility the herring fisheries might be transferred from Dutch to British hands.

This

## THE NORTHERN FISHERIES. 25

This proved, however, a more arduous task than had been foreseen by superficial speculators. The Dutch were frugal in their expenditures and living, perfect masters of the arts of fishing and curing, which they had carried to the greatest height and perfection. They were till the rise of the Swedes, in full possession of the European markets, a trifling rivalship from Scotland and Yarmouth excepted; and their fish, whether deserving or otherwise, had the reputation of superior qualities to all others taken in our seas.

With such advantages, the Dutch not only maintained their ground against this formidable company, but had also the pleasure of seeing the capital gradually sinking, notwithstanding the efforts of government from time to time in their favour, particularly in 1757, when the bounty was extended from 30 to 50s per ton. Their affairs becoming desperate soon after this liberal exertion of parliament, they sold their vessels and materials, and finally relinquished a business which had reduced their capital to little more than 7 per cent.

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The fall of this short-lived-fociety was chiefly owing to the want of markets, both at home and abroad; and, as if fate had decreed against the permanent establishment of a British fishery, the herrings at this time took a new course, which, though sufficient quantities still fell in upon our northern shores, raised an unexpected rival to the British, as well as the Dutch fishers or merchants.

The coasts of Norway, Sweden, Holstein, Germany, Britain, and Ireland, are, or have been, the principal seats of the herring fisheries on this side the Atlantic. Sometimes, however, the herrings, after having frequented certain shores for many seasons, and even ages, have capriciously abandoned those shores, seemingly never to return. Antiently, the coast of Sweden abounded so plentifully in herrings, that vessels resorted thither from various parts of Europe, to load with that article. Leaving the Swedish coast, the herrings fell to the southward, upon Holstein and the German shore, where they became a valuable prey to the Hans-towns, who thereby acquired a degree of opulence, power, and splendour, till then unknown in the north.

About



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About the beginning of the sixteenth century, the herrings also forsook the coasts of Germany and Holstein, as appears by the writings of Camden, Raleigh, Monson, and other British as well as foreign historians; and it was during the subsequent period, while Britain might have been enriched by an exclusive fishery, and the command of markets, that the Dutch directed their attention to the Scottish shores, with such assiduity and perseverance, that it is conjectured they have thereby realized three hundred millions sterling, while the infatuated natives were mere dabblers both in taking and curing.

These trifling captures enabled the Scots, however, to carry on a petty traffic with France, Hamburgh, Sweden, and the towns on the Baltic, where their herrings found a ready market; and, it is probable, that the society of the Free British Fishery had a view to the Swedish and Baltic trade when they first contemplated the business: but, as before observed, instead of a market, they had scarcely commenced their operations, when  
to

to their great astonishment, they found a formidable rival.

About the year 1752, the herrings returned to the Swedish coast after an absence of three or four centuries, of which bounty, that nation soon availed itself, and at present the exports of pickled herrings amount nearly to 200,000 barrels, besides the supply of the kingdom, which is very considerable.

The circumstances of this fishery gave the Swedes a decided advantage over that of Shetland and the Hebrides, and enabled those people to supply Europe at 7 or 8s. per barrel, while the British society could not take less than a guinea for the same quantity.

The herrings and cod-fish are driven in shoals by the whales, upon that part of the Swedish coast which lies contiguous to the trading city of Gottenburg. As the whales dare not venture in between the islands and the rocks upon the main land, they remain some weeks watching for the return of the shoals, on the back of a sand-bank which lies parallel to the shore, and extends 300 miles in length. In the mean time, the sharks, porpuffes, and smaller fish of prey, pursue and  
drive

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drive the cod and herrings along shore to inlets and creeks, where they crowd in such numbers that they are taken up in baskets or pails; and, it frequently happens, that upon the ebb of the tide, those which are furthest within the crevices, are left in heaps upon the beach, for those who choose to take them up. It is chiefly by means of this easy capture, with the cheapness of casks and labour, that the Swedes have defeated the late attempts of this country to establish fisheries, by means of societies; and, if ever this great national business shall be carried to any considerable extent, it will be solely owing to the encouragement given, not to chartered companies, but to individual adventurers; and to the ability of those adventurers to persevere in that business against all the accidents, discouragements, and misfortunes which attend it, both in the capture, and the sale of the fish.

So inconsiderable was the fishery of the society, that the highest amount of bounties in one year, viz. 1757, was only 8667*l.* and the greatest quantity of white herrings exported, viz. in 1758, only 10,942 barrels.

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## SECTION IV.

**H**AVING brought down the history of the society or chartered fisheries to the time when the last British company abandoned their enterprize, and sold their vessels, stores, and materials, it is now proposed to state some particulars relative to the present western fishery carried on by individuals upon a bounty, with the causes of its decline, and the certain means of establishing an extensive, permanent fishery in the seas which environ the northern part of the united kingdom.

When the society dissolved, all the fishing chambers established in the ports of the eastern coast, and which were branches of that society, also broke up; and from that time forward, the buss fishery hath been almost totally neglected on the east side of Great Britain, excepting at Yarmouth, where the fishers, stimulated by the certain annual re-  
turns

## THE NORTHERN FISHERIES. 31

turns of the herrings, and the facility of taking them, employ about 100 vessels upon their own coast, but, *from choice, without the bounty*, and consequently without the restraints and extra expence which the bounty laws require.

As the herrings taken at Yarmouth are chiefly dried or reddened, the British white herring fishery seemed now lost beyond recovery to the inhabitants of these kingdoms, while Dutch, Hamburghers, French, Flemings, Danes, Prussians, Dantzickers, were again restored to the full possession of our Shetland and east country buss fishery, which they have engrossed to the present time, two or three vessels excepted, which have occasionally made their appearance in that employ between Shetland and the main land of Scotland.

Thus were the inhabitants of Great Britain, after a succession of liberal, and vigorous efforts, nearly beat out of their own fisheries, when a spirit of enterprize broke forth in the west of Scotland, which bade defiance to the inclemencies of the winter, or the dangers of the turbulent Atlantic; and had not their laudable exertions been checked by a  
train

train of impediments injudiciously imposed by the Legislature, the Board of Customs at Edinburgh, and the subordinate officers in that department, there is every reason to believe; that 500 busses would have been afloat at this present time, from the Clyde, the west Highlands, and the Hebride isles, on the fishery of these shores.

Of these impediments I have selected the following :

1. *By the statute of 1750, the busses fitted out for the Shetland fishery were to rendezvous at Brassa Sound, before the 22d of June (New Stile) and might shoot or wet their nets on the 24th of the same month, agreeably to the practice of the Dutch and all foreigners; but the vessels fitted out from the Clyde for the western or Hebride fishery, were not to proceed from the place of rendezvous before the 12th of September, by which restriction they were deprived of the Summer fishery, when the finest and best flavoured herrings abound on these shores, which always bring a high price at the European markets.—This strange defect is now rectified by a statute of last sessions, which permits the busses to clear out any time after the 1st of June. An act of the Irish Parliament*

## THE NORTHERN FISHERIES. 33

ment, which passed at the same time, allows the vessels of that kingdom to clear out on or before the 25th of April, though I can see no reason for that early day, as the herrings proper for markets do not make their appearance before the middle of June, more usually the beginning of July.

2. *Vessels clearing out at Greenock, Port-Glasgow, and other towns on the Clyde, at the before-mentioned late season, were, nevertheless, obliged to rendezvous at the port of Campbeltown; a restriction without an object, though attended with inconveniencies, expence, and frequently great delays in the outward-bound voyage, by which the season was wasted and sometimes lost, the adventurers injured, and the West India ships unnecessarily detained from prosecuting their voyages.—The statute of last sessions empowers vessels to proceed immediately from the place where they are fitted out, to the fishing grounds.*

3. *The statutes enacted, that all and every person and persons employed in the fisheries may fish in any part of the British seas, and shall have and exercise the free use of all ports and harbours, shores, and forelands, in Great Britain or the*

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islands

islands belonging to the crown of Great Britain. But the licenses granted by order of the Commissioners of the Customs, to the buffes on clearing out, bore, that such a vessel *was to proceed to the north west Highlands*; and the oath administered on the sufferance inwards, was, *that the herrings were caught on the coasts of Scotland*. Those who could not take this oath had the mortification to find themselves deprived of the parliamentary bounty. This direct resistance to the spirit and express words of the law happened at a period when the herrings had seemingly forsaken their usual course through the Hebride islands, in their migration to the north of Ireland and the Irish channel, where the devoted Scottish fishers were by these custom-house mandates prevented from following them. The whole coast was filled with indignation against these self-made legislators, after having in vain pleaded upon the obvious words of the statutes of their country. At length, in 1783, the Convention of the Royal Boroughs took the matter into consideration, and, in a spirited memorial addressed to the Lords of the Treasury, brought the



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Commissioners to a right conception of the statutes, which, in a circular letter to the fishers of Scotland, they pretend to have misunderstood. As the herrings had been remarkably plentiful on the coasts of Ireland and the Isle of Man, while the Scots were prohibited from taking them, the loss, positive and negative, sustained by these people, hath been estimated at a very considerable amount. At the same time, the inhabitants of the western parts were deprived of their usual subsistence, and in a season of extreme scarcity.

4. *Vessels on the bounty were not to be under 20, nor above 80 tons burden.*—The fishers petitioned for permission to employ vessels of larger size in that branch, when such vessels happened to be, unengaged in trade or freights. Their request was granted by the foresaid statute, and vessels of any size above 20 tons may now be employed in the fisheries; but the highest bounty is to remain as before, upon the 80 tons only.

5. *Vessels were to remain at sea from the 12th day of September till the 11th day of January, unless they should sooner have completed their loading*

*of fish; and, by a subsequent statute, they were to be at the place or places of rendezvous at any time between the 1st day of August, and the 1st day of October in each year; and to continue fishing for the space of three months from the day of their respective departure from the said places of rendezvous, unless they should have sooner completed their loading of fish.*—By the statute of last sessions, vessels are permitted to purchase herrings from the Highland boats, *if, at the expiration of three months they shall not have fished their full cargo.* This law is, however, still very defective, and extremely prejudicial to the busb fishery as well as that of the boats. The clause which obliges the busses to remain at sea three months, subjects the owners to burdensome expenditures in provisions, liquors, and wages, while the merchants or purchasers are equal, if not greater sufferers, by the delays occasioned through this tedious method of procuring cargoes. And it is also certain, that, though the busses are thus detained upon a sedentary fishery by their long boats, (the vessels being at anchor in some loch or bay) they seldom return home with more than half a loading; whereas,

whereas, a permission to purchase herrings immediately on their arrival at the favoured loch or channel, as well as to fish, would enable them to return earlier, and with better cargoes, to the mutual benefit of all parties concerned, the merchant, the fisher, and the poor natives, whose boat fishery was ruined by this law. *See View of the British Empire, page 214--241.*

6. The regulations and restrictions respecting foreign and home made salt are so ill adapted to an extensive, townless coast, that a compliance with the revenue statutes, in the present state of the Highlands, is impracticable. The frequent journies and voyages, with the numerous custom-house fees, on account of the salt business, have also been found too expensive for a branch which requires the closest œconomy in every department. This subject is now under the consideration of the committee upon the British fisheries, by whom the heads of a more unexceptionable bill will be brought into the House of Commons during the present sessions.

7. All herrings cured for home sale are subject to a duty of 1s. per barrel, if used in Scotland, and 3s. 4d. if used in England ; which

38 CONSIDERATIONS ON

duty having a manifest tendency to obstruct the fisheries, this subject is also before the committee.

8. The custom-house fees upon the fisheries in Scotland have become so burdensome as to absorb a considerable part of the bounty, especially on small vessels : particular statements thereof have been laid before the committee, and redress is expected.

9. The unforeseen prohibition of American produce, in 1776, raised the price of pitch, tar, hemp, and staves, to a height unknown in any former period, viz.

	<i>l.</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>	—	<i>l.</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>		
Tar per barrel from	0	8	0	to	2	2	0		
Best hemp per cwt.	1	14	0	—	2	6	0		
Casks for herrings	-	0	2	6	—	0	5	6	
Foreign salt per bushel, also rose from	}		0	1	6	---	0	3	0

While seamen's wages, provisions, and every material for fishing or ship-building, rose, during a 7 years war, in a proportionable degree.

10. But the most discouraging circumstance relates to the bounty. It hath been observed that, in 1750, government, to encourage the herring

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herring fisheries, whether carried on by companies or individuals, granted a bounty of 30s. per ton on the buffes who should engage therein; and that, in 1757, it was found expedient to extend that bounty to 50s.: That upon the strength of such encouragement, and relying on the punctual payment thereof, the enterprizing spirit of the west country people attempted a Hebride fishery, after all efforts of the British Society, and the fishing chambers in the out-ports, on the east coast, had totally failed.

The number of buffes increased with astonishing rapidity; the nets, and all the apparatus of the fisheries, were every year improved; the men became more expert in navigating those intricate seas, and in taking and curing the herrings.

The demands from Ireland, the west Indies, and for home consumption, were considerable. A fishery thus carried on by a persevering people, stimulated by quick sales, and supported, apparently, by liberal bounties, assumed for a time, every appearance of national and individual benefit. But these flattering appearances were of short dura-

tion : the incitements held out by government proved fallacious to all those who had directed their attention and capital to that business.

The bounty granted by parliament was tolerably well paid till the year 1766; and the adventurers, many of whose circumstances admitted of no delay, had till then, either obtained payment in a few months, or got their bounty certificates discounted by bankers at 5 to  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. But, on the return of the fleet in January 1766, the owners were thunder-struck, on finding that they could neither receive payment of the bounties, nor prevail on any banking company to discount them at any price, while their brethren who prosecuted that business from England were paid at sight\*. The Scottish fishers were officially informed, at Edinburgh, that the fund appropriated for paying the bounties claimed in that part of the united kingdom, was already

\* The English bounty was paid from the general revenue of the kingdom : the Scottish bounty was issued from one branch only of the revenue, collected within Scotland ; which, falling short of the demands made upon it, left the poor fishers without remedy.

anticipated

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anticipated for some years, and no money could be paid till the prior claims were discharged.

The fishers, or adventurers, had, by their industry, perseverance, and the assistance of friends, increased the number of buffes between 1759 and 1766, from 3 to 261, which was more than six times the number employed by the British Society at any one time. The aggregate burden amounted to 12,476 tons\*; the number of apprentices and men whom they had drawn into their service from idleness or indigence, and who were now become expert seamen, was 2881, the quantity of white herrings exported, 27,033 barrels, besides the home sale, which is always considerable when fish are plenty.

From this deduction and statement the reader may easily conceive the bad policy of thus overturning a business of such consequence to the navy, to the sugar islands, and

\* The average burden was about 50 tons; and the average number of men 11 to each vessel. At present the buffes are generally built on a larger construction, and carry 14 men and boys upon an average.

to thousands of persons who then depended upon that branch at home. The shock occasioned by the disappointment was not only felt severely by persons immediately concerned in the fishery, many of whom had stretched their credit to the utmost limits; but also by their neighbours, friends, and kinsmen; by merchants, coopers, blacksmiths, and other persons who had assisted them in the various operations and disbursements of the business. The unexpected stroke fell particularly heavy upon those classes of men who build and navigate our ships; who fight our battles, protect our commerce, and defend our island. From the same cause, also, many persons, whose industry would otherwise have been lost to the public, now saw themselves in danger of losing that bare subsistence which their labour had recently procured; the old and the young, persons of both sexes, and at either verge of life, who, though unable, or unqualified for other labour, found employment in dressing hemp, spinning twine, knitting and making nets, assisting in repacking the herrings, jobbing, &c. In these, and such like employments,



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ments, 800l. per annum hath been paid in the small port of Campbeltown, and its neighbourhood, chiefly to boys and girls, who otherwise must have been a burden on their indigent parents.

Such were the consequences to various descriptions of people, from inattention, or ill-judged œconomy, in withholding the encouragement which these industrious and useful members of the community had a right to expect.—But the mischief did not end here. The nature of a fishery requires a long preparation in a variety of expensive articles, as shipping, boats, nets, casks, and salt. No fewer than 258 buffes had in seven years been raised on the Firth of Clyde, through an exertion scarcely to be exceeded by any body of people in those stations of life, and under the same scanty circumstances. These vessels being, in 1765, engaged in a promising fishery, and the bounty, till then, having been paid nearly at the regular seasons, a new fleet was consequently on the stocks. Timber, pitch, tar, fails, cordage, staves, hoops, anchors, hemp, netting, and salt, were preparing, commissioned, or on ship-board.

The

The coopers had made, or were employed almost day and night in making, from 60 to 100,000 barrels: all departments were busily engaged in their respective branches.

It would be difficult to enumerate all the channels of expenditure into which the adventurers, and all persons depending on that business, had farther embarked for extending the fishery: neither can we form a precise estimate of the aggregate value of vessels on the stocks; of 261, with their nets and boats, already afloat; of the new materials on hand, and those engaged for; also many small houses built of stone, lime and slate, upon speculation. But, though we cannot speak with certainty on this head, there are sufficient grounds whereon to form a probable conjecture that the property, which then depended on the payment of the bounty, amounted to 300,000*l*.

Here, therefore, was a sum that far exceeded the general opinion of mankind, of which one part was positively absorbed, and the other part in a train of being expended  
on

## THE NORTHERN FISHERIES. 45.

on a property whereon the proprietors had sufficient reason to depend, till the stoppage of the bounty; when the whole property suddenly fell in value, became a dead stock, and could neither be sold, nor mortgaged on any reasonable conditions.

Universal dejection, complaints, and murmurs pervaded the whole western coasts of the kingdom: a general suspicion, every man of his neighbour, friend, or brother, succeeded to mutual confidence, and reciprocal good offices. The payment of the bounty, even at any distant period, became doubtful. In the mean time, numbers of those men who had unfortunately embarked in expensive undertakings upon the faith of Parliament, unable any longer to pacify their creditors, found themselves reduced to the sad alternative of public bankruptcy, a jail, or of flying to Ireland or America.

The more affluent or fortunate number, who had been able to discharge their engagements, seeing themselves still encumbered with the vessels and materials, were obliged to struggle with the fishery against all impediments,

diments, or suffer the buffes to rot in the harbours. The intreaties of the idle, the indigent, the widow, and the fatherless, who depended on this business for daily support, contributed also to quicken the resolves of the owners, who, during the four succeeding years, fitted out the following number of buffes, on the supposed Scottish bounty, besides a number of vessels who cleared out at Whitehaven on the English bounty which was regularly paid : but the extra expence in the voyages to and from Whitehaven reduced this bounty very considerably, viz.

In 1767	on the Scots bounty	263
1768	- -	202
1769	- -	89
1770	- -	19

The patience and abilities of most of the adventurers being now completely exhausted, and the old bounties for a number of years still unpaid, the scene of distress which operated amongst all orders of persons exceeded that of any former period.

Every man was eager to transfer his property upon any terms, to avoid the horrors of a jail; many vessels were attached and sold at  
half

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half their value; and happy was he who could assign over his bounty certificates at a discount so low as 30 per cent. Many of the adventurers thus undone, found it necessary to contemplate new objects by which themselves and their families might be supported; others left the country; while the merchant of property directed his capital to other channels. In this manner, the British fishery, begun in 1750, under the vigorous support of government, was, at the expiration of 10 years, and again, at the expiration of 20 years, almost annihilated, with the apparent loss of some hundred thousand pounds to the subjects of these kingdoms, while foreigners were gaining half a million annually by the fisheries of the Scottish seas, where the natives, collectively and individually, were baffled in every attempt.

During this melancholy state of the business, certain persons thought of an expedient, which soon after took effect, and again revived the hopeless dejected mind. Experience had convinced the fishers that a small bounty, well paid, was preferable, in its operation, to a nominal large bounty, withheld  
for

for a series of years, and at length producing only 70 per cent. They accordingly made a proposal to accept 30s. per ton instead of 50; which being injudiciously agreed to by government\*, the 50s. bounty was declared to cease, and, in lieu thereof, a bounty of 30s. was to commence in 1771, for a term of 7 years, and to be punctually paid from the general revenue of Scotland, in the same manner as the English bounties were paid from the general revenue of England.

The fishers, perceiving that the bounty was to be paid out of productive funds, seemed to forget their former misfortunes. They resumed the business with redoubled vigour; inasmuch, that the number of buxses, which in 1770, had dwindled to 19, had increased, in 1776, to 294, carrying 14,193 tons, 3,365 men, and bringing home in the first trip, 51,863 barrels of herrings. The fishery was now carried on in the harvest as well as

\* Though the fishers, thus driven to desperation, first made this proposal, it was not the interest of the public to accept of it. A reduction of 20s. per ton was far too much; it crippled the fisheries, as experience hath proved, and as the adventurers severely feel.

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in winter. The money received from the merchant for fish, and from the exchequer in bounties, enlivened the whole western coast; circulated through every bay, lake, and channel; extended even to the cabins of the exterior parts of the Highlands\*, and reached the most distant islands; when, as if fate had decreed against a British fishery, a combination of unfavourable circumstances, already enumerated, co-operating with the scantiness of the bounty, once more involved these devoted men in a train of difficulties, and the business again declined, notwithstanding every possible exertion of the merchants, traders, and fishers, to keep it from sinking. The number of buffes fitted out from 1776 to 1783 inclusive, were,

In 1776	-	-	294
1777	-	-	240
1778	-	-	220
1779	-	-	206

\* Not by means of fish sold to the buffes, which was prohibited, but in wages carried home by young men after the fishery was over, in each year. A trifle was also earned by the Highland women and children in gutting the herrings.

1780	-	-	181
1781	-	-	136
1782	-	-	147
1783	-	-	153

And though we are now at peace with all mankind; though the bounty is regularly paid, the number of buffes in 1784 and 5 is greatly reduced.

#### SECTION V.

**S**UCH a series of unforeseen obstructions to the success of the Hebride fishery, happening at the infancy of that business, it is not to be wondered if at the quantity of fish caught hath not fully answered the expectations of the parties concerned. In the midst of disappointments, perplexities, and doubts, it must however afford these enterprizing men some consolation to find that their case is taken up warmly by Government; that some impediments have already been removed; that others are now under consideration; and that every circumstance, those already enumerated as well as others  
of



of inferior import which have not been mentioned, relative to the fisheries, will be fully investigated, with a view to a more perfect system of fishery regulations, whereby that great source of national strength will be better enabled to hold out against occasional or unavoidable accidents, whether from war or otherwise. But, to place the fishery beyond the possibility of a failure hereafter, to give it efficacy, vigour, and permanency, through succeeding ages, something more seems requisite than the mere removal of certain impediments hitherto overlooked or disregarded. We are to consider it relatively with the fisheries carried on by other nations, and to enable the British merchant or fisher to go to the European and West India markets upon equal terms, or nearly so, with Dutch, Swedes, Norwegians, Danes, French, and our brethren in Ireland. If we remain deficient in this respect, all other expedients, though they may facilitate a contracted provincial fishery, will only operate as secondary causes, in the more enlarged scale which the manning of the navy seems to require.

The establishment of an extensive, efficient, permanent fishery, requires a liberal, efficient aid from the public, applied by that mode which experience hath proved to be the most efficacious, the most simple, and the least subject to frauds or abuses.

We have given the outlines of the successive attempts to establish a British fishery for these last 150 years, with the apparent causes of their failure; whereby it is evident, that, exclusively of civil commotions, all attempts to carry on a beneficial fishery by societies or companies of persons unacquainted with the business must unavoidably fail: that the same bounty, which, in the hands of the British fishing society, proved ineffectual, operated most successfully, when in the hands of individual adventurers, merchants, superannuated sea-captains, respectable coopers, ship carpenters, and practical fishers; infomuch, that the increase of decked vessels, houses, population and trade, where the fishery was prosecuted, far exceeded the most sanguine hopes of the Legislature; and had that bounty

bounty been continued and regularly paid, had no unnecessary restraints been laid upon the fishery, the number of vessels, houses, and people, would have at least been double to what they are at present. This mode of bestowing the public aid, is therefore, the only sure ground-work whereon to build our expectations of extensive fisheries; and, though some speculative writers have lately endeavoured to depreciate if not to annihilate the bus fishery, on pretence of the want of success, without stating fairly and candidly the causes thereof, it will be difficult if not impossible to propose a more unexceptionable plan. They have indeed attempted to amuse, or rather deceive the public, by a variety of schemes, some of which have been formerly attempted, but failed in the experiment; others are utterly impracticable; and the whole may be pronounced the chimerical effusions of prejudiced minds, or of persons whose knowledge of these subjects is so limited and superficial, that every merchant, seaman, and practical fisher, by whom that business is carried on, ridicules these theories as idle

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fancies,

fancies, or visionary dreams, scarcely worthy of their notice; much less, say the fishers, ought such men to have any weight with Government. The plans which these speculators propose to introduce would be productive of such endless perjuries and frauds, both towards Government and the purchasers of the fish, that the public would be robbed, and the British fish would be brought into disrepute at foreign markets. This was the case about the time of the union, and some years after, in both kingdoms: a large bounty was given per barrel upon herrings exported; the same herrings were frequently re-landed and entered a second time upon the bounty for exportation. But this was not the only deception: barrels were sold abroad at a high price, which when unpacked, were found to contain stones and rubbish in the centre, and herrings at each end. The merchants were enraged, and for some years after the frauds had been discovered, it was in vain to attempt the sale of British herrings in many towns of the continent. This circumstance  
seems

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seems to have escaped the notice of those who propose a high premium on exportation, in preference to the tonnage bounty.

We are next entertained with a plan for establishing a boat fishery at little expence to the public. Much stress hath been laid upon this scheme, as being the most effectual, the most rational, and the most humane design that can be conceived. It is this: To give boats and nets to all those who choose to ask for them. I shall just observe on this head, that soon after the last rebellion, the trustees for the forfeited estates, among other efforts to improve the Highlands and employ the people, gave boats, nets, &c. to the natives upon the coast, which were soon embezzled, and the good intentions of the trustees came to nothing.

One writer, more noted for the multiplicity of his projects than the solidity of them, proposes to establish a great fishery by means of premiums, of which I think he specifies 15 or 20 sets, each set containing 6, 8, or 10 classes of boats or buffes. No other writer seems to dispute the originality of this

system of premiums, nor would it require above 500 or 1000 officers, superintendants, &c. to conduct it.

It hath also been proposed that Government should purchase all the herrings for sale, at such a price as would be an equivalent for bounties, which in that case should cease.

Admitting this plan to be similar to those already mentioned, I shall now mention the only proposal that hath any claim to attention, viz. To give the bounty, not upon the tonnage of the vessel, but upon the fish caught. This plan seems at first sight to have some weight, and several gentlemen, who have taken an active part in the business of the fisheries, were almost disposed to adopt it in preference to the tonnage bounty. It is indeed eligible in a certain degree, and may serve as a stimulus for the supply of the London market with turbot or other fresh fish, by which that fishery may be secured to British subjects, and many thousand pounds kept at home, which otherwise would, as heretofore, be drained out of the kingdom.

kingdom. But, though this plan may be expedient in certain cases, near home, it cannot be reduced to practice in a general view, by any means that could be devised, so as to extend and perpetuate the northern fisheries, or to raise a great body of experienced seamen. Perjuries, connivances, frauds, misapplication of the public money, and the loss of foreign markets from the bad condition of the fish, would be the unavoidable consequences of trusting this business to the integrity of revenue officers, or persons of any other description or name around that distant and very extensive coast; besides the great additional expence of these officers and other checks, which it would be found necessary to station in different parts. But supposing these evils to be ideal, and that all men, the merchant, the fisher, and the officer, were faithful in their respective stations, and proof against every temptation, the Hebride fishery would speedily dwindle to a petty boat fishery during the summer and the autumn, in the lakes and bays upon the coast. The proprietors of decked vessels have unanimously declared  
that,

that, if the tonnage bounty shall be withdrawn, or the public aid applied by any new mode, they must unavoidably relinquish the business. Those who are in the mercantile line will, as many have already done, employ their capital in that trade; others will remove with their families, their vessels, and long acquired experience, to the fishing in the North of Ireland, where they will be received by the gentlemen of that country with open arms. The expences attending the fishing business are more considerable than is generally imagined, especially in Great Britain, where ship-building, materials, cordage, netting, provisions, and wages are almost double the amount of the same articles in Norway, Sweden, and the Baltic. It would scarcely be supposed that the first cost of a herring buss of 60 tons, being the medium size now in use, amounted to 623l. and that the fitting out for the fishery in salt, casks, 15,000 square yards of netting, provisions, stores, wages, &c. for three months, amounted to 322l. in all 945l. besides insurance, wear and tear, &c. yet, notwithstanding this heavy expence, a third  
part



part of which must be repeated every succeeding trip, the vessels sometimes return, after incessant toils through the winter, without herrings: sometimes the same vessels return twice successively in the same manner; and I have an account from one of the owners, of a vessel having come home three times empty, or, as they call it, *clean*. If the bounty is granted upon the quantity of fish caught, the adventurer will be reimbursed his expence, or a great part of it, in a two-fold manner, while he who fits out at the same expence, and toils for three months with the same assiduity, but comes home empty, will be doomed to a double misfortune. An adventurer in a lottery purchases a ticket for 15 or 20l. This sum is so inconsiderable that he cannot be materially affected by his want of success; but the case is quite different with the fisher, who, in one vessel only, must launch out into an expence of 945l. upon a business at all times precarious, and particularly so of late years; a business, which, in that country, depends on propitious winds, and favourable weather, while the fisheries  
of

of other states are more certain, carried on with greater facility, and at less expence.

Though the bounty is inconsiderable when compared with the original expence, in building the vessels, and the necessary annual disbursements in repairs, wages, provisions, &c. it contributes to keep the business alive: it enables the unsuccessful fisher to quiet the clamours of his men, and to engage them for another trip or season, upon the hope of better fortune. Thus the bounty, though trifling, is powerful in its operation amongst men of humble views, and whose only wishes are, to maintain their families by means of labour, more slavish and hazardous than those who have not seen it can possibly conceive.

It is from these considerations that none of the persons who are engaged in the fisheries ever expressed a desire to have the present method of carrying on that branch altered in the essential parts: on the contrary, all their petitions and memorials transmitted to their representatives, express, in the strongest terms, the necessity of improving it, by the removal of fundry impediments,  
and

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and continuing such aid in tonnage bounties as would enable them to prosecute the fisheries with benefit to their families and their country.

Knowing these to be the views and wishes of the whole body of practical fishers, and the various descriptions of people depending on that branch; having been pathetically solicited both personally and by memorials, or letters, to explain and enforce their meaning; and being fully convinced from long observation, that no method can be devised, so simple in its operation, so free of exceptions, and so likely to answer every purpose of the navy, of commerce, of colonization in the Highlands, and the relief of a very valuable body of people; I have been endeavouring to counteract and explode all schemes proposed by ignorant or prejudiced persons, which, if adopted, wholly or in part, by the legislature, will, as before observed, transfer these fisheries to other nations; and thus a most valuable branch will be lost, or nearly so, to the very nation whose industry, habits, and local situation, qualify them  
for

for extending it to a height unknown in any former period.

These people only require a reasonable aid, upon rational principles: they ridicule all the reasonings of uninformed speculative writers, as ill adapted to the nature of their laws, the uncertainty of the fish, the incredible fatigues and hazards in cruising from place to place amidst storms, rapid tides, jarring currents, lee shores, funk rocks, and far projecting head-lands, on every side, which to avoid, requires not only good vessels, but able seamen.

Besides, the bounty system hath from long usage become familiar to these men: They are now expert seamen, and experienced fishers upon that plan, and any other method will be considered as a useless innovation, even supposing it possible to introduce another method equally good upon the whole. This being the case, where is the policy of harrassing them with novel-ties which they do not like, which they do not understand, which would confuse their ideas, break the chain of intercourse between the merchant, the adventurer, and the  
the

## THE NORTHERN FISHERIES. 63

the subordinate classes whose daily subsistence depends solely thereon?

Still less can the proposed innovation be defended, when it is evident to many disinterested persons, who have taken the trouble of investigating this business, that any other plan of carrying on the fishery in those seas, would fail in the experiment, and disappoint government, at a period when such disappointment might be attended with serious consequences to the British Empire.

The people of Manchester, Birmingham, and other parts of England, have, by their ingenuity and long habits, carried their various branches of manufacture to a degree of perfection which scarcely admits of farther improvement. Every department in every branch is thoroughly understood, and thus the business is conducted with a facility which cannot be exceeded. Now, were government to frame a set of laws obliging these ingenious, expert workmen, to lay aside their old tools, or machines, to adopt new ones, contrived and recommended by revenue officers, and to begin upon an entire new plan of workmanship, the consequences

quences would be univerfal difcontent, murmurs, and emigration, with the lofs of thofe branches to their country. The cafe is exactly fimilar with regard to the Hebride herring fishery, and the effects will be the fame, if government either withdraw their aid, or adopt any new mode in the beftowing of it.

On the contrary, if the bounty be continued, and fomewhat enlarged; if it be alfo adapted to veffels equipped after the Dutch manner for the Shetland fishery, and extended to fuch boats or wherries as fhall praftife the fisheries through the whole year, or the greateft part of it, there will, in a very fhort time, be fuch an appearance on the coafts of Scotland, and its Ifles, as hath at no period been feen, and which may tend to keep that expenfive, destructive monfter, *war*, at a diftance; or, if unavoidable, to prevent thofe diftreffes and embarraffments which we constantly experience, from the want of carpenters and coopers as well as failors.

The

## THE NORTHERN FISHERIES. 65

The dock yards, since the recovery of the ship building branch from the Americans\*,

F

have

\* “ Previously to the American war, the shipping of that country employed in the foreign trade of Great Britain, amounted to more than half the British. We shall find some advantage in running up succinctly to the original cause of these memorable effects. The year 1638 is the epoch of the arrival of the first New-England built ship in the Thames ; as we may know from the books of the privy council. Amidst the distractions of the subsequent civil wars, the New-Englanders became the carriers of the West India product to England ; as appears by the newspapers of those times, which are preserved in the Museum. The act of navigation confirmed their right to do so, by declaring American built ships to be completely English. Sir Josiah Child, soon after that declaration, warned the nation of the prospective danger of allowing colonies to build ships for their mother country ; adding, “ that this “ kingdom being an island, it is our interest, as well for our “ preservation, as our profit, not only to have many sea- “ men, but to have them, as much as may be, within “ call, in a time of danger.” Dr. D’Avenant remonstrated in 1698: “ If,” said he, “ we should go to cul- “ tivate among the American plantations the art of navi- “ gation, and teach them to have a naval force, they may “ set up for themselves and make the greatest part of our “ West-India trade precarious : besides many other evils “ in encouraging them to do so, it would carry from hence “ a great number of artificers, which in case of a war “ would be wanting in England.” Of that prophecy we have lived, alas ! to see the fulfilment. But, writers wrote  
then,

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have been fuller in Great Britain than at any former period, during peace. Num-

then, as writers write now, without much effect on public councils.

“ During the wars of Queen Anne, the Parliament encouraged the colonists to execute those very nautical projects, which those two able statesmen had shewn to be absurdly dangerous. The shipwrights of the river came up to Whitehall, in 1725, with a complaint, that their business declined, and their workmen emigrated, because the plantations furnished England with ships. Their petition was referred to the lawyers: But, the lawyers answered, they might as well complain of ship-building at Bristol; for the American built ships were English. The answer of the lawyers was sent to the board of trade for their advice: And they advised. “ To lay a duty of five shillings a ton on all American built vessels, which should be employed in the *foreign* trade of Britain.” The ministers did nothing in the end. And the shipwrights remained quiet, though they found their complaints to be unavailing because faction did not mingle in their grievances. Those who look below the surface of public affairs, as they run down the current of time, will not be surprized, when they are told: That neither the lawyers, the board of trade, the ministers, nor the carpenters, knew the true ground of the grievance; which consisted in this: The plantation built ships were admitted into the ports of Britain with all the exemptions of British; but, the British built-ships, when they arrived in the colonies, were liable to tonnage duties and to other taxes, from which their own vessels were altogether exempted. And thus the colony



bers of young men in Scotland, who, from the want of employment at the plow, must have embarked for America, are at present fully engaged in these yards, and of these the proportion to experienced carpenters is as three to one. Encourage the

carpenters enjoyed a double monopoly against the British shipwrights. The colony carpenters entered into free competition with the British shipwrights in all the dominions of the crown, and even beyond them; while the British shipwrights could enter into no competition with the colony carpenters, in their own ports. And we have seen the melancholy effects, which had flowed from the fountain of these causes, before the epoch of the civil war."

The expence of building merchantmen in Great Britain is, upon a medium, 7l. per ton, for which the workmen complete the hull with joiners work, carved work, painting and glazing. The shipbuilders in New England contract to build the hull of ships, including joiners work, at 3l. sterling per ton; but it is said that the American ships, upon their first arrival in Britain, used to require expensive additional joiner's works, &c. on the hull; and that American ships last only seven years, whereas British built ships last 21, and are much safer to navigate in stormy weather. The expence in building the hull of herring bufses in Scotland, exclusively of joiner's work, is from 5l. to 5l. 10s. The timber is chiefly from Wales.

buss fishery and still more hands will be engaged. Every lad thus employed may be considered as adding something to the British navy; and, should the business of ship-building become general and permanent in Scotland, as it is in England, navies may be raised almost instantaneously, to the astonishment of mankind, and the terror of combined enemies.

Next in importance to the nursery of seamen and ship-carpenters is that of coopers, which is greatly promoted by the herring fishery. To wait the return of mercantile fleets from America, Africa, and both the Indies, from whom to collect the three descriptions of men for enabling us to fit out ships of war against half the naval force of Europe actually on the seas, is a most dangerous expedient, the evil effects of which are well known to those ministers who had the direction of public affairs during the late pressing exigencies. To depend on foreign alliances amongst lukewarm friends, if not secret enemies, is equally hazardous. The best alliances are those

## THE NORTHERN FISHERIES. 69

those which we ought to form upon our own shores, in every bay, port, and creek, along a coast of 3000 miles! on which we might depend at all times, and under the most pressing exigencies, with an inconsiderable expence to Government, which the nation would chearfully raise.

Many young men in Scotland are annually forced from their country, merely from the want of employment. They are an incumbrance to their parents, and a dead weight upon the districts where they reside. Let these men be employed in fisheries and navigation in all their branches: suppress smuggling; fill every port with honest occupations; and a new generation of maritime people will soon line the whole northern coast of the united kingdom, besides contributing essentially to the supplies of the kingdom.

The people in Scotland are strongly disposed to industry, partly from necessity, and partly from a native pride which disdains the idea of depending upon others for support. Every man is emulous of becoming the master

of a family, of appearing respectable in his neighbourhood, and of giving his children a good education : these, and other virtues, it would be wise in Government to improve for the public safety and welfare.

Such, it may be supposed, will be the beneficial consequences to these kingdoms from one simple act of the legislature— permitting the herring fishery to be carried on as heretofore, agreeably to the unanimous and earnest solicitations of men, whose practical experience in that branch gives them a claim to the attention of parliament preferably to those who pretend to dictate on matters which they do not understand.

Though these arguments may have the desired effect with intelligent and candid minds, it may be necessary to consider the subject relatively with that carried on of late upon the north coast of Ireland, which, we hope, will put the matter beyond a doubt, even with prejudice itself.

The Irish Parliament had often failed in their attempts to establish a herring fishery in that kingdom. At length, an accidental circum-

## THE NORTHERN FISHERIES 71

circumstance, similar to that which began and extended their great linen staple, gave rise to a fishery which now exceeds those of Yarmouth, Scotland, and even the Dutch.

Some time after the peace of 1763, certain emigrants from the west of Scotland, happening to wander towards the coast of Donegal, and perceiving the benefits which might be derived from an annual shoal of herrings, that crowded into the lochs or openings of that coast, communicated the particulars to their countrymen upon the Firth of Clyde. In a short space, these enterprising men sent over coopers with casks and other materials for fishing, curing, and instructing the natives, whereby they expected to realize fortunes upon an unexplored and almost unknown coast: but their attempts, as might have been foreseen, had a contrary effect.

The Irish parliament, whose sole attention is directed to the extension of manufactures, commerce, and fisheries, saw the importance of this branch, which had been shamefully neglected by the natives till chance threw these miserable emigrants upon their shores. The liberality, judicious laws, and unre-

mitting perseverance of that Legislature, have improved the lucky accident, to a degree which the most sanguine amongst them neither foresaw nor expected.

After every necessary enquiry into the nature of that business, and the most effectual means of promoting it, they determined upon a tonnage bounty, which at first was 20s. to all vessels of 20 to 100 tons burden, besides a debenture or drawback upon herrings exported. Perceiving the good effects of the public aid, in the number of vessels employed, and the quantity of herrings brought to market, the Parliament, during the last sessions, took the matter again into consideration, and appointed a committee of enquiry, whose report might furnish the House with the then state of the fishery, and also assist them in framing a new bill for the further extension of that very beneficial branch.

The most essential improvement in this bill, relates to the tonnage bounty, which is raised from 20 to 30s. the consequence of which is an extraordinary increase of vessels, which Colonel Cuninghame lately declared in Parliament amounted to 500 sail; adding, that,  
instead

## THE NORTHERN FISHERIES. 73

instead of importing 30 or 40,000 barrels of Swedish herrings, annually, the Irish merchants exported last year 35,000 barrels of herrings caught on their own coasts\*.

Another member of the Irish Parliament represents the effects of bounties thus: —  
“ Such had been the policy of Parliament  
“ for 50 years past, during which time they  
“ had granted, for the purposes before-men-  
“ tioned, sums which would be equal to the  
“ national debt; and the consequences had  
“ been, that their lands, within that period,  
“ had trebled their value; that their linen  
“ manufacture was no longer confined to a  
“ single province; that their fisheries were  
“ become a great branch of trade; and that  
“ agriculture, with her attendants, popu-  
“ lation and plenty, had spread herself  
“ indiscriminately through every part of the  
“ kingdom:—these were the effects of the  
“ well-timed liberality of former Parlia-  
“ ments. Had they listened, on the con-

\* A subsequent account of this year's fishery states, that 500 buffes, carrying 20,000 tons, had got full cargoes; that 2000 boats, carrying 10,000 men, had been successfully employed; and that the herrings exported amounted to 150,000 barrels!

“ trary,

“ trary, to the narrow dictates of timid par-  
“ simony, the country would have conti-  
“ nued in the same deplorable state that it  
“ was in the beginning of that period : but,  
“ happily for them, their views were en-  
“ larged.”—

The expediency of a tonnage bounty being thus established, in preference to all other modes of assisting the fisheries, the following comparative view of the Scottish and Irish north-west fisheries may be useful, while a similar bill is under the consideration of the British Parliament.

There are some fishes, as the herring, cod-fish, haddock, whiting, mackerel, tunny, and pilchard, that may be called fish of passage, and bear a strong analogy to birds of passage, both from their social disposition, and the immensity of their numbers. Other fish live in our vicinity, and reside on our coasts all the year round, or keep in the depths of the ocean, and are but seldom seen : but these, at stated seasons, visit the more southern shores with regular certainty, generally returning the same week in the succeeding year, and often the same day.

The



## THE NORTHERN FISHERIES. 75

The herrings are found in the greatest abundance, in the highest northern latitudes within the arctic circle. In those inaccessible seas, that are covered with ice during a great part of the year, the herring find a quiet and sure retreat from all their numerous enemies: there neither man, nor their still more destructive enemy, the sun-fish, or the cachalot, the most voracious of the whale kind, dares to pursue them.

The great colony of herrings sets out from the icy sea about the middle of winter, composed of such numbers as to exceed the powers of imagination; but they no sooner leave their retreats, than millions of enemies appear to thin their squadrons. The sun-fish, and the cachalot devour thousands at a time; the porpus, the grampus, the shark, the cod-fish, haddocks, pollacks, and the numerous train of dog-fish, find them an easy prey, and desist from making war upon each other: but still more the unnumbered flocks of sea-fowl, that chiefly inhabit near the Pole, watch the outset of their dangerous migration, and spread extensive ruin.

In

In this exigence, the defenceless emigrants find no other safety but by crowding close together, like sheep when frightened, and leaving to the outmost bands the danger of being first devoured. The main body begins at a certain latitude to separate into two great divisions, one of which moves to the west, and pours down along the coasts of America, as far south as Carolina, and are so numerous in the Chesapeak Bay, as to become a nuisance to the shores. The other division takes an eastern direction, towards Europe, and falls in with the great island of Iceland about the beginning of March. Upon their arrival on that coast, their phalanx, which hath already suffered considerable diminutions, is nevertheless found to be of amazing extent, depth\*, and closeness, occupying a surface equal to the dimensions of Great Britain, but subdivided into columns of five or six miles in length, and three or four in breadth, each line or column being led, according to

\* Some writers affirm, that the depth of the shoals upon the coast of Norway reaches 200 fathoms from the surface of the ocean.

## THE NORTHERN FISHERIES 77

the ideas of fishermen, by herrings of more than ordinary size. The herrings swim near the surface, sinking now and then for ten or fifteen minutes. The fore-runners of those who visit the British kingdoms, appear off the Shetland islands in April or May, and the grand body begins to be perceived in June. Their approach is known to the fishers by a small rippling of the water, the reflection of their brilliancy\*, and the number of solan geese or gannets, and other aerial

\* Except the mackerel, no fish is more beautiful when first taken than the herring. The flesh of the herring is also perfectly white and most delicious, especially of those taken upon their first arrival, being then in the greatest perfection, plump, rich, and high flavoured. The vicinity of Scotland to this early fishery gives the inhabitants a superior advantage over all other nations for supplying the tables of the opulent with delicious fish, which however they have totally neglected, while the industrious Dutch have, for some centuries, supplied the greatest part of Europe with these early herrings at more than double the price of those taken in the latter seasons. The herrings retain their original flavour and richness till the middle of July : from that period they gradually fall off in quality ; and in winter, their spawning time, they become sick and poor. This is however the season when they abound most upon the Europeans shores, and is properly the great fishing season.

per-

persecutors, who feast richly upon this offered bounty; and who, with the marine attendants, may be a concurrent cause of driving the shoals into bays and creeks. Here new enemies await these heaven-directed strangers. Whole fleets of Dutch, French, Flemish, Prussian, Dantzic, and Danish vessels, with all the apparatus of netting, &c are in readiness on a fixed day, to drag the ocean, thereby snatching from the shoals not hundreds, but hundreds of thousands, every night from the 24th of June till September.

The Shetland islands, where the herrings meet with the first interruption in their migration, lie at the distance of 100 miles due north from the mainland of Scotland, and extend almost a degree in length. Though these islands break and separate the grand body of the herrings into two parts, the fish still continue their course southwards; one division proceeds along the east side of Britain, pays its tribute to the Orkneys, the Murray Firth, the coasts of Aberdeen, Angus and Fife, the great river Forth, the coast of Yorkshire, and particularly the far-projecting land at Yarmouth, which, by  
thus

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thus interrupting the shoals, enjoys the only certain periodical fishery in Great Britain, the Shetland fishery excepted. The herrings reach Yarmouth\* about the 21<sup>st</sup> of September, and the fishery is carried on till the 25<sup>th</sup> of November. In the mean time the shoals, though thus harassed, broken, and reduced, press forward down the channel, where they pay a slight visit to the north coast of France, but so exhausted and impoverished, that they are very improper for commercial purposes. The French, however, are glad of the offered bounty, which they redden for home sale, and also pickle for the use of their sugar colonies.

The other brigade take their course from the Shetland islands, along the west side of Britain, and are observed to be larger and

\* The Yarmouth fishery is the most ancient on record in the English annals, and of which there are accounts from the first arrival of the Saxons in the fifth century. It is conjectured that this fishery, from its magnitude and duration, hath brought a sum into the kingdom, equal to 20,000,000*l.* of the present money. The inhabitants build their vessels, and fish after the Dutch manner: they are bold expert, fishermen; and they redden their herrings so admirably, that the present price of Yarmouth herrings is 5*s.* per barrel, while those of Suffex bring only 2*s.*

fatter

fatter than those on the east side. After leaving the Shetland and the Orkney isles, they crowd in amazing quantities into the lakes, bays, and narrow channels of the north west Highlands, and Hebride isles, which face that coast. From thence they press southward amidst the rapid currents, head lands, and other obstructions of those narrow seas; sometimes visiting, in small detachments, the Firth of Clyde, Lochfine, and other lakes within the entrance of that river; and also the coast of Galloway and the Solway Firth. Having performed this friendly office to the western shores of Scotland, the main shoal falls upon the north coast of Ireland; where, meeting with a second interruption, they are again divided into two brigades: one shoal pass down the Irish channel, visit the Isle of Man, and afford an occasional supply to the east coast of Ireland, and the west coast of England, particularly Biddeford Sound, at the south entrance of the British Channel.

The other shoal skirt along the north-west coast of Ireland, where, after filling the lakes of Donnegal, they gradually disappear and  
are

## THE NORTHERN FISHERIES. 81

are lost in the immensity of the Atlantic\*.

Having thus traced the progressive migrations of these periodical visitants on both sides of Britain, we shall now state the comparative advantages and disadvantages of the two great western fisheries, upon the coasts of Scotland and Ireland. It may be supposed that as both of these kingdoms are supplied by the same individual shoals passing through the Hebride seas, to the coast of Donnegal, there can be no material difference in the expence, hazard, and trouble attending the capture. Or, in other words, it may be supposed, that a Scottish fisher may procure a cargo upon the north-west coast of that kingdom with the same facility, in the same time, and at the same expence, as an Irish fisher upon the coast of Donnegal; from which it may be inferred, that a 30s. bounty, which is now paid to the fishers of both countries, puts them on a fair equality. Were this the case,

\* Besides these migrating fish, there are also native herrings upon our shores, but their number is comparatively inconsiderable, affording only an occasional supply of fresh herrings for home consumption.

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it would be only necessary on the part of the British Parliament, to continue the bounty of 30s. and thus the issue of the fishery would depend solely upon the industry and frugality of the two respective nations.

There is, however, a most material difference between the situation of the Scottish and the Irish fishers. First, from natural causes; secondly, from the state of the respective countries; and, thirdly, from the construction of the fishery regulations in both kingdoms.

From the poverty of the inhabitants, and the want of towns on the north-west coast of Scotland, the fisheries of those shores are chiefly carried on by persons residing at a great distance, as at Greenock, Port Glasgow, and other trading towns upon the river and Firth of Clyde, who, in their first setting out, as well as their return, have to double a far projecting headland, called the Mull of Cantire, by which they sustain considerable inconveniencies and discouragements. By Cantire is meant, a narrow peninsula, which stretches forty miles from the mainland of the west Highlands, in a southern direction, till it approaches within  
thir-



## THE NORTHERN FISHERIES. 83

thirteen miles of the county of Antrim in the north of Ireland.

The distance from Greenock to the promontory or cape, which terminates this peninsula, is above sixty miles in a south-west direction; but if we include the course of shipping thither, the islands to be avoided, the tacks and evolutions occasioned by contrary winds and lee-shores, we may estimate the voyages from Greenock upon an average, at eighty miles each; which eighty miles, being a circuitous navigation, that must be made good on the opposite side of the cape, till the vessels have got so far northward as to be on a line with Greenock, the place from whence they set out, occasions an extra navigation of 160 miles; or 320 miles outward and homeward, to every vessel or boat passing from the Clyde to the Hebride fishery. The loss of time, the expence in provisions and seamen's wages in performing this voyage, must be obvious to every reader; while a consideration of still greater importance remains to be mentioned. As there are no lands between this cape and America, and the prevailing winds being generally from

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that quarter across an ocean of 3000 miles, the collective force of these winds, and the weight of the Atlantic, fall with the most tremendous and awful velocity on the cape; which, had it not been composed of solid rock, must have yielded, long since, to those raging elements. Vessels, therefore, whether outward or homeward bound, but more especially the former, are frequently under the necessity of taking shelter in some commodious port, creek, or bay, till the storms abate, till the winds prove favourable, and the passage becomes practicable. For, unless the wind be moderate as well as fair, the buffes and all other small vessels dare not proceed, and those who are hardy enough to make the attempt in rough weather sometimes founder in the cross and rapid currents that run at the cape, and add very considerably to its dangers.

Nor are these the only difficulties which the buffes have to encounter in this navigation. The wind that favoured the voyage down the Firth of Clyde becomes consequently adverse after having doubled the cape, when the vessels have to steer in an  
opposite

## THE NORTHERN FISHERIES. 85

opposite direction, and to encounter new toils and hazards.

Thus the Hebride fishery is attended, in the first instance, with considerable expence, as well as delay ; and as all the hopes of the adventurers depend on a speedy fishery, and a quick sale, nothing can prove more discouraging than the impediments and uncertainty of this circumnavigation. Was the western passage shortened \*, these dangers and delays would be evaded ; and the adventurers would be enabled to bring their fish to market in better time ; which, from the above mentioned causes, cannot be accomplished at present with any degree of certainty. Ships, it is well known, often wait several weeks in the ports of the Clyde for the arrival of the herrings, and are frequently obliged to sail without them. Thus the adventurers lose their market for the season, the merchants lose their freights, the planters their supply

\* Against such a multiplicity of evils, nature hath fortunately provided a remedy, in forming a short isthmus across the peninsula of Cantire, which admits of an inland passage, whereby this long and difficult navigation may be avoided.

of provisions, and the unhappy negroes their regular support. Soon after the departure of these ships, the buffes, which had been detained on the west side of the cape by unfavourable weather, arrive, not singly, but in fleets, which occasions a glut in the home market, greatly to the prejudice of the adventurers in general; while some are thus totally disabled from continuing the business.

The vessels having, in the outward-bound voyage, cleared the Mull of Cantire, they arrive upon a coast of 240 miles in length from that promontory to Cape Wrath; and if, to that extent, we add the numerous headlands to be doubled, the intervening islands to be evaded, the creeks or bays to which a vessel must frequently run for shelter, a winter voyage from Greenock may, upon an average, require two or three weeks.

After the vessel hath surmounted the difficulties and dangers of this intricate navigation, she does not arrive at a certain fishery, where she may load by her own boats, or those of the inhabitants, in a few days. Though the migrations of the herrings to  
the

## THE NORTHERN FISHERIES. 87

the north-west Highlands be certain, their arrival in one particular loch, bay, or island, is very precarious.

All have their turns. The loch that was crowded with fish one year may be quite deserted the following, and for many years after. Sometimes they fall in between the Mainland and the Long Island\*; at other times, they keep out in the main ocean between the Long Island and the rocks of St. Kilda, which lie 54 miles west of that island, and are surrounded with fish and sea fowl in boundless numbers. When this happens, there can be no boat fishery, especially in winter; neither is there any bufs fishery; those vessels not being accustomed to the Dutch method of a floating fishery, by following the shoals through the ocean.

\* The north-west coast of Scotland is covered by 300 islands, called the Hebrides, of which the Long Island is the most extensive. It lies due north and south in the main ocean, at the distance of 30 to 60 miles from the Continent, and is nearly 140 miles in length. It is this double coast, and the numerous openings or lakes on the Mainland and the islands, that render the fishery so uncertain, and which engage the bufs so long in cruising from place to place to find out the herrings.

The young herrings always come in a body some time in June; their stay depends on the winds and weather. Those which fall in between the Mainland and the Long Island are wrought upon and directed, not only by the winds, but also by the large fishes, and sometimes by the buffes, in their cruises from place to place.

As the season advances, the great shoals of full grown herrings appear on the coasts, moving southward. If, upon their approach, the weather happens to be stormy, and the winds from south-west to north-west, the shoals, thus interrupted by a strong head wind, crowd into the openings or lochs, and there is every probability of a successful fishery, either on the Lewis coast or that of the Mainland. But if the winds happen to be easterly, or within the eastern points, as is often the case towards the end of harvest, there is little chance of a winter fishery, because, as before observed, the herrings keep out in the main ocean. Nature, in this respect, gives the Irish fishers a manifest advantage over the Scots. The shoals, after having cleared the Scottish seas, whether their  
voyage

## THE NORTHERN FISHERIES. 89

voyage hath been on this side the Long Island, or on the west side, have to encounter a still more turbulent sea, owing to the great weight and swell of the Atlantic being opposed by the lofty coast of Donnegal; which, with the jarring currents and tides, interrupt the progress of the herrings, who, fatigued and weak, are glad to take shelter in the openings or lochs of that coast. This circumstance gives the Irish an absolute certainty of an annual fishery, and that fishery being drawn towards one point, enables the adventurers to double the gains of their neighbours, and with little trouble, hazard, or delay.

To this advantage which the Irish fishers enjoy, and of which those of the opposite coast of Scotland are deprived, is to be added the population, towns, shipping, and capital of the former. From the Mull of Cantire to the most northern extremity of Scotland, the whole coast presents a uniform picture of poverty and distress, without towns, marts, stores, capital, or vessels proper for the expensive, though precarious business of fisheries; on which account these hazardous undertakings

ings are carried on by people who, as before observed, reside at the distance of some hundred miles from the shores where the herrings chiefly resort. The merchants, traders, coopers and seafaring people of Greenock, Port Glasgow, Rothsay and Campbeltown, are the persons to whom the public owe the existence of a regular herring fishery on the coasts of Scotland; and it is against these persons that so much combustion is daily levelled, by some of their uninformed or narrow-minded countrymen.

Very different is the situation of the fishing coast in Ireland. That kingdom is divided into four provinces, the most northerly of which is named Ulster, and it is on the north-west coast of this province, particularly the extensive maritime county of Donnegal, where the herrings take shelter and embay themselves in, generally, one or other of the following lochs, and sometimes in all of them, viz. Loch Swilly, the Rosses, Killebeggs, and Inverbay.

The herrings frequently crowd to the very head of these waters, in compact bodies, where  
they



## THE NORTHERN FISHERIES. 91

they are taken with the greatest ease by the numerous well-equipped boats, which annually await their arrival in each respective loch. Here are also storehouses with salt and every necessary for the business: but the life of the whole consists in the numerous sea-port towns which line the coast of this province, some of them considerable, and all of them engaged more or less in shipping, commerce, coasting trade, fisheries, or salt works. These are Carlingford, Newry, Dundrum, Strangford, Portaferry, Downpatrick, Killilea, Killoch, Comber, Newtown, Belfast, Carricfergus, Donaghadee, Larne, Coleraine, Londonderry, Rosses, Killebegs, Donnegal, Ballyshannon, Sligoe, Killalla, &c. Some of these towns are situated upon, or within a few miles of the shores where the herrings mostly abound; as Londonderry, which is only four miles from Loch Swilly; and the most distant town is within two days sailing, in moderate weather, of the coast of Donnegal. New towns are also erecting in the most eligible situations, furnished with every accommodation

tion and requisite for extending that great national branch, towards which the Irish Parliament granted lately, in one vote, 20,000*l*.

Having thus stated the advantages of the Irish fisheries, First, from natural causes, and, Secondly, from the present state of the respective countries, I shall close this comparative review of the several fisheries, by contrasting the regulations and encouragements of the British and Irish Parliaments.

By the British laws, the buffes were prohibited from purchasing herrings from the Highland boats, on penalty of forfeiting the bounty; and instead thereof, they were to fish for the herrings themselves, till the expiration of three months from the time of their clearing out, unless they had sooner completed their loading. This restraint was a grievous hardship to the poor natives, whose fisheries were thus limited to their own consumption; and the supply of the thinly inhabited wilds of their neighbourhood. It ruined the boat fishery, discouraged industry, and left these unhappy people solely at the mercy of every tacksmen or steward, who  
might

might choose to oppress them in all their operations by land and water.

The object which Government had principally in view by these bounties, was the raising a numerous body of intrepid, hardy seamen, skilled in the principles of practical navigation, who might be ready upon every emergency to man the royal navy. With this view it was judged expedient to oblige the buffes to remain on the fishing grounds during a given period, and there to be employed in the exercise of fishing.

It may be observed that there are two methods of taking the herrings. First, the floating fisheries, by constantly dragging the sea, under sail, as practised by the Dutch. Secondly, the stationary or ground fisheries upon the shores, bays, or lakes, where the buffes cast anchor, and remain passive during the whole period of the fishery, which is performed in the following manner. Every bufs hath two or three small boats, and a proportionable number of men and nets. From these boats the nets are suspended and hauled in successively, between sun-set and daylight next morning; when the men, fatigued

and drenched in wet, board their respective buffes.

This method of fishing, instead of training seamen, subjects the men to unnecessary hardships, and the owners to burdensome expenditures in provisions, liquors, and wages; while the merchants or purchasers are equal, if not greater sufferers, by the delays occasioned through this tedious method of procuring cargoes. And, it is also certain, that though the buffes are thus detained upon a sedentary fishery, they seldom return home with more than half their loading; whereas, a permission to purchase herrings, as well as to fish, would enable the vessels to return earlier, and with better cargoes, to the mutual benefit of all parties concerned, from the poor half-starved Highlander upon the shores of the Hebrides, to the equally wretched being who toils under the burning sun of the West-Indies.

Since, therefore, the mere act of fishing, while the vessel lies at anchor, is extremely discouraging to that branch in every respect, as well as to individuals of all descriptions;

and,

and, since it is likewise evident, that this restraining method answers no beneficial purpose to Government, it would be expedient to allow those people a free discretionary power to take, to purchase, or do both; and in every respect to act as circumstances may dictate for their own interest, from the time of their first arrival amongst the herrings till their departure.

All the purposes of Government are effectually answered *in the voyages to and from the fishing grounds*. No seas between the two extremes of the earth are better adapted for training mariners; insomuch, that the Hebride fishery may be justly styled the school of navigation. In a voyage to America, or the Cape of Good Hope, the vessel follows one course; and as the winds keep mostly in one direction, the sails are set, and the men remain inactive, or nearly so, after leaving Ireland, till they approach the distant land. But in a voyage from the Clyde to the usual resorts of the herrings on the north-west shores of Scotland, the vessel no sooner clears one cape, than another appears; which, to weather, is most generally attended with difficulties

ties and hazards : the helm must be in the hands of an experienced seaman ; the sails and rigging require unremitting attention ; the men are constantly in motion, struggling and toiling without ceasing, day and night : and so hazardous and fatiguing is this navigation through the winter, when the frequent hurricanes threaten destruction on every side, that the safe return of the buffes seems miraculous, even to men who have spent their lives in the mercantile service, or the royal navy.

The seamanship acquired in these narrow channels would be still further promoted, by permitting the vessels, instead of lying at anchor in the lochs, to load and carry home at pleasure ; because the same vessels would have a chance of making three or four voyages in the season, instead of one or two. This is the method observed by the Dutch : some vessels send home their cargoes by yawgers that attend the fisheries for that purpose ; while others are their own carriers.

“ The instant the buffes have discharged their cargoes, they are refitted for sea ; and as the herrings make an annual tour round  
Great



restraint respecting netting ; nor indeed is it necessary to burden their fishers with these heavy expences, since they permit the vessels to load immediately from the boats.

Thus the Irish buffies are merely carrying vessels, equipped at the easiest expence, with a slender view to the raising of seamen ; while those of Scotland are tied down to expensive regulations, with a view to the navy as the principal object.

Upon the whole, the conclusion to be drawn from the above enumerated circumstances arising from natural, accidental, and political causes, seems to be this : that a 30s. bounty in Ireland is preferable, or at least equal, to a 50s. bounty in Scotland.

The Scottish traders and fishers are, however, well disposed to meet Government half way. Two years ago they proposed to apply for 50s. which was given formerly to the British Fishery Company ; but in consideration of fundry obstructions being lately removed, and the assurances they have received, that other impediments with which the fisheries are shackled will also be removed, the major part of the persons engaged



## THE NORTHERN FISHERIES. 99

gaged in the Hebride fishery have declared, that, if Government shall extend the bounty from 30 to 40s. they will again resume the business with vigour: and I am fully persuaded, that in less than three years, from the commencement of a 40s. bounty, a sum exceeding 100,000l. will be expended by those people, in building and equipping decked vessels, provided that the duration of such bounty be extended to 15 or rather to 21 years, the usual period wherein British built vessels may be navigated with safety to the men and cargoes.

### SECTION VI.

**H**AVING considered the busb fishery as best adapted to the Scottish seas, and as the stamina of the whole business; it is also proposed to admit subordinate orders of men to a proportionable share of the public aid; without which their profession cannot, in many parts, be improved beyond its present low state, as the experience of sixty years

fully flows. Let the public munificence be extended to that class of people, whose united exertions are limited to the equipment of open boats or wherries. Let these be registered, and put under the same regulations as the buffes, respecting the dimensions and construction of the boat, the quantity of netting, and the number of men.

When we consider the great extent of coast in Scotland, and the uncertain arrival of the herrings in any particular spot\*, it does not appear that men can follow this business as their sole profession, through the whole year, or even during three months, unless they shall be assisted with an annual bounty or premium of 15*l.* for each boat or wherry, carrying five men and a boy; which sum, though

\* This hath been used as the main argument in favour of a tonnage bounty to decked vessels; and it operates with still greater force when applied to open boats, who must not, particularly in the winter season, venture too far from home. They have therefore only an occasional fishery when the shoals of herrings happen to fall upon their respective shores, or lakes. It is on this account, that though the coast of Scotland is lined with boats, there are few persons who come under the description of regular fishers.

small, would go a great way towards the annual repairs and outfit, while the sale of fish caught would, one year with another, support their families in the common necessaries of life.

Boats of a larger construction, such as are used at present in the Murray Firth, having six oars, and carrying seven men, or seven men and a boy, might be entitled to 21l. per annum. Boats of these different constructions, viz. the four-oared boat, the six-oared boat, and the wherry, would suit the various coasts of the kingdom, and also the respective abilities of the owners or fishers.

By this simple method of diffusing the public aid proportionably to the sizes of vessels and expence of the equipment, the buffes and boats would assist each other for their mutual benefit, of which the community in general, and the west Highlands in particular, where the great strength of the fishery lies, would soon feel the benefits.

As a nursery for seamen, the boat fishery will greatly exceed that by the buffes in numbers; while the expence, per man, to

Government, will be considerably less\*: but, on the other hand, it cannot be put into competition with the busb fisheries in nautical knowledge †. It may be considered as the first step towards seamanship, which, without the subsequent experience acquired on board decked vessels, leaves the men only one degree removed from their original state, while at the plow or the spade.

A young man issues from the glens and wilds of the Highlands, in order to mend his fortune; he engages with the master of a boat for a time, returns home with a little money, expatiates on the wonders he hath seen, the dangers he hath encountered, and fancies himself qualified for entering on board a decked vessel. Here he is ridiculed as a novice in his trade; but that inherent prin-

\* See the table, page 10.

† Neither can the boats venture to sea at all times, by which a valuable fishery is frequently lost, though the herrings abound on the coast, of which there was an instance at Dunbar last season, when the boats were deterred, by the roughness of the weather, from venturing out. Had there been some decked vessels on the spot, it is probable that the owners would have realized considerable sums,

principle of honour so conspicuous in Highlandmen, aided by the excellent school—a *Hebride bus navigation*, qualifies him, in one or two seasons only, to steer by compass, to work the sails, and to perform the various operations of experienced seamen: he now, in turn, ridicules the boat fishers, whom he calls land-lubbers; and having seen the shipping of the Clyde, he becomes emulous of greater preferment, affects the appearance of a smart seaman, and embarks upon a voyage to America or the West Indies, which completes his education. By this gradation, the poor hopeless boy, instead of starving with his parents and kindred, amongst obscure deserts, becomes a most useful member of the community, qualified, when his country calls, to co-operate with the brave tars of the south, in whatever service that country may require\*.

It

\* Immediately before the year 1750, the decked vessels belonging to Campbeltown were four, and these of small size; the number of men 30 or 40. In 1777, the number of buffes belonging to that port had increased to 62, manned with 7 or 800 hardy, and, for the most part, experienced

It may be supposed by some persons who are unacquainted with the Scottish seas and fisheries, as well as the disposition of the Highlanders, that the number of buffes, boats and men, proposed to be thus raised, far exceeds probability. To enter upon a minute detail of the various particulars and circumstances from which I have formed the calculation, is not at present necessary; I shall only therefore speak in general terms.

By the statement already inserted from the Custom-house books, it appears that between the years 1759 and 1766, the number of buffes had increased from 3 to 261, and these

sailors. During the course of the last war, nearly 1000 men, who had been trained in the buff fishery belonging to that port, entered, in various parts of the world, on board the royal navy, or were pressed into the service. Two thirds of the seamen, who sail from the Clyde in the mercantile service, have been trained to that business by the buffes engaged in the Hebride fishery; and it is well known, that the naval officers are particularly fond of the *blue bonnets*, viz. Highland sailors, for the most part, on account of their hardiness, temperance, and sober manners. Above 100 of these blue bonnets have been counted on board a ship of the line at one time.

were

were employed on the western coast only. It is also certain that the following number of boats have been employed, viz.

1600 Highland wherries in the Firth of Clyde, carrying 4 men each.

700 Boats in the Forth, carrying 9 men each.

600 Ditto in the Murray Firth, carrying 7 men each.

2000 Wherries were afloat last season on the coast of the west Highlands and Hebride Isles, in virtue of the new law, which permits the buffes to purchase herrings from the boats at the end of a three months trip; these exertions, great as they may seem, were trifling to what a general national fishery admits of in every sea, channel, and lake of the kingdom.

The line of coast around Scotland measures above 600 miles; and that of the Hebride, the Orkney, and the Shetland isles, was each island measured apart, would, in the aggregate, exceed the Mainland by some hundred miles. To these two numbers, we are to add 2 or 300 lakes, bays, or openings,  
 extend-

extending from 1 to 20 miles inland, whose aggregate measurement it is difficult to ascertain with precision, and must therefore be left to the conjectures of those who take the trouble of looking at the map.

All these shores may be considered as one continued inexhaustible fishery; for though the herring fishery on the west coast is sometimes unsuccessful, and ruinous to the owners of decked vessels, yet, it is a certain fact, that the shoals do actually pass from the Shetland islands to the north of Ireland once every year, most generally between July and November.

The failure of these fisheries in some years is not, therefore, owing to the non-existence of the migrating shoals; but, as before observed, to the uncertainty of their tract or course between the Mainland of Scotland and the Latitude of St. Kilda, the most distant island of the Hebrides, which lies above 100 miles due-west from the Continent.

Besides the herring fishery upon the coasts of Scotland, those shores abound in all the varieties



varieties of white-fish, flat-fish and shell-fish, peculiar to northern latitudes.

But the greatest and most certain fisheries are those of the northern ocean, occupying a space of some hundred miles between the coast of Norway on the east, the great island of Iceland on the west, and Scotland on the south, where the maritime nations of Europe send vessels annually, not only for herrings, but white-fish of large size and excellent flavour, which gives them a preference at foreign markets to those taken on the Banks of Newfoundland.

In all these fisheries, viz. those immediately upon our coasts, and those in the main ocean, the Scots have made very inconsiderable progress, owing partly to the salt regulations, and the want of parliamentary support adequate to the expence of the equipment, and the hazards and extreme drudgery of the fishers, which, especially in the winter seasons, exceed all powers of description.

Were Parliament to afford the relief which seems indispensibly necessary, for enabling the British fishers to go to market  
upon

upon equal terms with Norwegians, Swedes, and the fishers from the Baltic, who have the materials of building, nets, cordage, &c. at a trifling expence, besides the lowness of wages, our own people, who are not defective in perseverance would explore the ocean in every direction, and bring to their native country an annual flux of wealth, superior, in many respects, to that which Spain receives, in cargoes of gold and silver, from Peru and Mexico.

Or, were the British Parliament disposed to put our herring fishery on the same footing with that of Ireland, one essential purpose, the manning of our navy, would, at least, be effected. The comparative advantages given to the Irish fishers over those of Great Britain are thus brought into one view, viz.

*Irish Fishery Laws.*

I.

In 1762, the Irish Parliament granted an annual bounty of 20s. per ton to the owners of vessels employed in the herring or white fisheries, carrying from 20 to 80 tons burden. In 1785, the tonnage

*British Fishery Laws.*

I.

In 1750, the British Parliament granted an annual bounty of 30s. per ton to the owners of vessels employed in the herring fishery, carrying from 20 to 80 tons; also 3l. *per cent. per annum*, on the capital actually employed  
bounty

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## *Irish Fishery Laws.*

bounty was extended from 20 to 30s. and a new set of fishery laws enacted, from which the following observations are extracted.

2.

A bounty of 3l. per ton is to be paid to persons who build on the north-west coast, any vessels fit for fishing in deep water, not under 20 tons, nor upwards of 60 tons, and launched before the 31st of December, 1788, but not to receive any other bounty by this act, for two years following.

3.

Every vessel on the herring and white fisheries must have 4 men for the first 20 tons, and one additional man for every 8 tons, by which vessels shall exceed that burden.

Tons burden.	Men.
20	4
28	5
36	6
44	7
52	8
60	9
68	10
76	11

## *British Fishery Laws.*

ployed in the fishery. In 1757, the tonnage bounty was extended to 50s. In 1771, it was reduced to 30s. and the 3 per cent. on the capital taken off.

2.

No encouragement of this nature is given to fishers in Britain.

3.

Every vessel on the British white herring fishery must have 5 men for the first 20 tons, and one additional man for every 5 tons.

Tons.	Men.	Tons.	Men.
20	6	55	13
25	7	60	14
30	8	65	15
35	9	70	16
40	10	75	17
45	11	80	18
50	12		

4. The

## CONSIDERATIONS ON

*Irish Fishery Laws.*

4.

The Irish laws lay the fishers under no restrictions respecting the quantity of nets to be on board.

5.

Vessels on the Irish herring fishery may either fish, purchase, or do both, and proceed directly to the market, or port from whence they came.

*British Fishery Laws.*

4.

The British laws on this head require, for vessels carrying

Tons.		Yds. of Net.
20	-	6,000
30	-	9,000
40	-	12,000
60	-	18,000
70	-	21,000
80	-	24,000

5.

Vessels are to remain at sea, or on the fishing grounds, for the space of three months, unless they shall have sooner completed their loading of fish, *caught solely by the crew of each respective vessel*; or having not completed full cargoes, they may, at the end of three months, purchase herrings from British subjects.

6. When

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### *Irish Fishery Laws.*

### *British Fishery Laws.*

6.

When any vessel on her fishery voyage shall founder at sea, or, by distress and hardship of weather, be forced on shore and wrecked, it shall and may be lawful for the Commissioners of his Majesty's revenue to order payment of the bounty to the owners of said vessel, or in case of their being lost, to the legal representatives of said owners.

7.

No custom-house fees shall be taken from owners of fishing vessels; and all certificates and other papers transmitted by post shall be exempted from postage.

8.

English rock-salt is exported to Ireland duty free, which, being of a strong and good quality, is more proper for curing fish than salt made from sea water in these kingdoms.

6.

No bounty is allowed to owners, or their representatives, on buffes lost or wrecked. The only indulgence in this case is a remission of the duty upon salt, carried out by such vessels.

7.

The fees exacted by custom-house officers amount, on small vessels, to one-fourth or fifth of the bounty; and all papers are subject to postage.

8.

No rock-salt is allowed to be imported into Scotland, on which account, when (as in time of war) foreign salt cannot be easily procured, the Scots are obliged to purchase rock-salt in Ireland, and to pay the full duties on the same, though imported into Ireland upon a debenture or drawback.

9. Fisheries

*Irish Fishery Laws.*

9.

Fisheries may be carried on in all seasons of the year, provided that the fry be not destroyed.

10.

The Irish salt laws are simple and well adapted to fishers of every description.

*British Fishery Laws.*

9.

Vessels on the herring bounty are to clear out any time after the 1st of June, and to cease from fishing after the 12th of January, though at that period the largest herrings are frequently found in shoals upon the west coast of Scotland.

10.

The British salt laws have proved extremely perplexing to the northern fisheries, besides the expensive fees attending them.

From this comparative review of the Hebride fisheries, the reader will wonder how the distressed Scotchmen have been able to maintain their ground so long; but as this system is now in a fair train of being amended, and having already spoken so fully on the subject, I shall only further advert to the clause which obliges the Scottish fishers to engage, maintain, and pay a greater number of men than the fishers of Ireland, or any other country. The Irish laws are calculated for promoting the fisheries, *as the primary object*; while those of Great Britain

tain are chiefly framed for *raising a numerous body of seamen*. It seems therefore unreasonable to lay this extra expence on the shoulders of the Scottish fishers, who, as appears from the decrease of their business, are utterly unable to bear it.

If the defence of the nation be the main object, surely that nation ought to be at the expence of protecting their own property; of preserving their consols, navy bills, goods, chattels, and lands, from sinking to half of their present value. But if the nation shall be disposed to rely upon the number and magnitude of its ships only, in that case it would be doing the fishers an essential service to release them from the heavy expence in supporting men which that business, particularly on the east coast, does not positively require.

We have seen the Yarmouth people preferring a free fishery, without the bounty, to a bounty fishery saddled with expences and restrictions to which the public aid was inadequate. We have also seen the Scottish merchants and curers on the east-side of that kingdom abandon the whole business so

completely, that they have not fitted out six vessels annually, upon an average, during these last twenty years. We have seen the west-country people, Highlanders, as well as persons of more opulent circumstances upon the Clyde, struggling with almost unparalleled discouragements, and at last, after an experiment of twenty-one years, reduced, a second time, to the alternative of selling their vessels, greatly under their value, or of fitting them out at 320l. each (besides the original expence of building), upon voyages, which scarcely afford grounds for a forlorn hope, as will evidently appear by a perusal of the following extracts from the memorials and letters from the fishing towns on the west of Scotland, delivered or transmitted to the author of these sheets.

*Memorial from the Magistrates, Traders, and Fishers in Campbeltown, Sept. 18, 1784.*

DURING the late war, there were at least 900 seamen in the navy, who had been originally bred to sea at this port; this valuable nursery, the memorialists are sorry to remark, continues fast on the decline, and must totally sink, unless supported by some farther  
 encour-



encouragement than the present. From sad experience, they are so much convinced, that the bounty now given to bufs is inadequate to indemnify them for the certain necessary expence of outfit, even though their success should far exceed that of late years, that they this season rather prefer employing many of their vessels, during the winter, as carriers to others, than engage in a certain great expence in fitting them out as bufs for a fishery, which, in years of ordinary success, they find to be a losing trade. An accurate statement of the expence of a buf of 60 tons accompanying this\*, and the advantages to the adventurer, when she has been even so successful as to take the half of

\* See *View of the British Empire*, vol. I, page 231. See also, a similar statement on a buf of 47 tons, in the third report from the committee appointed to enquire into the state of the British fisheries, page 241, wherein it appears that a buf of 47 tons, carrying 240 barrels, between 1778 and 1784, caught only 110 barrels in a season, and after receiving the bounty of 30s. per ton, the owners lost on every voyage, on an average, 60l. 4s. 10d. It further appears, that, had the vessel caught her full cargo of 240 barrels, which seldom happens, the owners would have cleared only 24l. 19s. 2d. for all their trouble and loss of time, in the process of the business.

her cargo of fish, will shew Mr. Knox, that, after the expence of the voyage is discharged, all that will remain to the adventurer, for paying commiffion, port charges, and other unavoidable cofts at market, and to fupport himfelf and family for a feafon, is only the fmall fum of 2l. 6s. 7d.

*Custom-houfe, Oban, Sept. 25, 1784.*

That from the year 1765, and during the continuance of the 50s. bounty, and until the year 1772, there was employed in the white herring bufs fishery, upon this and the adjacent coasts, particularly from the places after-mentioned, between the Mull of Cantire and the Ifland of Sky, 33 fail; at prefent there are only 9. The principal caufes of this decline in the number of veffels were, firft, the dilatory payments of the bounty during the latter part of the act allowing 50s. per ton; and, fecondly, the reduction of the bounty from 50 to 30s. per ton.

The within and above ftatements, extracted from the Custom-houfe books, and are attested by

DUNCAN CAMPBELL, Collector.

JOHN LOWE, Surveyor.

*Memorial*

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*Memorial from Dunbarton, October 2, 1784.*

That while the bounty of 50s. per ton was given to herring buffes, this town sent out four annually, at which time there were no other vessels belonging to the place, and the aggregate burden of these amounted to near 200 tons. That although the tonnage of the vessels fit for the fishing trade, presently belonging to this place, has since increased to 2000 tons, yet there have no buffes been sent out from it for some years past; and the causes of the decrease are these, with considerable loss to the adventurers, viz. the irregular payment of the bounty while at 50s. Secondly, the reduction of the bounty from 50 to 30s. per ton, with several obstructions as to the salt and the fisheries in general.

*Glasgow, October 5, 1784.*

Mr. Mackenzie, master of a fishing vessel, at Stranraer, in Wigtonshire, being at present on a voyage to Glasgow, declares, that when the bounty was 50s. per ton, the town of Stranraer had 16 or 18 buffes in the herring fishery, which number is now reduced to four, and that the adventurers have of late

been considerable losers. That if Government wish to revive this fishery, and raise a valuable nursery of seamen, and ship-carpenters, it will be necessary to extend the bounty to 50s. and that punctually paid.

*Memorial from Port Glasgow, Oct. 9, 1784.*

The considerable loss incurred by prosecuting the herring fishing business, for a number of years past, will, in a short time, oblige the adventurers to relinquish it altogether, if not prevented by some further encouragement from Government, owing to the great expence of the original and subsequent outfit, the loss of nets, which annually may be reckoned at nearly a half of the whole quantity, men's wages, wear and tear, &c. At the commencement of the present bounty, the buffes from this port amounted to upwards of 30 sail, but the adventurers incurring an annual loss from that period, they have gradually dwindled, and there now only remain 10 or 12 buffes of the above number. Unless therefore Government grant us the bounty formerly given of 50s. per ton, we see no prospect of carrying on this business

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business to any kind of advantage; it will continue to decline, and be finally given up, however valuable as a national object, as a nursery for seamen, and in supporting and employing the poor of this country.

*Memorial from Greenock, October 11, 1784.*

The present bounty on buffes is too small, and should be augmented to 40 or 50s. This is the great cause of the decline of the fishery; for, in 1777, the number of buffes fitted out from this port was no less than 138; whereas the number fitted out last year was only 40.

*Letter from a Mercantile Company in Greenock, October 11, 1784.*

We were, for a considerable time, concerned in the white-herring fishery; but, for many reasons, found it not worth the prosecuting.

*Memorial from Rothesay, Oct. 13, 1784.*

It is the opinion of the most experienced adventurers in the herring fishing, that we never shall find it a permanent or profitable trade,

trade, unless extended and improved by the strongest exertions of all who are interested in it, and those are *the whole inhabitants of Britain*, from the King downwards. By a schedule herewith delivered\*, you can, at a glance, discover the advantages to the revenue, the navy, the merchant, the tradesman, manufacturers, and at last to the landholders—greatest part of the money arising from the sale of fish, enter into their coffers. Though the adventurers should lose money, the poor people employed by them make profit and get subsistence, and, for the necessaries of life, pay away their money to the proprietors of lands, or their agents. One acre of land contiguous to a town, or even a village, yields more rent than 10 acres in a remote corner, consequently it is the interest of landholders to support our trade. These things being premised, and must be admitted, because facts are stubborn things, we mean to come to the point in view, and that is,—unless our Legislature do heartily concur in giving their strongest support, we soon will

\* This interesting paper is inserted at large in *The View of the British Empire*, vol. I, page 236.

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lose our fishing trade; the consequence inevitably must be the loss of a nursery for able and the most hardy seamen; the loss of our West-India trade; and of thousands of poor people who must emigrate to other nations for support. For prevention of which calamities, we would propose, that in place of 30 a bounty of 50s. (as before given) should now be paid to all buffes from 20 to 80 tons, and to continue as long as 14 to 20 years, or more. That a bounty of 3l. 10s. should be paid for 6 years, to every bufs who would fish after the deep sea method, as the Dutch do, and a premium of 10 guineas to every bufs master who would get a cargo every year of the fix.

*Memorial from Saltcoats, February 12, 1785.*

The cause of the decline of the herring fishery was partly owing to the bounty not being regularly paid when at 50s. At that time there were 12 buffes belonging to Saltcoats, and at present there are only 5. When the bounty was reduced from 50 to 30s. it was found not to be equal to the great expence of fitting out and keeping up these buffes,  
so

so that the adventurers became losers by the business. The best means, therefore, to encourage the white herring fishery will be to encrease the bounty to 50s. and to be paid regularly.

*Joint Memorial from the Adventurers in the white herring fishery residing in the burghs of Rothsay, and Campbeltown, and towns of Greenock and Port Glasgow, dated Greenock, March 8, 1785.*

This general convention of the principal traders and adventurers in the herring business arose from an alarm that the method of bestowing the public aid was to be altered from a tonnage bounty, to a bounty or premium upon the quantity of fish taken ; and this, in consequence of a plan suggested by a commissioner of the customs at Edinburgh, who, it must be confessed, hath been the cause of much uneasiness to the whole body of practical fishers and adventurers at present engaged in that losing trade. Copies of this memorial were also sent to the representatives in parliament.

It contains in substance the same arguments  
in



in favour of a tonnage bounty as have been already extracted from the detached memorials, sent from the respective towns, and it may be seen at large in the third report of the committee on the British Fisheries, July 14, 1785, page 247.

For further information on this important subject, the reader is referred to the following pages of the same report, viz. page 7, 12, 21, 45, 90, 238, 240, 242, 261, 270, 317, 391, 394, 402.

In some of the before-mentioned pages, a small annual bounty or premium is also recommended to all boats properly manned and equipped, which shall prosecute the fisheries through the whole year, or during the greatest part of it; and I have to observe, that the boat fishers prefer this mode of encouragement to all other methods that have been, or can be devised. Were Government therefore to extend their aid to this numerous class of men the boat fishers, in the manner which seems most agreeable to their inclinations, all our northern fisheries would be established upon one simple principle, viz.

a bounty

a bounty of 40s per ton to vessels employed in the Greenland fishery, which is now paid. .... Ditto to vessels employed in the north-sea herring and white fisheries, which is earnestly desired by the parties concerned, and seems indisputably necessary for the permanent establishment of the same.—And, lastly, 3l. per man to such persons as shall practice the boat fishery in the open seas, as well as in the firths and lochs, both for herrings and white fish.

We shall now take a general view of the expences to the adventurers, and the advantages to the public, from these fisheries, compared with the body of seamen kept on the peace establishment, viz.

18,000 men, at 52l. per man annually, are of no utility to trade or manufactures, and cost Government	} £. 936,000
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6000 men in the whale fishery save above 100,000l. to the nation, which otherwise would be paid to foreign states for whale-bone and oil; the total expence of this body of men, at 19l. annually, is	} 114,000
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50,000

50,000 men in the northern herring  
 and white fisheries at 4l. per } 200,000  
 man annually.

However striking the difference in the expence may appear; that, of the benefit to the community at large, is still more obvious.

Those of the first class already man our navy, but in other respects, while thus cooped up, are useless members to the nation.

A part of the second class are qualified for the naval service when called upon; and, the fishery keeps a considerable sum at home annually; besides the benefits gained by the owners, and by ship-builders.

Those of the third class are still better qualified for the naval service; and when we further take into the account, the various professions and descriptions of people who depend upon, or derive benefit from, this mighty branch, we fail in the attempt to do it justice. It is not only beyond comparison the greatest nursery of seamen in these kingdoms, but also for carpenters and coopers, through whose combinations and extravagant demands \*, the fitting out of  
 our

\* At the commencement of the late war, the coopers belonging

our fleets is retarded, and the purposes of the state sometimes frustrated. Against these evils, an extensive herring and white fishery will have a good effect, by keeping always in readiness above 1000 carpenters, and a still greater number of coopers.

These advantages to the building, equipping, and manning the navy, sufficiently ballance any expence which the public bestows in support of the northern fisheries. We have next to state the circumstances that relate to trade, navigation, and general employment at home. At the breaking out of the American war in 1776, there were exported from Scotland,

50,165	barrels of white herrings,
430	red ditto,
11,017	cwt. of dried Cod, Ling, &c.

belonging to the Thames demanded 15s. per day, which Government, having no remedy against these unreasonable men, were obliged to allow. And, in North Britain, when any considerable body of troops are shipped for foreign service, the persons who supply the transports with provisions and stores are frequently obliged to send to England for coopers. A circumstance extremely hurtful to the success of our arms, by giving the enemy advantages in point of time, which they had no reason to expect.

The

The herrings taken on the west coast of Scotland are chiefly exported to the West-Indies, immediately from the Clyde, or by the way of Cork, at a freight of 7s. per barrel, which, as the outward-bound vessels seldom have half cargoes, is all clear gain to the merchants. The white fish affect collaterally the trade of the Mediterranean, by furnishing a considerable article in the assortment of the cargoes, to that part of Europe.

Now supposing that the exports were extended not only to the West-Indies and the Mediterranean, but to France, the Low Countries \*, Germany, Poland, Russia, and the British settlements in the Mogul empire, and that the quantity thus exported immediately from Scotland, or by the way of Ireland,

\* At present the Swedes and Dutch have the monopoly of the Baltic trade; but as the Swedes have no summer fishery, and the Dutch have no Winter fishery, there seems to be some chance of opening new markets in the north of Europe, for the sale of British fish.

I have been lately informed that salted fish from Europe have quick sales, and bring a high price at Calcutta, Madras, and other British settlements in Asia.

and London, was equal to 400,000 barrels upon an average annually, the freights to the European, the West-India, and the Asiatic markets, would, at a medium of 7s. per barrel, produce a clear gain to the merchants of 140,000*l.* and give life to mercantile enterprizes, by which an additional number of seamen would be employed.

We are further to consider those fisheries in their effects upon the balance of trade.

By the herring and white fisheries in the north seas, the nation will receive for various kinds of fish exported equal to 400,000 barrels, of 32 gallons each, taking the whole at an average of 20s. per barrel

	400,000
For freights as above-stated	140,000
	<hr/>
	£. 540,000

in specie, and in goods, which we must otherwise purchase with cash. All this wealth being, or which might be, drawn from the sea

sea which furrounds our island, affords the speculative mind a pleasure that amply repays the trouble of his calculations.

Of the value of fish consumed at home, we can make no exact estimate; it must however be very considerable, being a great part of the food used by the principal body of the people in Scotland, who, without this cheap article, could scarcely find a subsistence in their native country.

Neither can we form any estimate of the value of oil that might be extracted from all the varieties of fish, which frequent those seas; nor of the skins of seals, now an article of general use. Probably the aggregate value of the fish used at home, of oil and seal-skins, might be so far extended as to exceed 100,000*l.* which, added to the supposed value of exports before-mentioned, will realize to this island 640,000*l.*

We are next to consider the utility of extensive fisheries, to the numerous classes of people of both sexes, and of all ages, who would thereby gain a livelihood, exclusive of those already mentioned, in the various departments of this business, as

K                      Blacksmiths,

Blacksmiths,	Rope-makers,
Joiners,	Sailcloth-makers,
Block-makers,	Sail-makers,
Painters,	Salt-makers,
Hecklers,	Women and children
Spinners,	employed in gutting
Net-makers,	the herrings; and
Tanners,	labourers of all kinds

We may also observe that the improvement of the Highlands, by employing the natives in that line for which their local situation, their habits, temperance, frugality, and hardiness, are most eminently adapted, is an object of very great importance to manufacturers and traders in broad cloth, stuffs, woollens, hardware, cutlery, and a thousand other articles, which would find their way thither, were the people able to purchase them. The annual exports from England to Scotland, upon an average of 10 years, previous to the union, was only 65,345*l*. At the breaking out of the late war in 1775, they had amounted to nearly 2,000,000*l*. having increased thirty fold in less than 70 years: which exports were chiefly, if not wholly



## THE NORTHERN FISHERIES. 131

wholly to the Lowlands, a country containing something more than two-thirds of the national population.

Here, therefore, is a data whereon to ground our estimation of exports to the Highlands, were the population increased, and the circumstances of the people mended by a well regulated, and well supported fishery, accommodated with small towns, where the people might be supplied with provisions, stores, and all the necessary materials for that branch in all its departments of fishing, curing, reddening, and the extracting of oil.

Finally, the arguments in favour of this branch will be found unanswerable, when it is considered, that, what Government gives in bounties to the fisheries, with one hand, they receive in duties from those fisheries with the other hand; and if we can believe the estimates of revenue drawn up by the fishers, arising from building materials, repairs, hemp, nets, staves, rum, and other spirits, sugar, &c. the balance will be found to be considerably in favour of the public: if so, the fisheries, instead of being a drain, are a source

of revenue, proportioned to the extent to which they are carried. But, supposing that the expenditures by Government in bounties, and its receipts in duties, should only balance each other; in that case, the produce of a small tax upon dogs, to be appropriated to the fisheries, would ultimately flow into, and become a part of, the general revenue.

We have further to remark, that a fund of 200,000*l.* annually, proposed to be raised by this tax, would be more than sufficient for the purposes of the northern fisheries for some years to come, owing to the backwardness of the East-country people, who, being employed in other branches, and in smuggling, have allowed the fisheries to fall into the hands of the Swedes, Irish, and West-country Scotsmen. The overplus might therefore be applied towards the opening two short communications to the Hebrides, and the establishing of fishing stations for the conveniency of a people, who are strongly disposed to prosecute that business with the utmost perseverance, and who would soon repay the public, by various channels, in a ten-fold degree.

Such

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Such indulgencies would be received with overflowings of gratitude. A general gladness would be diffused through every coast, glen, and island: thousands, who had dragged through an existence of unprofitable toil and drudgery, would wish for the renewal of life, to enjoy the luxury of a glass window, a chair, a chimney, a morsel of butcher's meat.

They would reckon their posterity and their kindred happy in having the prospect of being readily supplied, for money, with fishing hooks, lines, nets, salt, oatmeal; and in having the means of providing for their families, by honest labour, both on land and water. These are the humble requisitions of men, whose intrepidity in war, and inoffensive demeanour in time of peace, do honour to human nature; and it may be presumed, that a very small degree of public attention to those people, and the fisheries around their shores, would disconcert the councils of our rivals and opponents, more than the loss of their whole navy. A hundred sail of the line could be replaced in a few years; *but it never will be in the power of France, to bring forward a new maritime force, equal to that which may be drawn from the Highlands of Scotland.*

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P O S T S C R I P T.

*Dunbar, April 28, 1785.*

I Beg therefore you will be so good as to urge, in the strongest manner, the necessity of giving a bounty to the boat fishing, being the best adapted to this side of the country.

*Rothsay, March 19, 1786.*

I am perfectly satisfied that you are going upon proper grounds, and that, if your proposals are agreed to, the good effects will soon appear. If the bounty be abolished, the consequence must inevitably be ruinous to all concerned; the property of the adventurers will be entirely annihilated, as there can be no use for the vessels; and the whole country will be laid desolate and waste. It may be said by some persons, that many buffes will hurt the revenue, by taking such sums for bounties; but I affirm the contrary: the more buffes, the more gain to the revenue; because

because the herrings are paid for by returns of foreign produce; and the herrings of one bus will pay the bounty of three, by duties on such produce.

If any person is against the importation of rock salt, he must be completely ignorant, because there can be no good salt without rock salt; and if that was got, we would need no foreign salt, as at present is the case. I intreat you will read the observations\*; and do in all things as appears best to yourself.

*Greenock, Feb. 16, 1786.*

I am sorry to find there is any opposition to the system of the fisheries you have so strongly and so justly recommended. Should the aid of Government be withdrawn from the adventurers in the fisheries, this useful branch of business will come to an end; for whatever speculative men may assert, there is no doubt if bounties are not continued, we must give it up.

\* A memorial, from which some extracts are printed, in the third report of the committee of the House of Commons on the British fisheries. July, 1785.

*Port Glasgow, March 10, 27; April 10, 1786.*

Should the bounty be taken off, there is an end to our herring fishery.

I have sent you two cockets, and accounts of the duty on barrels and falt, paid by our vessels for the privilege of fishing upon the Irish coast. Over and above these accounts, the Admiral charges one guinea for registering the bufs, and 5s. for every boat the bufs has in the fishing. You will observe that the duty is upon the entry barrel, as well as the falt.

Duty on 251 barrels,	-	-	-	2	16	1
663 barrels falt,	-	-	11	1	0	
Custom-house fees,	-	-	-	1	10	0
Surveyor's fees,	-	-	-	1	2	9
Admiral's ditto	-	-	-	1	11	0
Ditto for 3 boats	-	-	-	0	15	0
					<u>18</u>	<u>15</u>
					£.18	15 10

In regard to the number of buffes or vessels that was employed in fishing and buying herrings on the Irish coast this season, they are not over-rated at 500. The fishing boats are under-rated at 2000. Certainly the quantity of herrings that went to England, Wales, Scotland,

Scotland, the Isle of Man, and the West Indies, was far above 150,000 barrels, besides what the Irish used at home. I have this account from judicious masters of vessels, who were upon the fishing ground this present year 1786.

I think it would be proper to have a clause in the bill, obliging the owners of buffes to have one third of their salt British or Irish made salt. My reason for this is, that, in the month of June, July, and August, the foreign or great salt is so long in dissolving, that the fish is hurt before the pickle is made in such a quantity as to preserve the whole of the fish in the barrel; whereas the small salt of our own making goes instantly into pickle, and being intermixed with the foreign, the whole will dissolve much sooner, and tend to the preservation of the fish.

You always expressed such an eagerness to have a trial made by some Scottish vessels upon the Shetland coast, and signified that some extra encouragement would likely be given to the adventurers, as the expence and risk would be very great, above what the present law requires. This, with the deference

I paid to Mr. Knox's judgment, induced me to build two vessels for that very purpose, and one I had before, in all three, because I think that one vessel is no trial. My new vessels are built upon the Dutch construction, deep waisted, with a drift mast upon the taffe, such as the Dutch have, and a net rope of 120 fathoms long, and 7 inches and a half thick, which will cost a great deal of money before the vessels fail.

I beg of you to lay this before the committee in a pressing manner, and that the vessels may be inspected by the Chamber of Commerce at Glasgow, or any persons whom the committee shall please to appoint.

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By a letter from Shetland, inserted in *the View of the British Empire*, page 272, it appears, that the expence of a vessel properly built and equipped for the fishery on that coast will amount to 1000l. and it is on account of this heavy expence, that the most valuable of all the British fisheries hath been transferred, from the natives of these kingdoms, to Dutch, and other foreigners, who frequent the north seas regularly every year.

To



## THE NORTHERN FISHERIES. 139

To enable our own people to revive, or rather to commence this fishery, an extra tonnage bounty will be required from Government: such encouragement is particularly necessary to vessels fitted out from the Clyde, on account of the great length, delays, and hazards of that voyage.

Besides the benefits to the Navy and to the community, from an extensive and permanent Shetland fishery, the Scottish seamen, who have been hitherto accustomed to a sedentary fishery while the vessels lie at anchor, will also practise the open sea fishery, during the summer and harvest months, by following the shoals, in the manner of the Dutch.

I hope that the gentlemen of the committee, who have devoted much time and attention to the business of the fisheries in general, are now sensible that the British herring and white fisheries are the most important to this country, and that the officious misrepresentations of commissioners of the customs in both kingdoms, respecting bounties, have a direct tendency to annihilate all the British fisheries, and consequently to ruin the adventurers, to throw thousands of working people

ple upon the public for support, to weaken the navy, and to endanger the general commerce of the nation.

So far from coinciding with these revenue officers, it may be honestly declared, that the word *Oeconomy* ought never to be joined in the same sentence with *British Fisheries*. Where is the oeconomy of saving one million at the expence of 80 or 100,000 millions ?

When we consider that all the statements, and the speculations of ministers, on finance, rest solely on the chance of a long period of peace, and that the value of such immense property, besides the safety of our distant settlements, depends on the tranquillity of Europe, to which an increased British naval force will greatly contribute, the trifle expended in bounties, were it purely to avert the evils which arise from every war, would be judiciously and humanely bestowed. The arm of power, and that only, will have the desired effect, respecting foreign states; who, as soon as they shall perceive the rapid increase of British seamen, and the gradual, but sure decrease of her burdens, will be better disposed to give peace to mankind.

F I N I S

A  
D I S C O U R S E  
ON THE EXPEDIENCY OF ESTABLISHING  
F I S H I N G S T A T I O N S,  
OR  
S M A L L T O W N S,  
IN THE  
H I G H L A N D S O F S C O T L A N D  
AND THE  
H E B R I D E I S L A N D S.

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**T**HE attention of all well regulated states hath generally been directed to such objects of national utility, as contributed to assist nature, and to employ the great body of the people.

The courses of rivers have been directed into new channels; internal navigations, of considerable length and dimensions, have been opened from sea to sea, through seemingly insurmountable difficulties: even the ocean itself hath been bounded; and, in many parts, the face of nature hath undergone a total change.

Immense tracts of desert land have been brought into cultivation; and regions, which served only to give shelter to the wild animals, became, through the persevering hand of man, the seats of populous cities, of science, and refinement.

These great efforts of human industry were rightly considered as the ground-work of manufactures, of commerce, and whatever contributed to the general welfare of communities, and to the strength of nations. Of this, the annals of ancient, as well as of modern times abound in examples. The works of antiquity were, however, effected by potent empires, in the meridian of their glory; but those of latter times, and some of them within the memory of man, have been generally undertaken and carried on by nations just emerging from obscurity, as Russia and Ireland, whose sudden transition, from a state of rude nature to that station which renders them

respectable in the eyes of mankind, hath been the result of unremitting application, both in the legislature and individuals, as well as of liberal aids from the public revenue, without which, no objects of great national concern can effectually be executed.

It would seem also, by the exertions and the liberal grants of other European states, as France, Austria, and Prussia, that a spirit of internal improvement hath, within the present century, wisely pervaded the greatest part of Europe, while the essential interests of this kingdom have been, in a great measure, sacrificed to delusive schemes of commercial monopoly, at the distance of three thousand miles from the centre.

Immediately after the Restoration, when peace and good humour were restored to this kingdom, the active genius of the people led them to colonization in the wilds of North America, upon the idea of raising new customers for their manufactures and merchandize, while a third part of their native and very improvable country remained in a state of nature.

This was particularly the condition of the Northern part of the island: the Lowlands exhibited almost one general ruin, owing to the civil and religious commotions which had distracted that unhappy country, from the death of James V. in 1542 to the Restoration in 1660, and which did not finally subside till the Revolution in 1688.

During these distressful ages, and almost down to the present day, the more remote districts of Scotland, called the Highlands, remained exactly in the state in which nature had formed them; a *terra incognita*, deemed unworthy of notice, and incapable of being rendered useful to Government, or to the Public.

Such was the half-improved state of these kingdoms, when it was resolved to extend the lines of empire, by including an immense continent, lying on the opposite side of the Atlantic, by which it was affirmed, that England would derive not only great wealth, but also a greater degree of strength and national importance.

In support of this new system, the colonists were permitted to supply the mother country with shipping, and to become in a certain degree its carriers. All American-built ships were to be admitted into our ports, with all the privileges of British: but the British ships, when they arrived in America, were burdened with tonnage duties and other expences, from which the colony-built vessels were exempted. The same partiality extended to American seamen, who, in all the subsequent wars, were not liable to be pressed into the naval service, which, consequently, threw the whole burden of that service upon the merchants and mariners of the mother country.

This system of colonization, begun and carried on at the expence of Great Britain, was warmly, but ineffectually, opposed by some able politicians of the last century; particularly by Sir Josiah Child and Doctor Davenant, whose predictions have been too completely fulfilled, with the additional mortifying circumstance, which they could not have imagined, that our new customers  
have

have cost this country above one hundred and fifty millions, in supporting their civil establishments; in bounties on the American produce; in defending the colonies against the Indian depredations, and the incroachments of the French; and, finally, in an unsuccessful struggle to retain their allegiance.

The effects of this expenditure have reached all descriptions of men, and afforded ample matter for political declamation, both in Parliament, and out of it.

Let us colonize in America, by which we shall be enriched, was the language of the last century. Let us abandon that distant country, by which we have been impoverished, is the language of the present day. Let us look at home, improve and strengthen the centre, is, happily, the favorite topic of mankind, of whatever description or party, from one end of the island to the other.

While this patriotic spirit predominates in the nation, and while Government are strongly disposed to co-operate with the wishes of the people, there is reason to hope, that our envied island will ultimately profit by its misfortunes, and rise with additional splendour from its apparent ruins.

When all the hitherto neglected sources of agriculture, manufactures, commerce, and fisheries, shall be brought forward, and when every pound expended on these great objects shall annually, and for a perpetuity, realize many pounds, enthusiasm itself falls short in its speculative estimates of the height to which Great Britain may yet arrive.

In contemplating these subjects, it naturally occurs, that the objects which contribute most effectually to the strength of the navy, should take the lead in the arrangements of future operations. The strength of the Navy depends chiefly on the extent of our maritime coast; the number of people who inhabit that coast; and the nature of the business on which they are most generally employed. It is owing to the happy situation of Great Britain in these respects, that we have been able to fit out such mighty armaments, and to carry on an almost unequalled commerce over a great part of the habitable world. By these, the British name is known and respected amongst the savage, as well as the civilized nations. But, as the force which may hereafter be brought against us, by a confederacy of naval powers, may far exceed the usual magnitude of our armaments, it seems indispensably necessary to take a survey of our native coasts, and to bring forward a proportionable increase of strength from parts, which, during the rage for territory in the western hemisphere, were totally overlooked.

The coast of Great Britain comprehends nearly two thousand miles, of which about four hundred miles, in the northern part, are not furnished with a town, harbour, or place, where a ship in distress can be supplied with an anchor, cable, or sail. From the want of these materials, and of persons to repair the damages occasioned by stresses of weather, or other causes, many valuable lives, as well as vessels and cargoes, are lost to these kingdoms. From a coast so ill provided in whatever relates to navigation, the royal navy cannot be furnished with the necessary supplies of

seamen and carpenters, when called for by the emergencies of the state.

To this great line of coast on the main-land of the Highlands, is to be added the circumference of the principal Hebride Islands, making six hundred miles; the whole, one thousand miles, on which there is only the small town of Stornoway, in the Hebrides; and the inconsiderable places called Thurso, Wick, and Dornoch, on the east side of the main-land, being only one town, or rather village, to every two hundred and fifty miles.

The number of people throughout the whole coast, including the isles, may amount to two hundred thousand, or two hundred for each mile; besides one hundred thousand inhabiting the glens and interior parts of the main-land, who, were the coasts in a flourishing state, would resort thither in great numbers annually, instead of emigrating with their wives and children to distant regions, from whence few ever return: and the nation thereby sustains a constant drain of persons, who, from their bravery in war, their hardiness, agility, temperance, simplicity of manners, and domestic qualities, it would be highly expedient to retain on their native soil.\*

Nature hath pointed out, in striking characters, the means whereby that coast might be rendered subservient to the great purposes of the navy, as the primary object; besides the advantages that would arise to manufactures and commerce, from the establishment of a thriving, populous colony in these extreme parts of our island.

The generality of people who inhabit these shores have a strong propensity to a sea life, particularly to fisheries; and no country, in the known world, is better situated for extending that branch on every side, and at all seasons of the year. It is an established fact, that the Northern Ocean is the grand receptacle of fish in endless varieties, and in such numbers as to exceed the powers of imagination to conceive. Some of the lesser species multiply by thousands, as the herring; others by millions, as the cod-fish†. Of these, and other fishes, as ling, tusk, haddock, the coasts of Scotland, and more especially of the Highlands, have a double supply: first, the home or native fish, which propagate on the coast through the whole year;

\* *Extract of a Letter from the Highlands, March, 1786.*

Mr. ——— has been at Greenock, to engage a transport to carry the Knoidart people to Canada: there are already, at least, three hundred passengers engaged, and it is thought that there will be many more. The vessel is to be at the isle of Oranfy the beginning of June; I am therefore afraid, that the scheme of villages will take place too late, as the people will be all away; many among them are expert fishers. These, when once they settle in Canada, will encourage others, as they are now encouraged by some friends before them; this will form a chain of emigration: it is thought the country will be converted into a sheep walk. Should this grow general, and our gallant Highlanders desert us, I fear all the sheep that can be introduced and reared will form, in their stead, but a sorry defence against our enemies.

By another account, communicated to a Member of Parliament, two ships are to be in readiness against the fifth of June, to take on board six hundred people, at £.4 each, for their passage to Quebec.

† *Philosophical Transactions.*

and

and, secondly, the great annual migrations from the northern latitudes within the Arctic Circle, which, after paying the British kingdoms a temporary visit, are again lost in the immensity of the ocean.

The fisheries carried on at present by the northern inhabitants consist of the home fishery immediately upon their shores, and in the lakes and bays by which these shores are every where indented, from one to twenty miles within land. The varieties most usually caught on these shores are herrings, white-fish, flat-fish, mackarel, dog-fish, and seals. Shell-fish also abounds, but is much neglected, excepting lobsters for the London market; oysters, which are chiefly burnt unopened for manure to the land; and lesser fish, which are sold to the inhabitants of the before-mentioned towns at an incredible low price.

Secondly, there is a distant fishery for herring, cod, ling, and tusk, around the Shetland Islands on the north-east, and the great Island of Iceland on the north-west; both of which stations are regularly frequented by many vessels from the maritime kingdoms of Europe; while the share which the Scots have in this distant fishery is little more than a name; nor have they been able to carry on even the home fishery to any considerable extent, comparatively to what that fishery admits of. Still less is the share that hath fallen to the lot of the poor native Highlanders, on whose immediate shores, persons from distant parts make their annual captures. Whereas, by improving these fisheries, and by a continued succession of fishing and sailing, these northern shores would be ready at all times to furnish a very powerful supply of excellent seamen; but, in the present state of the country, no effectual exertions can be made, even in that fishery which its lakes and bays afford. Here is a considerable body of people without capital, and a coast without towns where the natives can be supplied with nets, casks, salt, hooks, lines, and provisions.—Here are no places where fishers, women and children, from distant parts, can be accommodated with lodgings, either while in health or in sickness. The inhabitants of these shores have but scanty dwellings to themselves, and are equally ill provided in necessaries for the accommodation of persons who would flock thither in the fishing seasons.

This deplorable state of the Highlands having been lately represented in strong colours to the feelings and serious attention of the public, and the increase of seamen being also an object of great national importance, the legislature have already entered upon the subject of promoting the northern fisheries, and of removing several impediments, which have hitherto retarded their progress. Other objects of a similar nature are now in contemplation.-----But no laws, however judicious, no regulations, however expedient, can extend and secure a permanent fishery and nursery of seamen upon these shores, unless the public shall, at the same time, accommodate the natives, and those who may be disposed to come amongst them, with habitations and lodgings, upon or near the most frequented fishing grounds, and where these persons may be furnished with the necessaries of life, and all the materials for boat building, fishing, packing, and curing.

This implies the establishing of FISHING STATIONS, or small FREE TOWNS, in the most eligible situations, both on the main-land, and on the Hebride Islands, which front the extensive line of western coast at greater or less distances, and where the shoals of herrings pass, in their annual migrations to the south, filling sometimes one lake, sometimes another; which fishery, were the natives better accommodated, would prove a source of great national wealth; employ thousands of indigent people of both sexes; and bring forward into the line of active, useful industry, a country that composes a fifth part of Great Britain.

With a view to these important objects, as well as to the nursery of seamen, it was proposed that the public should erect, by way of experiment, some stations on the west coast of the main-land, each station or town to be composed of fifteen or twenty small houses; besides some public works necessary for shipping and fisheries. But the state of the national finances, and the uncertainty of the sources necessary for the exigencies of Government, did not at that time afford much reason to expect immediate assistance, and these distressed countries of the Highlands have consequently remained in *statu quo*.

In this dilemma, some gentlemen, who are members of the House of Commons, have suggested the idea of raising a fund by means of a general subscription; and, as all degrees of people in Great Britain will be more or less benefited by this maritime colony within our own island, it may be presumed, that gentlemen of affluence and public spirit will come forward upon this occasion, and merit the appellation of---THE FRIENDS OF THEIR COUNTRY.

By thus planting a coast of one thousand miles with hardy, intrepid seamen, the hostile designs of our enemies will be frustrated; their formidable armaments, instead of annoying our commerce and distant settlements, will be permitted to remain in their dock-yards probably for many years; during which season of peace and security, commerce and manufactures will flourish; Administration will be enabled to put the public burdens into a train of redemption, and have leisure to prosecute such measures of national policy as may, from time to time, be found expedient.

To these negative advantages, which will in a great measure flow from this new establishment, may be added the saving of seventy, eighty, or one hundred millions, the usual expenditures upon every seven years war; compared to which, the expence of the proposed towns will be mere fractions.---Every war entails upon the subject a long train of heavy taxes; but the measure now proposed requires only a trifle, for a time, from those who are able to advance it; and which, instead of taxes, will raise thousands of new customers for manufactures of broad-cloth, woollens, hardware, cutlery, and an endless assortment of lesser articles, for which England is famed.

Sir Charles Whitworth's Commercial Tables state, as before mentioned in page 139, the annual exports from England to Scotland, previously to the Union of the two Kingdoms, in 1707, at 65,345l. At present there are good grounds for supposing they have



have increased thirty-fold in value, being nearly 2,000,000l. Were the northern fisheries improved, and the people fully employed, the exports to that division of the kingdom would increase proportionably.

These are the grounds on which we entertain a hope, that the members of the Highland Societies of London and Edinburgh, and other noblemen and gentlemen, will subscribe to this plan, and thereby enable a sufficient number of gentlemen of rank and fortune to enter, as trustees or directors, upon the business of treating with the proprietors of lands, and with workmen, for erecting certain small plain buildings, by contract.

DESCRIPTION OF THE MARITIME PARTS OF THE HIGHLANDS,  
AND OF THE HEBRIDE ISLANDS.

**T**HE Highlands consist of two principal divisions:

- First, the northern part of Scotland; and,
- Secondly, the Hebride Islands.

The coast of the main-land stretches on the west side, from the head-land called the Mull of Cantire, facing Ireland on the south, to Cape Wrath, facing the great Northern Ocean.

The Mull of Cantire lies in North lat. 55, 23; and Cape Wrath in 58, 28; by other maps, in 58, 44: the whole forming a coast of two hundred and thirty-four English miles, in a straight line: but, were the windings of the head-lands included, the line would extend to three hundred miles. This is called the West Coast of the Highlands, and is washed by the Atlantic, between which coast and North America there is no land, excepting the Hebride Islands.

After passing round Cape Wrath, we enter upon the Northern extremity of Great Britain, which lies nearly in a straight line from Cape Wrath on the West, to Dunsbay-Head on the East, and forms a coast of seventy miles, usually called the Pentland Firth. There is no land between this coast and Greenland, excepting the Orkney Islands,

At the distance of	- - - - -	6 miles
The Shetland Islands,	- - - - -	100 ditto
The Ferro Islands,	- - - - -	150 ditto
And Iceland,	- - - - -	400 ditto

The two first belong to Great Britain; the two last to the Crown of Denmark.

Leaving Dunsbay-Head, we enter upon the east coast of the Highlands, which stretches ninety miles due south, to Inverness, at the head of the Murray Firth. But, as the most southern part of this district is accommodated with towns and materials for fisheries, we shall limit the estimate to that part of the coast which lies between Dunsbay-Head and the small ruinous town of Dornoch, containing a line of seventy miles. This coast is washed by the German Sea, and faces the south part of Norway, from which it is distant three hundred miles.

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The total number of miles between the Mull of Cantire and the Firth of Dornoch, exclusively of head-lands, bays, and lakes, is as follows : viz.

The West coast, between the Mull of Cantire and Cape Wrath,	234
The North coast, between Cape Wrath and Dungsby-Head	70
The East coast, between Dungsby-Head and the Firth of Dornoch,	70

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374

For the sake of even numbers we shall add, on account of head-lands, only	26
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26

Almost townless coast, on the main land	400
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400

We now come to the second division of the Highlands, which is composed entirely of islands, called the Hebrides, amounting to about three hundred ; of which forty are inhabited. It would be difficult to ascertain the circumference of this numerous cluster of islands, or even of all those that are inhabited. We shall therefore only state the dimensions of the most considerable, from which may be formed an imperfect conjecture of the aggregate line of the whole.

1. The *Long Island* forms a chain of nearly one hundred and forty miles in length, and, in general, from six to ten miles in width : in one place it is twenty-five miles across.

This chain is principally composed of five islands, lying south and north, and separated from each other, at high-water, by four narrow channels, through which fishing-vessels may pass from east to west, between the inner channel and the main ocean.

2. *Sky* is fifty-four miles in length, and fifteen in width, at a medium.

3. *Mull* is twenty miles in length, and fifteen in width, at a medium.

4. *Ilay* is about half the dimensions of Mull.

5. *Jura* is nearly the size of the former.

6. *Tirey* and *Coll*, separated from each other by a narrow channel, are about twenty miles in length, and three, at a medium, in width.

Before I close the description of this western coast, it may be proper to remark, that the country on the west side of the Firth of Clyde, a channel of forty miles in length, and nearly the same in width, is entirely Highland ; abounding, like that country, in islands, lakes, bays, and fisheries ; and which may be considered as a continuation of the Hebrides, being only separated from these islands by the narrow peninsula of Cantire.

Of the islands within the Firth of Clyde, that called Arran is the principal. It contains seven thousand inhabitants, is sixteen miles in length, by nine in width, and hath three excellent bays, of which Lamlash is the most considerable, where shipping ride securely in all kinds of weather.

From this island (which lies thirty miles within the Mull of Cantire, and is entirely townless) to the Firth of Dornoch, the attention of the public may be directed, including a coast,

On

## ESTABLISHING FISHING STATIONS. 149

	Miles.		People.
On the main-land, of more than 400	400	Inhabited by	150,000
And on the Hebride Isles	600		50,000
	<hr style="width: 50px; margin: 0 auto;"/>		<hr style="width: 50px; margin: 0 auto;"/>
	1000		200,000

NUMBER OF TOWNS WHICH IT MAY BE EXPEDIENT TO ERECT  
ON THE ABOVE-MENTIONED SHORES: PLAN OF THOSE TOWNS,  
AND THE EXPENCE OF THE HOUSES.

**B**ETWEEN the north point of Arran and the Firth of Dornoch, there are, upon the coast of the main-land and the islands, above two hundred lakes, bays, and openings, all of which are fishing grounds, and where ships may safely ride.

To put these extensive and valuable shores in a situation for prosecuting the fisheries effectually, and at all seasons of the year, FORTY fishing stations, or small towns, will be necessary, *in the first instance*: being only one station for every twenty-five miles, on a coast of one thousand miles, and for every five thousand people, who reside on that coast, besides those who inhabit the interior country, the younger part of whom would soon become regular fishers.

For facilitating the growth of towns, accommodating the great body of the people with materials for the fisheries, and instructing others in the mechanical arts, a house will be required for each of the following professions, viz.—A boat-builder, cooper, net-maker, tanner, blacksmith, mason, house-carpenter, weaver, taylor, shoemaker, butcher, and tallow-chandler.

Also for a general dealer in meal, grain, fishing materials and stores, salt, timber, staves, hoops, pitch, tar, oil, and a great variety of other articles, which the fishers and the country people have at present no means of procuring, upon easy terms, or when immediately wanted.

A public house, or small inn, accommodated with beds for the conveniency of strangers, who may come thither to buy and sell, will be particularly necessary; and we hope, likewise, that a house will be deemed requisite for a school-master, and for an apothecary or surgeon.

The whole number will comprise sixteen houses, which, excepting those for the trader and inn-keeper, may be built upon one scale or plan of architecture, with stone, lime, and slate; each house having two apartments on the ground, with stone-flooring; and two apartments above. The houses for the trader and inn-keeper should be more capacious, and accommodated with back-rooms for holding bulky articles. But, upon the whole, these sixteen buildings may be raised, in a country where materials (timber excepted) are plentiful, and where wages are low, at 80*l.* each, or 1,280*l.* for the whole.

As all the lakes and bays of the Highlands are more or less the receptacles of white fish, shell-fish, salmon, mackarel, and occasionally visited by the migrating shoals of herrings, there ought to be a number of stationary, practical fishers in each town, at their first establishment, for whose accommodation twenty small houses should be built, with two apartments on the ground, at about 25*l.* each: in all 500*l.*

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## GENERAL ACCOUNT, VIZ.

Sixteen dwelling-houfes to each town	£80 1280
Twenty do. do.	25 500
A public well, paving, and other incidental expences	220
	<hr/>
Expenditure on each town of 36 houfes	2000
Number of towns	40
	<hr/>

Total expence for building 40 towns, containing 640 houfes, at 80l. each; and 800 do. at 25l. in all 1440 houfes

£80,000

The above is the fum which it will be neceffary to raife by individual fubfcription, not upon speculative ideas of a plan of emolument to thofe who advance the money, but merely to build a number of commodious dwellings on the beft fifhing grounds, for a people, who, though they cannot immediately erect houfes at their own expence, may, with a moderate degree of fuccefs in their refpective profefions, be able, in a few years, to pay a fmall yearly rent, by which the fubfcribers may receive from three to four per cent. upon an average of years, till the houfes fhall be fold, and the principal repaid.

In a country which does not raife the neceffary fupplies of grain for its inhabitants, who frequently experience a temporary fcarcity, it would be expedient to accommodate each houfe, having four apartments, with an acre of land adjoining to the fame; and the fmall houfes with half an acre each, whereon to raife vegetables and potatoes; which, with fifh at their doors, would form a principal part of their fubfiftence through the whole year.

In treating with the refpective proprietors of the foil, it would be neceffary to look forward to the growth of the towns, and to procure, at once, fufficient ground not only for the fite of houfes, but alfo for a fmall garden to each houfe that fhall be erected by individuals during the infancy of each townfhip.

The progrefs of thefe towns will depend greatly on the liberality of the prefent ground proprietors; who, if they co-operate with the good difpofitions of Government and the public, if they wifh to improve their eftates, to have their rents well paid, and to fee their country flourish, will readily treat with the directors for a piece of ground, not under fifty Scots acres for each townfhip, to become from thence forward the unalienable royalty of fuch towns, fubject only to the prince on the throne, the laws of their country, and the regulations of their own magiftracy.

The growth of thefe towns will alfo depend much on the aid that Government fhall give towards the building of custom-houfes, quays, and other works, which fall properly on the public at large. The concurrence of Government in this refpect will operate as the main-fpring of the whole bufinefs, It will difpofe the proprietors of lands to treat for the alienation of the fame on the moft liberal terms; it will facilitate the fubfcription for erecting the private dwellings; and finally, it will draw to thefe places a concurrence of people, traffic, and fhipping.

From thefe outlines of the plan it appears, that the mutual concurrence, and hearty fupport of the feveral descriptions of men before-mentioned are abfolutely neceffary in laying the foundation of towns, which may, one day, prove as walls of brafs for the defence of this highly favoured and juftly celebrated ifland.

## ESTABLISHING FISHING STATIONS. 155

A PLAN FOR COMPLETING THE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN  
THE TWO SEAS OF SCOTLAND, BY A SUBSCRIPTION.

**T**O open a free navigation between these seas, there remain to  
be cut miles

Of the great canal, - - - - - 9 }  
And the short cut, at Loch Crinan, nearly - - - 6 } 15

As this great line of communication, extending 125 miles from sea to sea, cannot be completed until a fund shall be raised for cutting the last-mentioned 6 miles, and as it is universally admitted, that the improvement of the Highlands and the fisheries will depend greatly on the same; I humbly beg leave to introduce this business to the immediate consideration of the Highland Societies of London and Edinburgh, and the public at large.

Mr. Watts the surveyor states the expence of a canal of 10 feet water, at 48,405l.; but, as the large buffes, being sharp bottomed, draw 11 feet, I proposed to the Committee of the House of Commons on the fisheries, that the same be extended to 12 feet; and it may be supposed, that the whole expence upon this scale will amount to 60,000l.

As the navigation on this canal will consist chiefly of buffes and Highland boats, the tonnage duties cannot, with any degree of propriety, be stated at more than 500l. per annum; from which must be deducted about 40l. for collecting, and a considerable sum annually for keeping the canal and locks in repair. If heavy duties were levied, the vessels, and even the small boats would take the old course by the Mull of Cantire, though at the risk of their lives; and the purposes of the canal would be thereby in a great measure defeated.

This being a just representation of the case, the money cannot be raised on the prospect of an annual per centage, at least for some years; but by a voluntary gift from Government, from chartered and other towns, and from individuals, all of whom will derive essential benefits from the undertaking. Were the nobility, gentry, and seaport towns in Scotland, disposed to engage for two thirds of the expence, it is possible that Government would advance the remaining third. At any rate, it would be proper to know their sentiments on that head as soon as possible.

Sketch of the plan for raising the money.

Government to advance	20,000	}	£.60,000
The cities and towns upon the Clyde and the Forth,	5,000		
Noblemen, gentlemen, &c.	35,000		

Supposing that 350 individuals were to subscribe 100l. each, the subscription would be immediately filled on their part; but, as it may be difficult to persuade so great a number of persons to subscribe 100l. each, it might be left to the option of every person to subscribe any sum not under — pounds.

Thus, by including a greater body of people, the subscription would become easy to persons of every description; and it may be presumed that, upon this plan, the subscription would soon be filled.

As the canal will require three years from the present time, before it can be completed, the money might be paid in by three instalments; the first on the day of subscribing; the second on that day twelve-months; and the third, on that day two years.

For a full account of this proposed canal, see *View of the British Empire*, Vol. II, p. 410.

T H I R D R E P O R T  
F R O M T H E C O M M I T T E E  
A P P O I N T E D T O E N Q U I R E I N T O T H E S T A T E O F T H E  
B R I T I S H F I S H E R I E S,  
A N D I N T O T H E M O S T E F F E C T U A L M E A N S F O R T H E I R  
E N C O U R A G E M E N T A N D E X T E N S I O N .

( 4th May 1786. )

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The COMMITTEE appointed to enquire into the State of the *British* Fisheries, and into the most effectual Means for their Encouragement and Extension, and to report the same, from Time to Time, with their Opinion thereupon, to the House,

**H**AVE carefully examined the Evidence contained in the Reports referred to them for Consideration; and, in the fullest Conviction which that Evidence has impressed upon their Minds, that, without any considerable Enlargement of the pecuniary Aid already afforded by the Public, the Removal of those Obstacles to Industry, which at present impede the Exertions of Individuals, will effectually improve the Fisheries of *Britain*, and, by that Improvement, increase the Strength of her Marine, advance her Manufactures, enlarge her Commerce, and extend her Population,

Your Committee have formed the following Resolutions, which they now submit to the Judgment of the House.

R E S O L V E D,

THAT it is the Opinion of this Committee, That the Bounty which was granted by an Act, made in the 19th Year of His present Majesty, and which will expire at the End of the next Sessions of Parliament, should not be renewed; but that, in the Place thereof, there should be given, on every decked Vessel of not less than Fifteen Tons Burthen, employed in the Herring Fishery, and fitted out and navigated according to Law, a Bounty of Twenty Shillings *per* Ton; and that on such Herrings as shall be landed from any such Vessel, during any One Year, there should be paid a Bounty after the Rate of Four Shillings for every Barrel of Herrings twice packed and completely cured: Provided always, That, if the Number of Barrels of Herrings imported in such Vessel, shall in any One Year exceed the proportion of Two Barrels and a Half of Herrings, so packed and cured, for every Ton of the Vessel's Burthen (which, upon an Average of the last Twenty Years, is supposed

supposed to have been the Quantity of Herrings Annually caught) there shall be paid on every Barrel so exceeding the said Proportion, a Bounty of no more than One Shilling: Which Inland Bounties of Four Shillings, and One Shilling, as the Case may be, should be exclusive of the Bounty granted on all Herrings exported; so that, if the Industry and Success of the Owner should not be less than it has been upon an Average of the last Twenty Years, the Bounty he will receive will not be less than at present, and, should his Industry and Success be greater than before, he will receive an additional Reward.

*R E S O L V E D,*

THAT, it is the Opinion of this Committee, That, for the more effectual Prevention of Frauds, the Quantity of Herrings in any Cargo, entitled to the Bounty, should be computed at the Time of their being unshipped, while they are in the State in which they are denominated Sea Sticks, or Herrings not re-packed; and that Four Barrels of Herrings in that State should be considered as equivalent to Three Barrels of Herrings packed a Second Time.

*R E S O L V E D,*

THAT, for the Encouragement of the Deep Sea Fishery, on the North and North-East Coasts of the Island, it may, in the Opinion of the Committee, be expedient, that Premiums, of which the Total Amount in any One Year shall not exceed the Sum of Two hundred Guineas, should, for a time to be limited, be paid, at the End of each Season, to the Four Vessels that shall have taken, in the Course of that Season, in the aforesaid Fishery, the greatest Quantity of Herrings.

*R E S O L V E D,*

THAT, in the Opinion of this Committee, it is highly expedient, as well for the Purpose of encouraging the Fisheries by an Extension of the Market, as for that of providing a cheap and wholesome Article of Food for the Support of the Poor, That all Duties at this Time payable by Law on such Herrings, Cod, Ling, and Salmon, or other Fish, caught and cured by *British* Subjects, as are removed for Home Consumption, should cease and determine.

*R E S O L V E D,*

THAT, as it appears by Evidence contained in a Report presented to the House on the 14th Day of *July* last, and referred to this Committee, that the Distinction between *Haberdine Cod*, and *Cod not Haberdine*, is useless, inasmuch as little less than the Whole Quantity of Dried Cod, exported during the last Thirty Years, has been shipped as *Haberdine*; and as it also appears, by Evidence contained in the said Report, that the Value of Cod, in some of the Foreign Markets, is much diminished by that Degree of Dryness which is denominated *Haberdine*, and on which the highest Bounty is now payable by Law; it is the Opinion of this Committee, That the Distinction of *Haberdine*, and not *Haberdine*, in the Cure of Cod, ought to be abolished; and that the Bounty of Three Shillings *per* Hundred Weight, at present payable on *British Haberdine* Cod exported, should be paid on all *British* Cod exported, whether *Haberdine* or not.

*R E S O L V E D,*

## RESOLVED,

THAT, in the Opinion of this Committee, it is highly requisite, that on all Barrels and Casks, in which any Fish whatever (Fresh Fish excepted) shall be packed, either for Exportation or Home Consumption, the respective Names of the Curers should be marked, in conspicuous and permanent Characters: And, that the Staves of all Barrels, in which White Herrings shall be packed for Exportation, should not be of a less Thickness at the Bulge than Half an Inch; and that all such Barrels should be full Bound.

## RESOLVED,

THAT, as it appears to this Committee, that, by an Act passed in the 12th Year of her late Majesty Queen Anne, entitled, "An Act for allowing a Drawback upon the Exportation of Salt, to be made use of for the curing of Fish taken at the *North Seas*, or at *Ireland*; and also by an Act, passed in the 25th Year of His present Majesty, entitled, "An Act for the further Encouragement of the *British* Fisheries," the Use of Salt, Duty free, for the Cure of such Cod, Ling, and Hake, as are taken in the *North Sea*, is expressly allowed, whether such Fish shall be exported, or sold for Home Consumption (which Privilege is accompanied by an express Declaration, that the Cod, Ling, and Hake, so cured, shall be entitled to a Bounty on Exportation): And as it also appears to this Committee, that, by an Act passed in the 5th Year of his late Majesty King George the First, entitled "An Act for recovering the Credit of the *British* Fishery in Foreign Parts, and better securing the Duties on Salt;" and also, by an Act passed in the 29th Year of his late Majesty King George the Second, entitled, "An Act for encouraging the Fisheries in that Part of *Great Britain* called *Scotland*" (which last Acts, the Committee apprehend, relate to the Home Fisheries alone), the Use of Salt, Duty free, is allowed for the Cure of such Cod, Ling, or Hake, only as shall be cured for Exportation; a Restriction that is accompanied, however, by the Privilege of a Bounty on the Fish so exported: And, as it further appears to this Committee, that Doubts have arisen, how far the Seas between the North-East Parts of *Great Britain*, and the opposite Coasts of the Continent of *Europe*, are to be considered as included within the Limits of the *North Sea* (in consequence of which Doubts, Vessels sailing for the same Sea, and employed on the same Banks, in taking the same Fish, are often fitted out under different Regulations, by which they are subjected to different Restrictions, and entitled to different Privileges)—this Committee are of Opinion, That, for the Purpose of giving Uniformity to the Law, and Relief from Doubt to the Subject, it is highly expedient, that the Boundary of the *North Sea* should be clearly ascertained, and expressly declared by the Legislature.

## RESOLVED,

THAT the Committee are of Opinion, That, for the Encouragement of the Fisheries, the Right of exercising any Trade or Calling, in any City, Town, or Borough in the Kingdom, should be extended to all such Persons as shall follow, for the Space of Seven successive Years, the Occupation of a Seaman or Fisherman, on board



board of any Vessel or Vessels employed in any of the Fisheries of *Great Britain*.

*R E S O L V E D,*

THAT, as it appears by Evidence contained in the Report referred to this Committee, that the several Laws which prohibit the Importation of fresh Fish, taken by Foreigners, have proved ineffectual—it is, in the Opinion of this Committee, highly expedient, that such further Regulations should be adopted, as may prevent the Continuance of an abuse so injurious to the Fisheries, and so obviously detrimental to the Naval Interests of the Kingdom.

*R E S O L V E D,*

THAT, in the Opinion of this Committee, it is highly expedient that Red Herrings, and all other Fish, on which, if cured in *England* and exported from *England*, or if cured in *Scotland* and exported from *Scotland*, a Bounty is payable by Law, should also be entitled to that Bounty if cured in *England* and exported from *Scotland*, or if cured in *Scotland* and exported from *England*.

*R E S O L V E D,*

THAT, in the Opinion of this Committee, it is of the utmost Importance, that such Fish-Curers as shall receive into their own Custody, for the Purpose of preserving Fish, Salt of *British* Manufacture, should not be required to give any other Security, respecting the said Salt, than their own Bonds justly and truly to account for the same; and that Credit for such Quantities of the said Salt, as shall have been used and duly accounted for, should Annually be given, by the proper Officer, on the back of the said Bond; and that such Bond should continue in force till a proper Account shall have been rendered of the Whole of that Salt specified therein, or till the Duty shall be paid on the Deficiency.

*R E S O L V E D,*

THAT, in the Opinion of this Committee, all Bonds or other Securities demandable from the Takers or Curers of Fish, or from the Masters or Owners of Boats employed in the Fisheries, or in the Exportation of Fish, or in the Conveyance of the same from one *British* Port to another, should be written on unstamped paper.

*R E S O L V E D,*

THAT, as the Report referred to this Committee contains the strongest Evidence of the pernicious Effects which the Fees or other Perquisites of the Custom-House Officers, especially in *Scotland*, have produced on the Fisheries of the Kingdom; and as the Requisition of such Fees, however sanctioned by long Usage, appears, by the Orders of Parliament, in the 12th Year of the Reign of his late Majesty King *Charles* the Second, to be contrary to the declared Intention of the Legislature; this Committee are of Opinion, That no Officer should be permitted to ask or accept of any Fee, or other Perquisite, for or on account of any Transaction relative to any Vessel or Boat employed in the Fisheries, or in the Transportation from one Place to another of Fish, or of Salt for the Use of the Fisheries, or for or on account of the Payment of any Bounty or Debenture on Fish, on Pain of forfeiting, for every such Offence, Treble the Value of the Sum received, together with Costs of Suit, and of being *ipso facto* discharged, and rendered incapable of serving

ing His Majesty in any Civil Office in future: The Committee, at the same Time, indulging an earnest Hope, that the Benevolence of the Legislature will induce them to make Compensation to the Officers for the Abolition of their Fees; especially as at present their Salaries are such, that the Fees they are accustomed to take, heavy and oppressive as they are to the Fishermen, are, in many Instances, absolutely requisite for the creditable Subsistence of the Officer.

*R E S O L V E D,*

THAT, as the Value of the Privilege of curing Fish with Salt of *British* Manufacture, duty-free, is much diminished in *Scotland*, by the Provision of the Act of the 29th of *George* the Second, that such Salt shall be taken from the Salt Works of that Part of the Island—it is the Opinion of this Committee, That the Fish-Curers in every part of *Great Britain*, so far as they are allowed by Law to employ in the Cure of Fish Home-manufactured Salt, duty-free, should be permitted to take the said Salt from any of the Salt Works within the said Kingdom.

*R E S O L V E D,*

THAT, as the opening a Communication between *Lock Gilp* and *Lock Crinan*, by a navigable Canal across the Peninsula of *Cantire*, in *Argyleshire*, would prevent the Necessity of a Voyage of more than One Hundred Miles, in a very dangerous Sea, and greatly promote the Fisheries and Commerce of the North-Western Coasts of the Island; and, as it appears, by actual Survey, that the said Communication may be effected at a moderate Expence, it is, in the Opinion of this Committee, extremely desirable, that such Persons as are willing to perform, at their own Cost, a Work so useful to the Public, should receive all reasonable Encouragement.

*R E S O L V E D,*

THAT, as the Business of the Fisheries can only be carried on to Advantage by the joint Labour of many Individuals, aided by the Skill of several distinct Classes of Manufacturers; and as the Establishment of Villages or Towns, in certain Situations, on the Northern and Western Coasts of *Scotland*, would not only furnish the Means of that Co-operation and mutual Assistance, but would likewise afford a Market for some Part of the Produce of the Fisheries, and much facilitate the Conveyance of the Remainder, whether sold for Consumption in the Inland Country, or for Exportation to Foreign Parts; it is the Opinion of this Committee, That the liberal Disposition, which appears in many public-spirited Proprietors of Land upon these Coasts, as well as in many respectable Individuals in the Southern Parts of the Kingdom, for the Establishment of such Villages and Towns, deserves the highest Encouragement.

*R E S O L V E D,*

THAT, in order to encourage the forming, by Subscription, a Fund for the Establishment of such Villages and Towns, it is, in the Opinion of this Committee, highly expedient, that the Subscribers should, by Act of Parliament, be declared to be a Joint Stock Company;

Company; that Power to appoint Agents for the Management of their Business should be given them: and, that the Members should be expressly exempted from a greater Extent of Responsibility, than that of the original Sum which each shall respectively subscribe—That the Fund should be declared to be applicable to no other Use, but that of renting or purchasing Lands, and that of erecting, by Contract, Houses and other necessary Buildings—That the Company should be impowered to let or transfer, in Perpetuity, such Parcels of their Land, as Individuals, with a View of Building at their own Expence, may be inclined to hire or to purchase—That the Company should be restrained from engaging, as a Corporation, in any Trade, as well as from issuing Notes payable to the Bearer, or other Species of circulating Security—And that, in order to prevent excessive and pernicious Fluctuations in the Value of their Stock, the Act should declare, that, during the space of the First Five Years of the Company's Establishment, no Member shall dispose of his Stock in any other Way than that of Gift or Bequest.

*R E S O L V E D,*

THAT, for the Encouragement of such Fishermen, Manufacturers, and others, as shall become Householders in the said Villages and Towns, it may, in the Opinion of the Committee, be adviseable to declare, that the Householders in each of the said Villages or Towns, as soon as their Number in such Town or Village shall amount to or exceed Fifty, shall have a Right Annually to choose, from among their own Body, certain Magistrates, who shall have the same Powers, for the Government of such Town or Village, as the Magistrates of Royal Burghs, in *North Britain*, are now, by Law, entitled to exercise: Provided, however, that no separate or exclusive Corporation shall be erected within such Town or Village, nor Money be exacted to entitle any Person to his Freedom, or to the Privilege of exercising any Profession, or of carrying on any Trade, Business, or Employment in the said Village or Town; and provided also, that no private Rights or Jurisdictions, already subsisting, shall be infringed.

*R E S O L V E D,*

THAT, for the further Encouragement of the said Villages and Towns, as well as for the more effectual Extension of Commerce, it may, in the Judgment of the Committee, be expedient, that in every Village or Town, of the Description aforesaid, in which the Householders, from their Number, shall be entitled to elect Magistrates, a Post Office and Custom-House should, with all convenient Dispatch, be established.

*R E S O L V E D,*

THAT, as Licences imposing a heavy Tax on the Exercise of certain necessary Trades, are peculiarly unfavourable to the Establishment of Towns, in the remote and unimproved Districts of the Kingdom; and as the Law which declares that the different Branches of the Tannery shall not be carried on by One and the same Person, must be injurious to Infant Settlements, in which the Division of Labour, that takes place in more extended Societies, is neither practised nor known; it may, in the Opinion

of the Committee, be expedient, that in all such Villages or Towns as shall be erected in any part of the Coast, from the *Mull of Cantire* to the *Murray Firth*, the same Person should be allowed to carry on, at the same Time, the several Branches of the Tannery Business; and that the Inhabitants should, for the Space of Seven Years, have Permission to exercise the Trades of a Common Brewer, Maltster, Candlemaker, Tanner, Tawer, Dresser of Hides in Oil, or Currier, on Condition that every Person, who shall so carry on any of the said Trades, shall Annually pay, by way of Licence, the Sum of One Shilling: Provided always, That no Person should be entitled to that Indulgence who shall make, in any One Year, more than 1,000 Barrels of Beer, or more than 200 Quarters of Malt.

*R E S O L V E D,*

THAT as, by the Duty on Coal carried Coastways, the Inhabitants of many of the Districts of *Scotland* are deprived of the Benefit, which the Abundance of this Article in the neighbouring Districts would otherwise afford, it would, in the Opinion of this Committee, be highly expedient, that the Inhabitants of those Districts, in *Scotland*, in which the said Duty is paid, should, for a Term of Years, be permitted Annually to raise, by Assessment, or other Mode of Commutation, a Sum equal to that, which, on an Average of the last Five Years, those Districts have Annually contributed to the said Duty; and should, on that Condition, be liberated from this burthensome Impost.

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