

ABSTRACT

Of the Hon. R. J. Uniacke's Evidence, before a Committee of the House of Commons, on the 11th April, 1826.

CONCLUDED.

581. Can you state of your own knowledge, that many vessels which are employed in the fishery in the summer, in Nova Scotia are employed in the winter in voyages to the West-Indies?—They are, many.

587. Is not there a French settlement in Newfoundland?—The French government have now taken up their position at Saint Pierre Miquilon, and they are carrying on the fishery upon the western and northern shores of Newfoundland to a great extent; The Frenchmen now drive away our fishermen from some of the best salmon fisheries that our people formerly carried on upon that coast.

588. Do the French, settled in Newfoundland, conduct a sea fishery?—Yes.

589. Do they conduct it very successfully?—The French differ from the English in their mode of fishing, they dry but their fish home in salt, green very little fish, they carry all fish.

590. Do they carry it in bulk or in barrel?—In bulk.

591. Where do they sell it?—It is consumed very much in France; the product of the French fishery extends very little beyond their own consumption, but they do not cure their fish by drying it.

592. Should not you think that if they carried on a successful fishery at Newfoundland, they might sell a great quantity of green fish in the Mediterranean and in Spain?—I am not sufficiently acquainted with that to say; the people there, if they found there was a market for that kind of fish, no doubt would send it, and they did at one time send a great deal to France, till the French supplied themselves; but the French are peculiar in the use of fish, the southern people in Europe prefer dried fish, but the French prefer the salt soft fish.

593. Do you think that all the Catholic countries would prefer green fish to dried fish?—I doubt whether the green fish would stand the climate of Italy, or Spain or Portugal, to be distributed in the country; I doubt whether the fish would bear its carriage.

594. You are aware, that in the examination which has been carried on by this Committee

with respect to agricultural emigration, it has been the object of the Committee to ascertain whether the emigrant would be able in any degree to repay the expense incurred in his emigration; do you conceive that the opinion that has been expressed, by yourself and others upon that subject, would be equally applicable in the case of the fishermen; although he may not have land that could be pledged in return for the capital so advanced to him, yet might it not be possible in some way or other to mortgage the proceeds of his fishery, so as to obtain from him a substantive return for any capital that might be advanced for his removal?—

I rather doubt, with respect to the security you would have from the fishermen, because they are a wandering description of people, and you cannot have that hold of a fisherman that you have of an agriculturist, because the agriculturist is tied to the soil by his improvements; but in my opinion there would be no persons who were sent out to that country, that would not be enabled by one year's labour to pay the expense of sending them out, if it was so adjusted that the man that employed them was engaged to pay the expense of their passage.

595. What time of the year would be most adapted for the sending out that class of fishermen?—I should rather prefer the autumn so that they would arrive here in the latter part of the summer, and have the winter to prepare for the ensuing fishery; because it requires a good deal of preparation before they can embark, and all that should be done before the ensuing fishing season.

596. From what would they derive their support during that winter?—It is probable that if sufficient notice was given that it was intended to bring, for instance, from the north of Scotland any fishermen acquainted with the herring fishery, or from the Scilly islands any persons acquainted with the sea fishery, if it was known at what point any of those settlers would be established, I think capitalists would resort there, in order to avail themselves of their labour.

I should certainly recommend the Bras d'Or Lake for those removed from Scotland, because the settlers there have already engaged to a considerable extent in the herring fishery; and I should recommend Louisburgh for the others. If previous notice was sent to the

country, that such an establishment was about to be made, for instance, if notice were sent to the Governor, saying that it was the intention of Government to send out a number of settlers of that description, persons of some capital would then go to the spot, and make preparation to embark in that fishery, with the assistance of those people, so that they would not be landed upon a desolate place; provided sufficiently timely notice were given, numbers would be encouraged to go down and take advantage of those settlements, finding they would be able to get fishermen at reasonable rates.

[Mr. U. here points out the injurious effects which the Act of Parliament, at present in force for regulating the number of passengers every vessel should carry out, has had in lessening the amount of voluntary emigration.]

601. Do you think it would be better, supposing government were to give any assistance in forwarding emigration, that that assistance should be directed to carrying out the poorer class of agricultural emigrations?—I am satisfied that government will do well to follow up the system they have so wisely begun;—that is, to make little establishments, one here and another there, in each Province, taking emigrants from different spots, so that they would form a nucleus for settlers to come there afterwards. If government brought persons from different parts of Ireland, that would lay the foundation for a voluntary emigration from all those parts, and the voluntary emigration would become immense if no obstruction was in the way; but at present they are imprisoned, their little resources will not enable them to meet the expense of getting out. You might as well talk to them of paying ninety or a hundred pounds, as nine or ten pounds; but when you come to talk of a less sum, they might be able, with the assistance of their friends, to make up. The voluntary emigration is the thing that will remove the redundant population of this country.

602. Do you think, so far as the fisheries are concerned, that they might be supplied by a voluntary emigration?—I am convinced that the voluntary emigration, if there was no obstruction to it, would resume its former standard, and to a higher degree, because the distress in Ireland is multiplied in

an extreme degree; voluntary emigration, to my knowledge, has settled Maryland and Pennsylvania, and the back parts of New-York; you may call that whole country Irish; and I am satisfied that the tide of voluntary emigration to the British colonies would again resume its former strength, if all impediments were removed out of the way. I have no objection to impose as may penalties as you please upon those who take passengers out, and who conduct themselves improperly in performing their contracts with their passengers, but let the people choose their own way of getting out.

603. Do you imagine that there are any persons in Nova Scotia and New-Brunswick who would pay the expense of taking out fishermen from Scotland, or from the Scilly Islands, provided those fishermen bound themselves as apprentices to them for two or three years, at a certain rate of wages;—I have no doubt that there would be very many, if they were allowed to provide cheap passages.

612. You consider that end of Nova Scotia very favourable for the settlement of fishermen?—Canso and Cape Breton I think, well adapted for fishermen; the settlers that are settled on the Bras d'Or Lake in Cape Breton, are now very comfortably settled.

613. Is Halifax ever blocked up with ice?—Never, to speak any thing about; I have known it interrupted with ice for about a week, once or twice in twenty years perhaps.

614. Are any of the harbours on the southern side of Nova Scotia blocked up with ice?—Some of the small ones, but none of the large harbours; there are more ship harbours from Cape Canso to Cape Sable, than in all the United States.

On a subsequent day Mr. HENRY BLISS was called in; and delivered in the following Statement.

My attention has been principally directed to the evidence of Mr. Uniacke, the attorney general for Nova Scotia. His information and experience on this subject seem to me of the very best authority. The description he gives of the labors of the emigrant, is very exact, and his opinion of the practicability of the proposed plan perfectly just. I do not know what person could have been selected from the colonies, whose opi-