

The SAINT JOHN GAZETTE.

[Vol. 19.]

SAINT JOHN, (New-Brunswick) MONDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1804

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BARBADOES, SEPTEMBER 22.

At a Meeting of the General Assembly, at the Town-Hall, on Tuesday the 14th day of August, 1804.

The following letters from the Agent to the Chairman of the Committee of Correspondence, delivered in at the table by Mr. MAYERS, of that Committee.

Ordered, That said Letters, with the inclosures therein contained be read, and the same were accordingly read in these words.

"Dear Sir,

"Copies of a Petition and Memorial, from the Merchants of Halifax, in Nova-Scotia, to Lord Hobart, and of a letter from your agent to Lord Camden on the same subject, accompany this.

"The maximum price of Cod Fish to regulate the admission of all other species of Fish, recommended in the letter, I obtained from our worthy Treasurer, whom, as a Member of the Legislature, and equally connected with the landed and mercantile interests of our country, I consulted on the occasion.

"Our Governor, of whom I cannot speak in sufficiently high terms of approbation and esteem, has left London, and is proceeding with the fleet for Barbadoes.

"The Slave Trade Bill has not yet passed through the House of Commons. The admission of American vessels into the West-India ports, is under consideration, and some permanent regulations, I am inclined to hope, will be adopted by the close of the year.

"I am, dear Sir,

"With great respect and esteem,

"Your's sincerely,

"G. W. JORDAN,

"To the Right Hon. Lord Hobart, one of His Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State, &c. &c.

"The Petition of the Merchants, and other Inhabitants of Halifax, in the Province of Nova-Scotia,

"Humbly sheweth,

"That the trade of this Province arises principally from the fish caught on its coasts, great quantities of which are exported annually by your Petitioners to the West-India Islands. That in the pursuit of this commerce, your petitioners are rivalled by the citizens of the American States, to whom the ports of those Islands are ever open, and who are exempt from duties and other expences to which your Petitioners are liable. Your Petitioners have heard, that in the existing negotiation, relative to the 12th article of the treaty with America, the Americans aim at a further extension of their trade with the British West-India Islands, which, if obtained, would utterly ruin the already declining fisheries of the British Colonies, whence the nation has long derived much wealth, and its navy a supply for hardy seamen.

"That the coasts of this Province, as well as the Gulph of St. Lawrence, and the Islands of Newfoundland and Cape-Breton, abound with fish of the most valuable sorts, so that with encouragement these Colonies would satisfy, to its utmost extent, the demand of the West-India Islands for dry and pickled fish.

"Your Petitioners therefore most humbly pray, that your Lordship, and His Majesty's other Ministers, would take the premises, and the annexed memorial into consideration, and would protect the trade and fisheries of His Majesty's subjects in those Colonies, against the views of the Americans, by granting to the British Colonists, the exclusive privilege of supplying their fellow subjects in the West-Indies, with the article of fish caught on the coasts of North-America.

"WILLIAM SABATIER,

"WILLIAM SMITH,

"GEORGE GRASSIE,

"JAMES FRASER, and

"WILLIAM LYON.

"Committee appointed by the Merchants, and other Inhabitants of Halifax, Nova-Scotia.
Halifax, Nova-Scotia, March 23d, 1804.

"Memorial and Statement of the Case, referred to in the annexed Petition:—

"As every British Province and Island in these Northern Climates, is individually able to furnish the West-India Islands with some essential article of consumption, which in whole, or in part, is deficient in others, the Petitioners in the following statement, have extended their observations beyond the limits of the single Province in which they reside.

"The West-India Islands require to be supplied with the undermentioned articles, viz.

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| Fisheries. | { Dried cod fish, barrel or pickled fish, viz. salmon, herring, (of various species) and mackerel, and oil. |
| Forest. | { Lumber, viz. squared timber, scantling, planks and boards, shingles, clap-boards, hoops, and oak slaves. |
| Agriculture. | { Biscuits and flour, Indian corn and meal, pork, beef, butter, cheese, potatoes, and onions, live stock, viz. horses, oxen, hogs, sheep and poultry. |
| Mines. | { Coals. |

"Of these articles, the following are produced by the several Colonies.—New-Brunswick produces, in the greatest

abundance, lumber of every kind, except oak slaves; it yields already, many of the smaller articles which serve to complete a cargo, and its shore abound with various fish fit for pickling. Nova-Scotia produces lumber of all sorts, except oak slaves, but in a lesser degree than New-Brunswick; horses, oxen, sheep, and all the other productions of agriculture, except wheat and Indian corn; the eastern and northern parts of the Province abound in coal, and its whole coast yields inexhaustible quantities of cod fish, and others fit for pickling.

"Cape-Breton and Prince Edward Islands: the former yields coal in abundance, its fisheries are also considerable; but without dealing directly with the West-Indies, they serve to increase the exports of Nova-Scotia. Both these Islands supply Newfoundland with cattle, and with due encouragement, would rival some of the more opulent Colonies in articles of agriculture; their fisheries also may be greatly extended, as the whole circuit of these Islands abound in fish.

"Canada can supply any quantities of oak slaves, as well as flour and Indian corn, for six months in the year. Newfoundland yields little lumber, but its trade in dried cod-fish has hitherto, in a great measure, supplied all Europe and the West-Indies, and it is capable of still greater extension.

"The Petitioners have therefore no hesitation in affirming, that these Mother Colonies are able to supply the West-Indies with dried fish, and every species of pickled fish, for their whole consumption, and that at no very distant period they could also supply all the other articles herein before enumerated, except perhaps flour, Indian meal and corn, and oak slaves.

"Having stated the foregoing facts, the Petitioners beg leave to request the attention of His Majesty's Ministers to the peculiar circumstances of this Province; the permanent establishment of which took place about 54 years ago; for previous to the settlement of Halifax, there were few inhabitants in it, and but little trade. The Mother Country, sensible of the favorable situation of this Colony for fisheries, that its harbours are seldom more than a few miles from each other, and that its extensive sea coast presents every season with shoals of fish of the most useful sorts, made every effort to establish them.—The fisheries, however, until the close of the American war, languished from one cause only—the want of inhabitants. The influx of inhabitants at that time, and since, has promoted industry and domestic comfort, and a race of people born on the soil, have become attached to it.—The clearing of the lands, and other causes, have improved the climate; and by a late survey of the interior of the Province, it is discovered that the lands are not only better than had been imagined, but superior to the greater part of the rest of North-America.

"The present situation of this Province, with regard to its trade, resembles that of New-England at the close of the seventeenth century, and unless checked at this crisis, it has the most reasonable expectation of a more rapid increase than the latter ever experienced.

"Encouraged by the prospect before them, and conscious of the abuses that have crept into the fisheries, the petitioners are looking forward to the aid of the Provincial Legislature, and to other means for correcting those abuses, and for establishing and improving the fisheries, that great source of wealth to the parent State, the Colonial Husbandman, and Merchant; but they perceive, with regret, that their efforts will prove ineffectual, unless the citizens of the United States, according to the ancient policy of Great-Britain, towards foreigners, are wholly or partially excluded from the Islands, or a permanent equivalent is granted to the Colonists.

"The American Legislature having rejected the 12th article of the late Treaty, the citizens of the United States would have been excluded from the West-Indies, if the Governors of those Islands had not, under the plea of necessity, by proclamation, admitted them. In this trade the Americans possess the following advantages over the Colonists.

"First, In the Islands of Barbadoes, Antigua, St. Kitt's and Jamaica, a stranger's duty of two and a half, or more, per cent, is imposed on imports, and in the Island of St. Vincent, British subjects exclusively are subject to a duty of 3 per cent, which must be paid in specie, and to procure which a forced sale is frequently made of part of the cargo to great disadvantage. From this duty the Americans, being invited by proclamation, are exempt.

"Second, during the late and present war, the citizens of the United States, being neutrals, have not been burthened with the heavy charge of insurance against the enemy, which to the Colonists has increased the premium 10 per cent. to the smaller Islands, and twelve and a half per cent. to Jamaica.

"Third, The Northern States have granted a bounty of near 20s, per ton, on vessels in their fisheries.

"From those circumstances, so unable are the Petitioners to contend with the Americans in the West-India markets, that they derive greater advantage by selling their fish at an inferior price in the United States; whence the Americans re-export them to the West-India Islands under the above-mentioned advantages, so as to make a profit even on their outward voyage.

"It is well known, and in an ample report made to Congress in the years 1790 and 1791, by the now Profi-

dent of the United States, then their Secretary of State, it was set forth, that the fisheries of New-England were on the verge of ruin, and he recommended, what was afterwards adopted, the grant of a bounty to counterbalance the disadvantages the trade then laboured under. At that period, the fisheries of Nova-Scotia made a rapid increase; the whale fishery alone from the port of Halifax, consisted of 28 sail of ships and brigs from 60 to 200 tons burthen; but the succeeding war and other unfavourable circumstances soon destroyed this important branch of the fishery. By the aid of bounties from the State Legislature, the American fisheries recovered their former vigour, and are now carried on with great spirit, increasing their trade with the West-Indies to an incredible extent. Considerable numbers of our best fishermen have emigrated from Newfoundland and this Province, to the United States, within a few months, and more are daily following them; thus it appears evident, that a wise policy, steadily pursued, will preserve a sinking trade, and that this Province is not wanting in exertion, when favourable opportunities for it are offered.

"Should the Americans obtain by Treaty, an indulgence of their trade in fish with the West-Indies, it will prove the ruin of that of the British Northern Colonies, and draw away from them their most industrious inhabitants. The Islands will then depend on Foreign States for supplies of all the articles before enumerated, and if at any time hereafter differences should take place between Great-Britain and the American States, from what quarter, it may be asked, are the Islands to obtain their supplies? The ruined trade and fisheries of those Colonies may prove, too late, the fatal policy of throwing into the hands of foreigners a trade, which, with a little encouragement, might have been almost, if not entirely, be confined to British subjects.

"From these considerations the justice and policy of giving encouragement to the Northern Colonies are evident. Should the stranger's duty imposed in the Islands be taken off; should a bounty equal to that granted by the State Legislature be allowed, and the present war be succeeded by a peace, then may the West-India Islands receive from these Colonies supplies of all kinds of dried or pickled fish on as advantageous terms as they are now furnished with them from a Foreign State. It is obvious that the Americans, and the West-India Planters, have a mutual interest in the free trade to the Islands, but the Planters have no right to expect supplies from a neutral nation in time of war, merely because it affords them at a cheaper rate than the British Colonies: they should bear the inconveniences of war as well as their fellow subjects, who have been driven into these Northern regions by their zealous loyalty in support of the happy Constitution under which they now live. The supplies required by the Islands cannot greatly increase; while the Northern Colonies, from their great extent and growing population, will every year be more and more able to furnish those supplies. The Islands are in a measure, limited in their extent; but the Northern Colonies are almost unbounded.

"The inhabitants of those Colonies have acquired their present condition, which at best is mediocrity, by a continued exertion of industry and frugality, under a climate and a soil which yield their blessings to persevering exertion alone. The West-India Planters have ever been in a different situation, and can afford to wait a reasonable time for the accomplishment of those expectations which are justly entertained by the Colonists. In the interim, they ought to give a fair equivalent for the articles of which they stand in need, and not expect at an inferior price, commodities whose value the imperious circumstances of the times have tended to enhance. The Northern Colonists have struggled with all the difficulties incident to a young Country; and they are now arrived at a period, when, if duly encouraged, they may be enabled to reap the fruits of their honest labour; but, restricted in their trade to the Mediterranean by an ancient regulation, which obliges them to land their cargoes in some English European port, before they can proceed on homeward bound voyages, and burthened also in the manner here stated in their West-India trade, the Petitioners cannot contend with the Americans, but look forward with the most distressful prospects to means of procuring a future subsistence, unless His Majesty, in his goodness, shall be pleased to afford them protection and relief. They therefore anxiously hope, that the observations contained in this Memorial may not appear unworthy of the attention of His Majesty's Ministers, but that whatever temporary indulgencies may be granted to the American citizens, the British Colonists, agreeably to their former solicitations on that subject, may be permitted to return to America, without entering at any port in Great-Britain."

"My Lord,

"Having just seen a copy of a petition and memorial from the Merchants and Inhabitants of Halifax, in Nova-Scotia, which I understand have been, at some time past, presented to His Majesty's Secretary of State for the department over which you preside, I consider it to be my duty not to let them any longer remain to be considered, without being accompanied by some observations on their objects and statements.

"The allegation of the Petitioners and Memorialists, that they are subjected, in the ports of the West-India Islands to duties and expences from which the Americans are ex-