

*Cape Breton and the  
French Régime*

**Harold A. Innis**

[fadedpage.com](http://fadedpage.com)

**\* A Distributed Proofreaders Canada eBook \***

This eBook is made available at no cost and with very few restrictions. These restrictions apply only if (1) you make a change in the eBook (other than alteration for different display devices), or (2) you are making commercial use of the eBook. If either of these conditions applies, please contact a <https://www.fadedpage.com> administrator before proceeding. Thousands more FREE eBooks are available at <https://www.fadedpage.com>.

This work is in the Canadian public domain, but may be under copyright in some countries. If you live outside Canada, check your country's copyright laws. IF THE BOOK IS UNDER COPYRIGHT IN YOUR COUNTRY, DO NOT DOWNLOAD OR REDISTRIBUTE THIS FILE.

*Title:* Cape Breton and the French Régime

*Date of first publication:* 1935

*Author:* Harold Adams Innis (1894-1952)

*Date first posted:* October 7, 2023

*Date last updated:* October 7, 2023

Faded Page eBook #20231008

This eBook was produced by: John Routh & the online Distributed Proofreaders Canada team at <https://www.pgdpCanada.net>

# Cape Breton and the French Régime

By HAROLD A. INNIS, F.R.S.C.

FROM THE TRANSACTIONS OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF CANADA

THIRD SERIES, SECTION II, VOLUME XXIX, 1935

The attempt of the French, in the latter part of the seventeenth century to build up an Atlantic empire parallel to that of England, with its dependence on (1) a north temperate agricultural region in the St. Lawrence drainage basin, (2) a maritime fishing region at Placentia in Newfoundland and on the mainland, and (3) the tropical sugar plantations, failed because of the inability to link up with sailing vessels the closed season of the St. Lawrence (November to May), the fishing season, the hurricane season of the West Indies (July to October), and the sugar season (the beginning of January). A three cornered trade from France to New France and to the West Indies was developed under great difficulties.<sup>[1]</sup>

The withdrawal of the French from Placentia in Newfoundland and from Nova Scotia after the treaty of Utrecht was accompanied by their entrenchment in Cape Breton and by a determined effort to develop a balanced empire. This region had been an important centre for the fishing industry from the beginning of the sixteenth century. “De tems immemorial, les vaisseaux ont fait la pesche sur iles costes du Cap Breton, le Forillon, l’Isle Plate, l’Indiane Niganiche, Achpe, le Chadie, Canceaux, le Havre a l’Anglois [Louisbourg] et la Balaine qui en dependent ne sont jamais sans vaisseaux au temps de paix.” In contrast with the Atlantic coast of Nova Scotia, the fishery was regarded as certain from April to the end of October. With an abundant fishery and a region which was a key to the St. Lawrence, the French planned to develop a fortified area based on the expansion of economic activity.

The abandonment of the southern shore of Newfoundland, and an apparent decline in importance of the Paris market for green fish, weakened the position of the French fishery on the banks. Expansion of dry fishing in Cape Breton implied increased competition in Europe with the English

fishery in Newfoundland, which advanced in territory vacated by the French, and in New England, which advanced in similar territory in Nova Scotia, particularly to Canso, adjacent to Cape Breton. To meet this competition France encouraged (1) settlement and the fishing industry.<sup>[2]</sup>

The artificial character of settlement implied, and contributed to, lack of economic strength. Indecision as to the choice of a central location as a base of fortifications and the failure of efforts to attract Acadians to Cape Breton, were early handicaps. Port Toulouse and Port Dauphin were eventually regarded as unsatisfactory.<sup>[3]</sup> Port Dauphin had a harbour capable of holding 200 vessels, but was on the other hand seven or eight leagues distant from the cod-fishing grounds, and consequently not suited to the small boat fishery; and high elevations shut off the winds and made the sun too strong for satisfactory drying.<sup>[4]</sup> Louisbourg had a harbour of eight fathoms depth, which would hold 300 vessels, was protected from all winds, and from which vessels could leave without difficulty at any time. Moreover, there was no anchorage outside the port from which enemy vessels might blockade the port. An excellent fishery could be conducted by boats half a league from the port. It provided an excellent relief depot for vessels coming long voyages, and it was relatively convenient to the Grand Banks.<sup>[5]</sup> Then, as at the present time, it avoided the dangers of field ice in Cabot Straits in the spring. It was definitely chosen as the central port in 1719.

In 1713 and 1714, after the signing of the treaty of Utrecht, the inhabitants of Placentia were removed to Cape Breton.<sup>[6]</sup> An excellent fishery at Louisbourg in 1714 with 14 and 15 vessels, and in spite of a scarcity of salt, was followed by an increase to 64 vessels and 308 boats in 1715. A tax on the merchants to support a garrison at Louisbourg contributed to a decline to 20 vessels in 1716.<sup>[7]</sup>

Difficulties in the fishery in the vicinity of Louisbourg became increasingly apparent with growth of settlement. In 1724<sup>[8]</sup> an excellent fishery in the southern ports especially Scatarry and Louisbourg, was followed by an unsuccessful autumn fishery; and it was suggested that the cod migrated to the north and northeast about the end of September, as the autumn fishery had been a success at Niganiche. Again in 1726, with a large summer catch and a favourable price of 9 *livres*, the autumn fishery was lost as a result of two severe storms on the seventh and twenty-fifth of November.<sup>[9]</sup> In 1727, with an abundant summer and autumn fishery, Niganiche had more shallows than all the other ports of Cape Breton.<sup>[10]</sup> Not more than thirty or forty vessels<sup>[11]</sup> came from France to Louisbourg from

about 1728 to 1733, although it was stated that the number had reached eighty in the earlier part of the decade. In 1733 low prices in Europe was accompanied by lack of interest and a decline in the number of vessels from France, with the result that an abundant fishery left quantities of cod unsold.

<sup>[12]</sup> In 1735 an excellent fishery was marred by rain and fog from June 20 to the end of July, which involved damages estimated at 200,000 *livres*.<sup>[13]</sup>

The difficulties of the resident (sedentary) fishery were met by various remedies. The sharp decline in 1716 and 1717 was attributed in part to the introduction of large boats (apparently in 1715)<sup>[14]</sup> which were able to fish from twelve to fifteen miles from the shore. It was alleged that these boats threw overboard the gurry (head and entrails), and prevented the cod from coming in to shore.<sup>[15]</sup> In reply it was stated that the decline was a result of the rapid increase in the number of small boats, from 25 or 30 to 700 or 800, and of the heat and shallow water which checked the inward migration of the cod. Herring, capelin, anchovy, and mackerel<sup>[16]</sup> continued to come in, and ordinarily would be followed by cod. The attack on two or three owners of large boats was accompanied by “mille discussions” on the high wages of the fishermen.<sup>[17]</sup> High prices of provisions rendered “l’ancien usage”, in which the fishermen were entitled to one-third of the product,<sup>[18]</sup> extremely burdensome to the merchants or employers. Fishermen began to sell their product to merchants or employers who had not provided them with advances of supplies, and to violate “l’usage et la coutume tant de Plaisance que de cette nouvelle colonie” of giving the preference of purchase of fish and oil to merchants or employers who had made the advances at the average price of the season in good bills of exchange. In 1724 an ordinance prohibited this violation of the usual custom.<sup>[19]</sup>

Success in keeping down wages was followed by an increase in the number of merchants who began to compete for labour. In 1733 the older residents, “anciens habitants pescheurs”, complained of the excessive wages which followed competition from “plusieurs nouveaux habitans”. The new competitors disregarded the “anciens usages”, and paid bonuses, in the form of half-passages, to labour brought out from France. The cost of passage out and of half the return passage, paid according to custom by the employer, was evaded by the payment of half the passage, although the men remained in the colony over the winter. Complaints of high wages, and of inability to pay the ship captain for provisions and fishing equipment, on the part of the old residents, led to the enactment of an ordinance prohibiting the payment

of any passage or half passage, and also the practice of allowing the fishermen to retain more than half the oil to which they were entitled.<sup>[20]</sup>

Competition for labour became increasingly severe, in spite of, and because of, regulations designed to lower wages. In 1739 the difficulties were described in detail.<sup>[21]</sup> Employers hired fishermen under contract to other employers by getting them drunk and antedating the agreements. Fishermen were at times under three different contracts for the same fishery. Higher wages and bonuses in the form of passages and half passages continued. To meet debts, the *habitants* were obliged to sell goods at a higher rate to the fishermen, and to sell larger quantities of liquor, which in turn prevented the men from effectively prosecuting the fishery. Prices of fishing equipment were bid up, and the *habitants* were unable to secure adequate fishing equipment or to maintain their families. It was estimated that for the summer fishery the returns of two shallops (600 quintals) would be distributed as follows: 2 shallop masters at 38 quintals each or 76; 4 other fishermen at 36 quintals each or 144, a total of 220 quintals for 6 fishermen; the beachmaster—45 quintals, salter—24 quintals, header—20 quintals, boy—18 quintals, or a total of 107 quintals for four shoremen; passage from France for 6 fishermen, beachmaster and salter at four quintals each, or 32<sup>[22]</sup>, making a grand total of wages of 359 quintals. Provisions for the fishermen included 30 quintals of biscuit or 40 quintals of cod, 2 quintals of butter or 8 quintals of cod, one-half barrel of molasses—3 quintals, 1 barrel of rum—8 quintals, 2 barrels of peas—8 quintals, 1 *quart* [barrel] of salt pork—5 quintals, or a total of 72 quintals. Fishing equipment included 2 shallops (costing 15 quintals new and lasting four seasons, or depreciation—7½ quintals), 2 *fargues*—2 quintals, oars—3 quintals, sails lasting only one year—14 quintals, 2 grapnel ropes—8 quintals, 2 grapnels—3 quintals, 50 fishing lines—9 quintals, hooks—2 quintals, 100 lbs. of lead—4 quintals, 8 herring and mackerel nets for bait—32 quintals, a small shallop to look after bait nets, costing 10 quintals, or depreciation—2½ quintals, 70 barrels of salt—70 quintals, or a grand total for the fishing equipment of 157 quintals. The total outlay was 588 quintals, leaving a profit of 12 quintals for the *habitants*, from which was to be paid the cost of buildings, beach, flakes, and general equipment, and the maintenance of his family. Employers with sloops and schooners were equally unfortunate.

Nor was the autumn fishery more profitable, and the advantages of Cape Breton over Newfoundland in seasonal operations were not adequate to support an extensive population. Shallops employed in the fishery from November to January, and sometimes February, in a good season caught 120

quintals. Expenses were higher; there were greater dangers from accidents through storms; and occasionally the boats were unable to fish for a fortnight at a time. If the *habitants* engaged the men on the summer basis the loss was considerable; and if they engaged them on the half basis, the fishermen supplying themselves with food by purchasing from the *habitants* and the *habitants* supplying the shallop, fishing equipment, salt and buildings, the results were scarcely more favourable. During the month between the shipment of summer fish and the beginning of the autumn fishery, men were generally kept by the *habitants*, and their time was usually wasted in drunkenness.

In the spring, although fishermen returned from France about the end of March, ice and bad weather prevented fishing sometimes until the twentieth of April and later. Drunkenness, ill-will, and spite greatly increased losses to the *habitants*. The results were cumulative. The losses of the *habitants* were made up by the sale of goods and liquors, so that the proceeds of the current fishery were absorbed and those of the succeeding fishery were mortgaged. Employers refused to give statements to the fishermen, and bad will and lack of initiative followed. Fishermen were dismissed by *habitants* although in debt, and their returns under another *habitant* seized. Injustice, disputes, and confusion were rampant. The difficulties of the *habitants* involved not only the fishermen but also the supply merchants. Credit to the extent of fifteen to twenty thousand *livres* was necessary for the fishery throughout the season, and low returns encouraged the *habitants* to give a preference to certain creditors, necessitating a division on a *pro rata* basis to remaining creditors. This problem was particularly serious, because buildings, boats, and fishing equipment could not be attached for debt. Employers were encouraged to buy more supplies than were necessary, and debts accumulated from year to year with little possibility of liquidation. Resident wholesalers became an additional source of difficulty. They charged higher prices than the ship captains, and were able to press their claims more effectively, with the result that the ship captains were discouraged through being forced to return to France without having been able to collect their debts. The vicious circle raised still higher the prices of supplies. It was alleged that the possibility of getting cheaper supplies from the foreign merchants encouraged the *habitants* to buy unnecessary goods, and to plunge himself in debt to such an extent that the supplier of essential goods was unable to collect his debts.

Attempts to encourage the sedentary fishery were numerous and diverse, but in the main unsuccessful. In 1720 an ordinance was issued requiring all captains of vessels arriving at Louisbourg, or shallops belonging to vessels

anchored in other parts of the island, to make an exact declaration of wines, brandy, and other merchandise in the cargo, concealment being penalized by confiscation. They were forbidden to sell wine or brandy to any tavernkeeper, but were allowed to sell to merchants and *habitants* who were engaged in the fishery but not in retailing liquors. They were allowed to sell fishing equipment to anyone, and provisions, provided the governing authorities had been informed. Merchants engaged in the fishery were only allowed to sell wine and brandy to men in their employ.<sup>[23]</sup> Two years later, foreign merchant captains were prohibited (1) from employing fishermen to engage in the autumn fishery, (2) from purchasing supplies remaining after the season's trade from other vessels (and thereby increasing prices of salt, bread, and fishing supplies to the residents, rather than allowing them to be sold at remainder prices), and (3) from purchasing complete cargoes of foodstuffs from vessels from Canada.<sup>[24]</sup> Another ordinance of about the same date forbade all captains and foreign merchants, under heavy penalties, to purchase biscuits, peas, flour, and other foodstuffs.<sup>[25]</sup> Later general regulations permitted sales by foreign merchants only from vessels, prohibited captains from leaving men to engage in the autumn fishery (only allowing them to leave a man and his family), and from purchasing cargoes from boats from France, Canada or the West Indies. In spite of regulations designed to encourage resident fishermen, it was claimed in 1739 that merchants came out from France, and participated in the fishery without becoming domiciled; that captains bringing out passengers for the resident fishery employed them on the merchants' account, alleging they were employed by the vessel; and that captains with large equipments left men over the winter in outlying ports to carry on the autumn fishery. These men were replaced by others in the following year, and the competition was regarded as unfavourable to the resident fishery.<sup>[26]</sup>

The scattered<sup>[27]</sup> and seasonal character of the fishery, and the ease with which trade could be carried on with the English, militated against enforcement of regulations. Canso became an important smuggling centre; and in 1717 it was reported that there were six French residents employing one hundred sailors in the vicinity. Since ownership of the district was apparently undecided, trade was active and the enforcement of regulations was difficult.<sup>[28]</sup>

The number of shallops at Niganiche<sup>[29]</sup> increased from 14 in 1718 to 37 in 1723, and to 73 in 1726. A decline to 59 in 1727 was followed by a recovery to a high point of 93 in 1731. By 1739 the number had declined to 51. Fishing-ship shallops reached a high point of 17 in 1730, and after



violent fluctuations disappeared in 1739. The height of this fishery was reached from 1730 to 1733. At Scatary resident shallops reached a high point of 27 in 1730, and declined to 13 in 1739. Fishing-ship shallops were not relatively important, reaching a peak of 7 in 1730. At La Baleine resident shallops reached a high point of 45 in 1729, and declined to 30 in 1739. Fishing-ship shallops reached a peak of 14 in 1733. At L'Indienne resident shallops declined from a total of 17 in 1726 to 11 in 1739. At Fourchet they declined from 34 in 1731 to 23 in 1739. At St. Esprit they reached a peak of 46 in 1733, and declined to 27 in 1739. At Lorembec they reached a peak of 39 in 1729, and declined to 29 in 1739. At Isle St. Jean they reached a peak of 40 in 1733, and declined to 18 in 1739. At Petit Degrat they declined very gradually from 19 in 1727 to 13 in 1739. Numerous smaller ports revealed similar tendencies pointing to a peak position in the early thirties followed by a persistent decline. In 1736 it was estimated that Louisbourg had 300 inhabitants, with about 55 shallops manned by 3 men each, chiefly from France; Fourchet had 20 boats; St. Esprit, 100 inhabitants and 20 boats; Isle Michan, 10 boats; Port Toulouse, 50 inhabitants but no fishery; Petit Degrat, 100 inhabitants and 20 boats; Niganiche, 30 boats; Scatary, 15 boats. The bad harvest in Canada in 1733 and the rumours of war in 1734 appear to have contributed to the beginning of the decline.

The extent of the shallop fishery and of the catch is indicated in the following table.

*Chaloupes*

	<i>Habitants</i>	<i>Vaisseaux</i>	Total	Summer Total catch	Autumn catch
1718	304	322 <sup>[30]</sup>	626	156,500	.....
1723	310	42	352	63,600	21,000
1726	285	80	365	76,650	37,050
1727	280	105	385	57,000	30,880
1729	327	52	379	.....	.....
1730	329	77	406	85,260	42,770
1731	366	78	444	97,680	40,260
1733	338	53	391	84,065	33,800
1734	299	24	323	74,290	23,920
1735	271	34	305	74,725	29,810
1736	290	43	333	85,280	31,900
1737	317	24	341	.....	.....
1738	286	28	314	78,500	34,320
1739	245	36	281	73,060	19,600
1740	250	29	279	55,800	22,500
1744	181	54	235	47,000	5,430

Shallops owned by residents increased to 366 in 1731, and thereafter declined, with the exception of an increase in 1736, 1737, and 1740, to 181 in 1744. Vessel shallops increased from 42 in 1723 to 105 in 1727, and fluctuated to 52 in 1729 and 77 and 78 in 1730-1, declining to 24 in 1734, increasing to 43 in 1736, declining to 24 in 1737, but on the whole increasing to 54 in 1744. The fluctuations were an indication of the uncertain character of the shallop fishery as carried on by the fishing ships; and the general decline throughout the period, from the high points of 105 in 1727 and 78 in 1731, pointed directly to its relatively weak position. The total shallop fishery increased to a high point in 1731, but declined with some fluctuations to 279 in 1740 and 235 in 1744. The total catch of the shallop summer fishery reached the highest point in the year in which the largest number of shallops was engaged, or 97,680 quintals in 1731. From that point the catch declined to 55,800 in 1740, and 47,000 in 1744. The autumn fishery, which was carried on almost entirely by the residents, fluctuated materially, and reached its highest point in 1730. Following a

partial recovery to 34,320 in 1738, the decline continued to 22,500 in 1740. The boat fishery, which was by far the most important, apparently reached its highest point in 1731, and declined in the following years.

Vessels from France were dependent to a much larger extent relatively on schooners which were engaged in fishing on the more distant banks. The fishery was confined largely to the Basques from St. Jean de Luz, Sibiburo and Bayonne. Difficulties of ship-building in Cape Breton necessitated dependence on New England for supplies of schooners. In 1716 St. Jean de Luz had 2 vessels at Niganiche taking 4,400 quintals; 1 at Menadin—1,475 quintals; 2 at Scatary—4,000 quintals; and 6 at Gaboury—4,320 quintals; or a total of 534 men taking 14,195 quintals in ships with a space for 17,860 quintals. A year later, St. Jean de Luz had 5 vessels (159 tons), and Bayonne 6 vessels (100 tons) at Louisbourg. In 1733 St. Jean de Luz had 12 vessels at Louisbourg, and 4 at Port Dauphin; and Bayonne 5 at Louisbourg, and 3 at Port Toulouse; and in 1734 St. Jean de Luz had 10 ships at Louisbourg, and 4 at Port Dauphin, and Bayonne 7 at Louisbourg. In 1737 St. Jean de Luz had 12 ships and Bayonne 4; and of a total of 50 schooners, St. Jean de Luz vessels owned 32, and Bayonne 5. Of 9 schooners purchased from New England in 1736, at least 3 were bought by St. Jean de Luz captains. In 1733, 14 vessels of 687 tons were built at Louisbourg, and 16 boats of 680 tons were purchased from the English. In 1734, 9 vessels of 340 tons were purchased; and in 1736, 7 vessels of 175 tons were purchased, and 5 boats of 213 tons were built. A year later 9 vessels of 565 tons were built, and 12 vessels of 583 tons purchased. At Louisbourg in 1736, about 30 schooners were engaged in fishing on the banks. Fishermen were brought from France and given one-fifth of the fish. At Niganiche at the same date 12 schooners were employed on the banks. The resident schooner fishery dwindled from 8 in 1733 to 2 in 1739; fishing-ship schooners were at a peak of 4 in 1727; and trading schooners dwindled from 14 in 1733 to 8 in 1739 and 3 in 1740. At Scatary, schooners declined from 11 in 1734 to 2 in 1739, and trading schooners were at a peak of 6 in 1733. In 1739 it was stated that of 80 ships from France (averaging about 2,000 quintals), about 60 purchased their cargoes, and “the rest of the ships fit out from Saint John de Loe and Bayon to fish for themselves and proportion their number of men to the quantity the ship will carry which they compute at two men to every hundred quintals of fish”.<sup>[31]</sup>

The schooners owned in the island by residents, the vessels from France, and the catch, were as follows:

Schooners (*goélettes*)

	<i>Habitants</i>	<i>Vaisseaux</i>	Total	Schooner catch	
1723	34	59	93	36,800	qls.
1726	23	45	68	27,200	
1727	20	47	67	26,800	
1729	26	49	75	.....	
1730	33	61	94	37,600	
1731	21	53	74	29,600	
1733	34	61	95	47,500	
1734	29	51	80	41,600	
1735	25	48	73	37,960	
1736	15	47	62	35,960	
1737	14	50	64	.....	
1738	17	44	61	39,650	
1739	20	40	60	51,000	
1740	15	54	69	44,850	
1744	6	28	34	17,000	

Only in occasional years did the schooner fishery produce more than half as many quintals of fish as the boat fishery. Fishing ships occupied a more prominent position than the residents in the schooner fishery. The number of schooners belonging to residents fluctuated materially, declining from 34 in 1723 to 20 in 1727, and rising to 33 in 1730. After a decline to 21 in 1731, it reached the 1723 level in 1733. From that high point the numbers declined to 14 in 1737, rose to 20 in 1739, but fell off to 6 in 1744. On the other hand, the number of schooners belonging to ships remained fairly steady, and increased from 59 in 1723 to 61 in 1730 and 1733. From that date there was a decline to 47 in 1736, a recovery to 50 in 1737, a decline to 40 in 1739, and finally an increase to 54 in 1740. The decline in the latter part of the period was less striking than that in the number of schooners owned by residents. The total number of schooners reached a high point in 1730 and 1733. The net results of the schooner fishery were shown in the catch. In spite of a decline in the number of schooners, the total catch increased from 36,800 in 1723 to 51,000 in 1739. The Cape Breton fishery was apparently prosecuted with greatest profit and success by the fishing-

ship schooners. Its position generally improved throughout the period while that of the boat fishery declined.

The shallop fishery was closely reflected in trade. Passengers were brought out, chiefly from ports such as St. Malo, Grandville and Nantes, who were interested in purchase from the settlement rather than the catching of fish. In 1737, of a total of 329 passengers, St. Malo sent 167, Bayonne 38, and St. Jean de Luz 98. At Niganiche, trading and fishing vessels declined from a high point of 16 in 1731 to 7 in 1734, but recovered to 12 in 1740. At Scatary, trading ships reached a peak of 5 in 1734. In 1736 it was stated that Fourchet sent its fish to Louisbourg to be cured and sold, while St. Esprit and Scatary took the cured fish to Louisbourg for shipment to France. Petit Degrat traded with ships from Quebec and the West Indies, and Niganiche with ships from France and the West Indies.<sup>[32]</sup> The small trading vessel developed in relation to coastal trade. Vessels were built in Cape Breton and employed in trading and in fishing “batimens des habitans pour le commerce et le cabotage”. The number increased rapidly from 24 in 1723 to 76 in 1731, and after a slight decline to 72 in 1732, rose to a high point of 81 in 1733. After that date the number declined to 55 in 1734, rose to 67 and 73 in 1735 and 1736, declined to 54 in 1738, rose to 59 in 1739, and declined to 49 in 1740. Ships from ports other than Saint Jean de Luz and Bayonne were concerned chiefly with trade. In 1737, 11 ships from St. Malo had 5 schooners, and 5 ships from Bordeaux 6 schooners. In 1716, 5 vessels with 235 men from Granville took 6,200 quintals; 1 from Nantes with 35 men 500 quintals, but had additional space for 9,500 quintals; and 7 or 8 vessels from St. Malo returned with half a cargo. A year later, Bordeaux sent 4 vessels of 87 tons, St. Malo 3 vessels of 110 tons, Nantes 2 vessels of 45 tons, Rochelle 3 vessels of 83 tons, and Rochefort 1 vessel of 53 tons.<sup>[33]</sup> In 1733 St. Malo had 12 ships at Louisbourg and 4 at Port Dauphin, and a year later 8 ships at Louisbourg and 1 at Port Dauphin. Nantes had 6 at Louisbourg in each year, but this number declined to 4 in 1737. Bordeaux increased from 1 in 1733 to 2 in 1734 and to 5 in 1737. La Rochelle increased from 2 in 1733-4 to 3 in 1737. Other minor ports such as Morlaix, d’Olonne, Marenne, Grandville, Havre, and St. Martin de Rhe, were represented by one or two vessels, chiefly at Louisbourg. In a total of 121 vessels and boats calling at the ports of Cape Breton in 1734, 102 were at Louisbourg.

*Ships from France*

	<i>Traite et pêche</i>	<i>Traite</i>	Total
1723	50	27	77
1726	33	28	61
1727	37	27	64
1730	47	34	81
1731	49	35	84
1733	45	25	70
1734	19	34	53
1735	22	46	68
1736	25	35	60
1738	30	43	73
1739	35	21	56
1740	36	37	73
1744	19	14	33

The number of ships coming from France to trade and fish, and especially to trade, reflected the general development of the boat fishery. Vessels engaged in trading and fishing were closely affected by changes in the supply of fish and in the demand for fish. The number declined from 50 in 1723 to 33 in 1726, but recovered to 49 in 1731, declined sharply to 19 in 1734, and increased steadily from that date to 36 in 1740. In spite of the sharp decline in 1734, a result of rumours of war, the fishery showed signs of strength in the latter part of the decade from 1730 to 1740. The number of trading vessels, increased from 27 in 1723 to 35 in 1731. After that date, however, they increased to 46 in 1735, and declined slowly but with marked fluctuations to 43 in 1738 and to 37 in 1740. The number of trading ships in the latter part of the period apparently had less relation to the fishery, and probably a closer relation to trade to New England and other centres.

The sedentary fishery was dependent on accessibility to cheap supplies and provisions. To quote the old captain of Sarah Orme Jewett: “It ought to read in the Bible, ‘Man cannot live by fish alone’, if they’d told the truth of things; t’aint bread that wears the worst on you”. In 1741 it was stated that the French could not hope to increase agricultural production in Cape Breton “non seulement à cause de la mauvaise qualité des terres, si on peut en

admettre, mais encore par l'intempérie du climat qui est continuellement brumeur pour l'ordinaire pendant l'été ce qui empêche les grains de murir”.

<sup>[34]</sup> As early as 1720 those not engaged in the fishery were required to settle in the north eastern part of the harbour to raise “trous”, to cut wood, and to raise poultry. Port Toulouse in 1736 sent nine or ten sloops to Louisbourg loaded with wood for fuel. The slight development of agriculture necessitated dependence on other sources.

On August 14, 1718, <sup>[35]</sup> a report stated that a deficit of provisions had reduced the garrison to rations of three-quarters of a biscuit per day, had forced the *habitants* to abandon an abundant fishery, and had kept vessels from leaving for France until assistance arrived from Canada or Europe. In 1733, with a bad harvest in Canada, the colony was forced to send a number of fishermen back to France because of lack of provisions, to the serious detriment of the fall fishery. <sup>[36]</sup> Four years later, with another failure in Canada, the autumn fishery was again suspended, and the population reduced to living on fish and garden produce. <sup>[37]</sup> A document dated October 25, 1738, stated that “la dizette de vivres dont la colonie a été affligée depuis deux ans et celles auxquelles elle a été sujette cy devant, ont apporté un préjudice notable au commerce et à l'établissement de l'isle”. <sup>[38]</sup> Four years later (1742), <sup>[39]</sup> a bad fishery and a bad harvest in Canada forced the majority of the vessels to return without a cargo, with disastrous results to the *habitants* and serious prospects for the future. The high freight on grain from France and high prices ruined the *habitant* and his creditors. “La pêche au lieu d'ogmenter diminue considérablement”. “Les vivres sont icy au dessus de dix à douze louis le quintal, il n'est pas possible que la colonie subsiste”.

The problem of support from France was described in a document dated December 28, 1737. The annual requirements of the colony for flour, biscuits, and vegetables were estimated at 20,000 quintals. Vessels coming from France were forced to bring salt and other supplies for the fishery, and were not disposed to bring more bulky and less valuable foodstuffs in preference to less bulky and more valuable supplies. <sup>[40]</sup> All the vessels coming from France, with the exception of St. Malo and Nantes, “ne portent pas à beaucoup près les vivres qui leurs est nécessaire pour la subsistence de leurs équipages et cela est sy vray—qu'il a esté acheté par les navires pour leurs retours mille ou douze cent quintaux de pain”. <sup>[41]</sup> In 1733 vessels from St. Jean de Luz and Bayonne, the first arrivals in the spring, were accused of lending provisions to a destitute colony and receiving flour and biscuits at the end of the season, thereby securing a fresh supply and avoiding losses

through waste of the stock in summer. This practice was held to assist the colony in postponing its purchases from other vessels from France and Canada, and in forcing those vessels to dispose of their products at a lower price.

Isle St. Jean (Prince Edward Island) was regarded as a possible alternative base of food supplies, but difficulties of settlement and cultivation resulted in failure over a long period of determined effort.<sup>[42]</sup> Acadians accustomed to the primitive agriculture of the dyked lands of the bay of Fundy were reluctant to engage in the difficult task of clearing the adjoining uplands, or of migrating to Isle St. Jean and engaging in similar operations. The rich pastures of the bay of Fundy marsh lands tended to encourage the raising of live stock rather than the production of grain, and Acadians succeeded with grain production in Isle St. Jean in the face of numerous handicaps. Support to Cape Breton was extremely limited. In 1753 one individual sent 5,000 cabbages and 100 barrels of turnips to Cape Breton, but such assistance was infrequent and of slight importance.

New France was a final alternative source of supply under French control, but again difficulties were numerous. Prices of provisions were forced down in Cape Breton through New England competition, with the result that they were higher in Quebec than in Louisbourg, particularly in years of bad harvests. As early as 1725 it was stated that traders from Canada found the Louisbourg market captured by New England.<sup>[43]</sup> In 1733 the best grade of biscuits was sold at 7 *livres* to 7 *livres* 10 *sous* per quintal in Cape Breton, and at 9 to 10 *livres*, and even more in Quebec.<sup>[44]</sup> Moreover, flour sent from Quebec was often unsatisfactory.<sup>[45]</sup> Vessels could not reach Louisbourg from Canada before the last of May, whereas they arrived from France in April. Again, the absence of small private warehouses and the weak financial position of retailers in Cape Breton made it difficult to dispose of provisions other than in small quantities over a long period of time, and Canadian vessels were not in a position financially to engage in extended trade.<sup>[46]</sup> Regulations requiring Canadian vessels to remain in the harbour until their provisions were sold practically placed them at the mercy of a monopoly of local buyers, and with low prices effectually discouraged the trade.<sup>[47]</sup> The fluctuating character of the fishery and of the Canadian wheat harvest provided an uncertain market and uncertain prices. With the announcement of the fall of Louisbourg in the summer of 1745, the price of flour in Quebec declined from 10 and 12 *livres* per quintal to 6 and 7 *livres* per quintal.<sup>[48]</sup> As a result of these difficulties, the number of vessels from Canada declined after 1730. The number increased from 15 in 1726 to 31 in



1730, declined to 17 in 1733, increased to 31 in 1734, declined to 14 in 1738, and increased to 19 in 1740.

Cheaper supplies of grain and provisions from the more accessible districts of Nova Scotia and New England, and the problem of supply from French territory, hastened dependence on regions under English control. As early as 1718<sup>[49]</sup> French vessels arrived from Cape Breton at Minas basin, “the greatest settlement for the growth of corn at present in this colony”, and “exchanged wine, brandy and linnings which they can afford four pence and sixpence in a yard cheaper than our traders can possibly doe” for wheat and salt beef. From the livestock region of Chignecto, cattle were driven across the peninsula to Baie Verte and taken to Cape Breton. In November two sloops left Minas basin with several hundred bushels of wheat and several head of cattle. Apparently sloops (one of 60 and the other of nearly 50 tons) and cargoes were sold in Cape Breton and sent to bring livestock from Baie Verte.<sup>[50]</sup> In 1725 trade was flourishing. The French went with vessels to Baie Verte, crossed overland, and bought cattle and furs from the Acadians. The latter had twelve vessels engaged in the trade carrying cattle, beef, pork, boards and shingles to Cape Breton although ostensibly for Canso. John Bradstreet stated that in August (1725) he saw four vessels from Nova Scotia at Louisbourg with “over 80 oxen and cows great store of sheep and other provisions and a great quantity of furs; being thus furnished with vessels and the timber of Nova Scotia to build others, Cape Breton affording neither timber nor provisions, they are enabled to vie with us in the foreign fish trade and reap as much benefit from Nova Scotia as if they were still proprietors thereof”.<sup>[51]</sup> In 1741 Mascarene stated that he could not prevent those from Cape Breton who were in great want from resorting to Baie Verte and other points along the east shore to secure cattle from Chignecto and Minas. In 1743 it was stated that French from St. John, Louisbourg and elsewhere went to Baie Verte to cut oak timber and large masts for vessels and fortifications.<sup>[52]</sup> It was estimated “6 or 700 head of cattle and about 2,000 sheep in a year” were taken by the Gut of Canso from the Acadians. The garrisons at Annapolis Royal and Canso were forced to bring mutton and beef from New England. “The Acadians—Have their woollen and linnens and most of the necessary they want from Louisbourg”.<sup>[53]</sup>

Supplies from French territory and from the French population in English territory were not adequate to the expansion of Cape Breton, and were unable to compete with the lower prices of the English colonies. As early as 1717 French vessels complained that they were in danger of being obliged to return to France with their provisions and cargoes unless steps

were taken prohibiting foreign vessels from fishing and trading on the French coasts.<sup>[54]</sup> In August 1725 John Bradstreet “saw ten New England sloops and schooners and one ship in the harbour of Louisbourg all to be sold to the French both vessels and cargoes; which occasioned such plenty of provisions there, that the price of one sheep at Canso was equivalent to that of two at Cape Breton”.<sup>[55]</sup> In the same year<sup>[56]</sup> it was charged in a petition signed by nineteen names that English traders smuggled with commodities involving no loss to France, such products as salt, beef, pork, tobacco, tar and even textiles which were prejudicial to French trade. Moreover, the demand for cattle, sheep, eggs, poultry and other provisions, and for bricks, planks and building materials, and the unfavourable balance of trade by which specie was drained from the colony, weakened the position of French creditors and involved difficulties in local trade. The severe storms of 1726, the small number of ships arriving from France in 1727, and the deficit in supplies of salt, salt provisions, and butter, necessitated dependence on New England. The merchants of St. Malo complained of the smuggling of English goods to Cape Breton, and in turn to Canada. They complained also not only of the purchase of bread, flour, salt, salt meat, butter, cheese and dry goods, and of the drain of gold and silver specie, but also of the purchase of fish. “Cette conduite ruine absolument le commerce de la colonie, met les negociants hors d’état de le continuer et ils y ont fait des pertes considérables depuis plusieurs années”. On the other hand it was held that coal, wine, brandy, and French goods were sold to the English. In 1731 three of four small English boats, with planks, bricks, cattle, sheep, poultry, corn, potatoes, turnips and onions, were allowed to dispose of their cargoes because of the need of the colony.<sup>[57]</sup> Two years later the difficulties of the colony led to an agreement to supply 7,500 *livres* to dispatch a vessel to New York to purchase flour.<sup>[58]</sup> In 1740 it was claimed that imports of flour, hardware, and cod from New England were prohibited, and only imports of furs, cod and flour from Acadia “qu’on ne regarde point comme colonie étrangère” permitted; but two years later, in spite of prohibition of sale of foodstuffs from the English colonies to the French, a vessel was sent to New York with an English passport.<sup>[59]</sup> The following year<sup>[60]</sup> an English supply merchant purchased 4,000 “barrels” of flour, but was unable to clear more than 1,600, because of the news of the outbreak of war with France.

The New England fishery at Canso was directly related to the problems of Louisbourg. As early as 1717<sup>[61]</sup> 5 or 6 English master *habitants*, and 6 French who traded with the English, were engaged in the Canso fishery, and

a frigate of 18 cannons had been loaded with cod for Livourne. In 1720<sup>[62]</sup> it was reported that there were at Canso 96 English vessels of from 50 to 70 tons which had come 180 leagues, and that in the season 20,000 quintals of cod were caught. The number of boats sent from various New England ports fluctuated widely as between different ports and different years, and suggested the flexibility and elasticity of the industry. These boats ranged in size from 10 tons to 40 or 50 tons as an average, and carried from 3 to 7 or 8 men, but generally 5 or 6. In 1721, from an estimated total of over 70 boats, Piscataqua sent 15 weighing 640 tons and manned by 93 men, and Boston sent 14 weighing 626 tons and manned by 84 men. The remainder were divided up between possibly a dozen ports, sending in the case of Marblehead 7 boats, but in the main from 2 to 3 boats each. A few of these boats arrived in March, but the majority in April and May. Some arrived in June and July. Most of them probably left in July and August and a few in September. These boats caught, it was estimated, 20,972 quintals of fish. In some cases as many as four were owned by one man, as in the case of John Cawley, who owned 1 boat from Boston, 2 from Marblehead, and 1 from Salem. Hugh Read owned 3 boats from Piscataqua. Two years later (in 1723), from a total of between 60 and 70 boats, Piscataqua sent 11 boats weighing 369 tons and having 63 men; Boston 15 boats weighing 360 tons and having 102 men; and Marblehead 11 boats weighing 398 tons and having 66 men. Ipswich owned 7 weighing 172 tons and having 34 men, and Salem 6 weighing 115 tons and having 42 men. With few exceptions the men were employed on the share principle. In 1725 the fishery showed signs of marked expansion, and the number of boats had increased to over 170, or more than double that of two years previous. Piscataqua sent 24 boats, weighing 616 tons and employing 129 men; Boston 35 boats weighing 1,143 tons and employing 214 men; Marblehead 21 boats weighing 593 tons and employing 118 men; Salem 27 boats weighing 658 tons and employing 149 men; Gloucester 20 boats weighing 537 tons and employing 107 men; Cape Ann 19 boats weighing 529 tons and employing 98 men; and Ipswich 14 boats weighing 340 tons and employing 70 men. A large proportion of these vessels arrived in April, May, June and even July. The total of fish caught suitable for the European market was 56,357 quintals valued at £31,935.12, and an almost equal number of refuse fish were sent to the West Indies, Barbadoes, Jamaica and the Leeward Islands. The names of some of the owners appearing in 1721 and in 1723 were still in evidence. The following year witnessed a marked decline to about 110 boats, of which 52 weighing 1,420 tons and employing 262 men were from Boston, and 38 weighing 977 tons and employing 203 men were from Salem. Marblehead had only 2

boats, Cape Ann 1, and Ipswich was not represented. Piscataqua had declined to 6 boats. The total catch was a little more than one-half of the previous year, or 30,826 quintals. In 1729, 250 vessels were reported,<sup>[63]</sup> and 1,500 to 2,000 hands were engaged in “catching, curing and loading of fish for several marketts the returns whereof to Great Britain is thought to advance more the revenue of the customs than the produce of any province upon this continent of the longest settlement Virginia excepted”. In that year, it was estimated that the schooners and sloops made 51,749 quintals of fish, of which 28,929 were taken to foreign markets. In 1732, 26,370 quintals were taken to foreign markets, and a year later 40,000 quintals.<sup>[64]</sup> In 1730, the number of boats was over 100, but Piscataqua was not represented. Boston had 28 boats weighing 965 tons and employing 154 men; Ipswich 21 boats weighing 480 tons and employing 109 men; Gloucester 20 boats weighing 429 tons and employing 91 men; Salem 12 boats weighing 317 tons and employing 52 men; and Portsmouth 26 boats weighing 632 tons and employing 148 men. The importance of the fishery to New England is suggested in part by the expansion of shipping. In a total of 147 boats used in that year 45 had been built in Salem, 53 in Boston, and 28 in Portsmouth, or a total of 126 from 3 ports. Of these vessels, 30 had been built in 1728, 25 in 1729, 25 in 1724 and 21 in 1727. The expansion of the fishery in 1725 had apparently been preceded by the increase of ship-building in 1724, and the decline of fishing in 1726 had been followed by a slow development in ship-building. Recovery reached its peak in 1728 and 1729. Salem had been an important ship-building centre in 1724, and of importance in the fishery in 1725. Portsmouth became an important ship-building centre in 1728, and an important fishing centre in 1730. Boston continued with substantial contributions throughout the period. The tendency toward concentration in New England was evident in the importance of Salem in 1730 as an import centre for goods from Canso. Vessels from Gloucester, Cape Ann, Ipswich, and Marblehead,<sup>[65]</sup> as well as from Salem itself, returned in ballast or carried back barrels of fish oil and fishing stores to Salem. Boston vessels alone carried fishing stores and oil to Boston, but some of the vessels carried cargoes to Salem. Nevertheless, prior to 1739 Salem had ceased to send vessels to Canso. In 1735, 58 schooners owned by 24 men (the majority owning 1, 2 or 3 schooners) made 21,766 quintals of fish, of which less than one-half, or 10,760 quintals, were sent to foreign markets and the remainder to New England. The following year 28 men owned 46 schooners, at least 10 of the names being the same as the preceding year, but practically all having a smaller number of schooners. These produced 24,990 quintals, of which 14,514 quintals went to foreign markets, and 11,156 quintals to New

England. A large number of the same owners were represented among the 27 men having 65 schooners in 1737; but the number of schooners owned by each had increased. Of a total of about 40,000 quintals, 30,400 quintals were sent to foreign markets, and 9,600 to New England. In 1738, 20 schooners of 45 tons each employing 900 men, and 40 schooners of 25 tons each employing 1,000 men, produced 48,000 quintals, of which 20,000 quintals were shipped to foreign markets, 20,000 to New England, and 8,000 to Cape Breton. In the following year, 50 schooners were employed, 9 from Piscataqua weighing 240 tons with 46 men; 12 from Ipswich weighing 315 tons with 56 men; 8 from Portsmouth weighing 190 tons with 38 men; and the remainder from 7 other ports, including 6 from Cape Ann, and 5 from Boston. The total catch was 22,166 tons. As a result of the outbreak of war with Spain, and the loss of that market, the Canso fishery declined to 9 ships making 2,310 quintals in 1740, and to 11 ships making 5,450 quintals in 1741,—most of the ships being from Cape Ann, Ipswich, and Piscataqua.

The various changes which characterized the Canso fishery from 1720 to 1740 were sufficient to indicate long-run trends. The position of Boston was of first importance in the development of the period. In 1721 the fish produced at Canso was carried to the European market by a large number of vessels, chiefly from England.<sup>[66]</sup> Topsham in England sent out 7 vessels weighing 390 tons and employing 101 men. Two vessels of 35 and 120 tons respectively took 3,700 quintals to Lisbon, a vessel of 35 tons took 900 quintals to Bilboa, and 3 other vessels carried 600 quintals to other points. Two vessels from Barnstaple took 1,500 tons to Lisbon and 1,600 tons to an unspecified market. Three of the vessels from Topsham and Barnstaple were owned by one exporter. A London ship carried 2,000 quintals to Alicante. From New England 2 vessels from Boston carried 900 quintals to Lisbon and 1,100 quintals to Bilboa, and one vessel from Salem carried 872 quintals to Bilboa. In the exceptional year 1725, Topsham vessels carried 1,790 quintals to the Straits and 1,800 quintals to unspecified ports. Southampton sent one vessel which took 1,990 quintals to Malaga. London vessels carried 315 quintals to St. Christophers and Madeira, 690 quintals to Spain, 4,590 quintals (2 vessels) to the Straits, 3,000 quintals to Alicante, and 7,980 quintals in four vessels to unspecified points. Vessels from Bristol took 1,990 quintals, from Exeter 1,900 quintals, from Weymouth 1,600 quintals, and from Cork 1,900 quintals, to unspecified points. A Margrett vessel took 1,937 quintals to Alicante, and a Bristol vessel 1,990 quintals to Barcelona. From New England, Boston vessels took 1,290 quintals, 3,800 quintals, 1,415 quintals and 1,590 quintals, or a total of 8,095 quintals to Bilboa; and in 3 vessels 4,100 quintals to unspecified points. Piscataqua sent 1 vessel

with 1,990 quintals to Lisbon; Salem 1 vessel with 890 quintals to Bilboa; Gloucester 2 vessels 1,800 quintals to unspecified points; and New Hampshire 1 vessel with 900 quintals to an unspecified point. Portsmouth vessels carried 1,980 quintals to the coast of Spain, 2,900 quintals to Leghorn. London had become the chief centre, with Boston second. In 1726 Exeter vessels carried 1,800 quintals to Lisbon and 1,100 quintals to unspecified points. London vessels carried 2,000 quintals to Oporto, and 3 cargoes of 3,000, 3,000 and 1,600 quintals to unspecified points. New England ports such as Salem sent vessels carrying cargoes of 750, 1,787, 1,400 and 711 quintals to Lisbon; and Boston sent vessels with 2,500, 600 and 800 quintals to unspecified points, and 1,850 quintals to Bilboa. New Hampshire sent vessels with 800 and 1,400 quintals to unspecified points; Portsmouth sent 1 vessel with 800 quintals to unspecified points; Plymouth and Newport sent each 1 vessel of 900 quintals and 600 quintals respectively to unspecified points; and Saints of Basten (San Sebastian) had 1 vessel which took 3,000 quintals. New England vessels carried at least one-half to market. The character of the trade is suggested in part by tables indicating the markets, home ports, and last port of call. From Boston and Salem 4 vessels proceeded from Canso for Lisbon or Bilboa; a vessel from London proceeded to Oporto, and from Exeter (Exonham) to Lisbon. Vessels from Cork came from Salem and proceeded to Bilboa or Lisbon. A Portsmouth vessel came from London to Canso. But in the main Canso was becoming an important exchange centre, to which fishing stores were brought from England and taken to Salem or Boston and distributed among the fishing centres. New England had also found it increasingly profitable to send vessels direct to the Spanish market and to enter the sack ship trade. The trade from Canso fluctuated between these two lines of growth. In 1730 London ships carried cargoes of 2,600 quintals, 1,400 quintals, 2,100 quintals, 1,000 quintals and 3,500 quintals to the Straits and the Mediterranean; of 2,000 quintals and 1,500 quintals to Alicante; of 2,200 quintals to Barcelona, and of 1,600 quintals to other parts of Spain and Portugal. Topsham sent 2 cargoes of 2,100 quintals and 1,300 quintals to Lisbon, and Exeter ships took 2 cargoes of 1,200 quintal and 500 quintals to Bilboa. Boston ships took cargoes of 1,800 quintals, 2,025 quintals, and 2,000 quintals to Bilboa, and 2,177 quintals to Alicante; and a Salem ship took 700 quintals to Bilboa. Ships from England carried almost twice as many fish to Europe as ships from New England. The demands of the fishing industry directly (and indirectly, in that supplies were being carried to Cape Breton and Newfoundland) restricted the possibilities of New England's trade from Canso to Europe. On the other hand, the larger ships from Europe, the export of manufactured products to Canso, and the

triangular voyage from Spain, gave English vessels an advantage. Canso was a marginal competing ground in which vessels from England competed effectively for the trade with vessels from New England. Five years later the advantage was still with English vessels. Exeter ships took 3,300 quintals to Bilbao; London ships 2,200 to Lisbon and 1,800 to Alicante; and Bristol ships 1,400 to Gibraltar. Boston sent 1 ship with 2,000 quintals to Gibraltar. But it was significant that more than half of the fish went to New England presumably to be re-exported to Europe. In 1736 London ships carried cargoes of 1650 quintals to the Straits, and 1,272 quintals to Genoa; Southampton 2,100 to Bilbao; Bristol and Weymouth 1,400 and 1,100 respectively to the Straits; Exeter 1,200 to Bilbao. Portsmouth sent a cargo of 1,500 quintals to Cadiz; Cape Ann 1,100 to Lisbon; and Boston 1,600 and 1,100 to the Straits. Again almost one-half of the catch was exported to New England; and of the total shipped direct to foreign markets about one-third was taken by New England vessels. In 1737, 5 London ships carried cargoes of 2,400 and 1,600 quintals to Bilbao; 1,700 to Barcelona; 2,500 to Lisbon; and 2,400 to the Mediterranean. Topsham had 1 vessel with a cargo of 1,200 quintals for Bilbao; Weymouth 1 of 1,400 to the Mediterranean; Southampton 1 of 2,400 to Bilbao; and Exeter 1 of 2,500 to the Mediterranean. Boston took cargoes of 2,000, 1,200, and 1,600 quintals to the Mediterranean. Only a third of the total, or 9,600 quintals, was taken to New England; and of the total of 30,400 sent direct to Europe, New England vessels carried about one-quarter. In 1738 the pendulum swung in the opposite direction. New England took about one-half; but of the remainder, 3 London vessels carried cargoes of 1,880, 1,860 and 2,660 quintals to Mediterranean, and a Southampton vessel carried 1,880 quintals to Bilbao. Boston vessels took cargoes of 1,580, 2,000, 2,600, and 1,800 quintals to Spain and the Mediterranean, and a Virginia vessel carried 1,700 quintals to Portugal. New England ships carried over one-half of the direct shipments to Europe. The effects of the war with Spain in 1739 were shown in the departure of 3 London ships with cargoes totalling 6,800 quintals; of 1 Southampton ship with a cargo of 2,500 quintals, and of a ship from Cadiz with a cargo of 2,500 quintals, all for England. Plymouth and Cork apparently had vessels carrying 1,500 and 1,400 quintals respectively to Lisbon. In 1740 and 1741 no sack ships were reported as arriving; and the fish was shipped to the West Indies or taken to New England.

The decline of the Spanish market precipitated by the outbreak of war coincided with the increasing importance of New England and of the West Indies market. New England was handicapped in the production of the better grades of fish because of dependence on schooners, and the absence of

settlement and a boat fishery. A year after the signing of the treaty of Utrecht, Vetch submitted in “Some reasons and proposals humbly offered for settling the main coast of Nova Scotia with all imaginable speed” that many of the sloops, shallops and ketches fished off the Nova Scotia coast from about March 20 to the latter end of October, and that many of them went as far as Canso, 200 leagues from Boston, “and the winds during the fishing months blowing all most a trade att South West which is just against them in their return when laden, so that offten in their long voyages in the hott season their fish is spoiled before they gett them to their stages but all ways loose two thirds of their time in going and comeing—which could be all employed in fishing had they but good settlements on shoare to protect them from the Indians and stages to make their fish on which would not only occasion their making three times as much—but even that which was made much better than it is now by reason it would be putt ashoare ffresh every day as soon as catched”.<sup>[67]</sup>

Unfortunately, the establishment of Canso did not relieve the New England fishery from dependence on schooners<sup>[68]</sup> and on the bank fishery. If the schooners were left out too long on the banks the fish were salt burned and lost, and even the most favourable circumstances involved a poorer grade of fish. The fish were not “as bright as those caught in boats at Newfoundland and brought o’shore every day; but that can’t be expected till settlements are fixed by people that can remain there summer and winter”. In 1732 Robert Ffytche reported that he found “The fault of the fishes not turning out at foreign marketts so good and in such condition as it ought, is equally owing to them boath to the masters by taking their fish on board before it is well cured, and after sunsett and in great dewes and by carrying a mixt cargoe which is all sold at markt for marchantable fish when its only (what in the stile of the fisherman is called Tal Qual) to the shoarmen by not allowing a sufficient number of hands to cure the fish and throw the piles so often as they should do, and not giving it time in the pile to swet before its carried on board the ships, and not keeping their contracts with masters of ships who agree with them for it at their arrival, but oblige them to take it on board before it is well cured, which are too many to the great detriment of this trade”. It was held also that “The merchants who usually freight ships upon charter party from the ports of England, Portugal and Spain, who are obliged to tarry a certain number of days only which occasions the fish many times being shipt off sooner than would be otherwise if the ships would unanimously agree to tarry till a certain time later when their fish would be more wrought and better cured”.<sup>[69]</sup> Scarcity of labour, lack of reserves, and the fact that the fishery as conducted from schooners produced



a poorer grade of fish, weakened the position of the Canso product in the European market.

On the other hand, the establishment of a sedentary fishery at Louisbourg enabled French boats to fish in the Canso region and to dry the product more satisfactorily. In 1720 an English account<sup>[70]</sup> estimated that there were 200 small French shallops. “When fish is scarce at other places, here they are always plenty . . . our fishing vessels cannot take 4 fish when they will take ten, they fish with fresh and we with salt bait; we come 180 leagues, they but 7; they in small boats, we in large sloops”. In 1739<sup>[71]</sup> “the English fishery at Canceaux is much decayed in proportion to the improvement and increase of the French fishery within these ten years past: greatly occasioned by their fishing on those banks on our coast—even making and curing their fish on the coast of Nova Scotia, which if they could be prevented from doing they must entirely give up that valuable branch of trade which employs great numbers of people”.

The decline of the English fishery was a result of the increasing importance of trade with Louisbourg and the French West Indies.

The demands of the English colonies<sup>[72]</sup> began to exceed the production of the British West Indies; and the lower costs of sugar production in the less exhausted soil of the French West Indies, and the lower prices of a market in which rum was excluded from France as a possible competitor with brandy, provided an additional stimulus to a smuggling trade. As early as 1731<sup>[73]</sup> “several masters of ships trading to Canso” complained not only of the sale of products of old France, such as brandy, wine, and linens, but also of “great quantities of Martenico rum,<sup>[74]</sup> molassus”, products of the French West Indies brought by the French from Gaspé and Cape Breton in exchange for fish: “Which enhances the price of fish and also proves a very considerable detriment to the ships which yearly come from England in order to purchase their cargoes of fish there not only by the French getting part of the fish for those contraband commoditys but also is a manifest loss to those British ships who cannot sell the lawful commoditys they bring with them in order to purchase fish, the people at Canso being continually stockt by the French so that the advantage which might accrue from our own and plantation commodities is lost thereby as well as the French being enabled to purchase the greatest quantities of fish and supplying the markets in the Meditteranean therewith and more especially Italy<sup>[75]</sup> which is yearly overstock’d with fish brought thither in French ships the great part of it is caught by our own people as above”. The British West Indies attempted

through the Molasses Act of 1733 to check the trade of English colonies with the French West Indies. Smuggling was inevitable, and Cape Breton became an important area. In 1736<sup>[76]</sup> it was stated “the island is quite barren so that they depend chiefly upon our neighbouring colonies [English] for their supplies who trade with them for rum and molasses”, Petit Degrat near Canso was in 1740 a recognized trading centre where the English exchanged cod, pork, flour, tar and vessels for rum and molasses.<sup>[77]</sup> “La vente des battiments anglais est nécessaire dans la colonie—pour procurer le débouché aux cargaisons qui viennent des isles [West Indies], ce commerce soutient seul la colonie”.<sup>[78]</sup> It was estimated that 80 to 90 sail were engaged annually in taking lumber, bricks, livestock, and fish purchased at Canso to Louisbourg, in some cases disposing of vessels as well as cargo, and receiving in return brandy, wine, iron, sail cloth, rum and molasses (about 6,000 hhds. annually).<sup>[79]</sup> Fish at Canso was sold almost entirely to the French. In 1740 it was estimated that at least a third of the rum was re-exported to New England.

Statistics of vessels from New England and Acadia to Louisbourg showed an increase from 33 in 1726 and 31 in 1733 to 46 in 1733 and 52 in 1735; and a decline to 35 in 1736 and 50 in 1740. From the West Indies they increased from 9 in 1726 to 25 in 1733, but declined to 14 in 1736 and 24 in 1739. Of 15 vessels (750 tons) in 1737, 3 were from Guadaloupe, 4 from St. Dominique, and 8 from Martinique. A decline was attributed in 1743 to an increasing smuggling trade direct from the English colonies to the French West Indies. Three French vessels from Louisbourg reported inability to purchase rum and molasses at Martinique because of English competition. Half the vessels at St. Martinique and St. Dominique sailed under two flags, with French and English captains.<sup>[80]</sup>

Louisbourg became an important *entrepôt* for trade. To quote D’Ulloa (1745):<sup>[81]</sup>

More than one inhabitant maintained forty or fifty which daily went on this fishery carrying three or four men each; so that the cod storehouses never failed of being filled against the time the ships resorted hither from most of the ports of France, laden with provisions and other goods, with which the inhabitants provided themselves in exchange for this fish; or consigned it to be sold in France on their own account; likewise vessels from the French colonies of St. Domingo and Martenico, brought sugar, tobacco, coffee, rum etc. and returned loaded with cod; and any surplus,

after Louisbourg was supplied found a vent in Canada, where the return was made in beaver skins and other kinds of fine furs. Thus Louisbourg, with no other fund than the fishery carried on a continual and large commerce both with Europe and America.

Boats left the West Indies in October, and arrived after thirty to forty days in November, bringing molasses, tafia, sugar, tobacco and soap. An itemized list for 1740<sup>[82]</sup> of exports from the West Indies, totalling 269,315 *livres*, included the following: tafia, 2,308 casks of 150,040 *livres*; molasses, 1,969 casks of 78,780 *livres*; coffee, white sugar, soap, Provence wine, olive oil, and tobacco leaves valued at from 5,000 to 7,000 *livres*, and smaller items of raw sugar and cotton. Goods exported to the West Indies totalled 242,988 *livres*, and included: dried cod, 198,264 *livres*; fine flour, 28,039 *livres*; and smaller items of salmon, planks, shingles, coal, peas, bureaus and fish oil.

Louisbourg exported 715 casks of tafia (46,475 *livres*) and 460 casks of molasses (18,400 *livres*) in a total of 70,678 *livres* to New England; and 56,880 *livres* worth of tafia, 15,720 *livres* of molasses, 11,100 *livres* of raw sugar, 16,380 *livres* coffee, and 100 *livres* of tafia spirit, in a total of 114,776 *livres*, to Canada. In return, Louisbourg received from Canada 84,483 *livres* of fine flour, 15,831 *livres* of second quality flour, 75,000 *livres* of biscuits, and about 7,000 *livres* each of whole wheat, flour, and peas, in a total of 196,403 *livres*; and from New England 13,290 *livres* of planks, as well as other items of lumber and provisions totalling 49,147 *livres*. Acadia exported 25,959 *livres* of produce, 11,625 *livres* for live oxen and the remainder chiefly for provisions.

The outbreak of war between Spain and England increased the importance of Louisbourg trade in 1741. It was estimated that imports from France totalled 574,191 *livres*, and exports to France 859,715 *livres*, leaving a favourable balance for Cape Breton of at least 285,524 *livres*, and not including products sent to the West Indies by French vessels. Imports from the West Indies<sup>[83]</sup> totalled 282,910 *livres*, and exports 477,849 *livres*, or an excess of exports of 194,938 *livres* (including returns of boats from Canada and France for the West Indies).<sup>[84]</sup> In spite of the favourable statistics of the balance at Louisbourg, the importance of re-exports probably involved a net unfavourable balance. Imports from the West Indies were of much higher value than exports. It was estimated that a 200-ton boat from the West Indies would bring supplies valued at 40 to 50,000 *livres* to Canada, and would return with provisions and lumber valued at 15,000 *livres*. The balance could

be made up in part with the export of flour and biscuits to Cape Breton to be exchanged for cod for France or the West Indies. Provence wine and soap were brought from the West Indies, the former because of competition with Bordeaux wine and the higher prices available at Cape Breton. Imports from Canada totalled 261,768 *livres*, and exports 43,114 *livres*, showing an unfavourable balance of 218,653 *livres*, chiefly the result of goods brought by boats from Canada and France for the West Indies to Louisbourg. Acadia sent exports of 56,946 *livres*, and imported 35,998 *livres*, including 20,000 *livres* of specie; but the unfavourable balance of 20,948 *livres* was probably made up in smuggling. Similarly, imports from New England, including boats, totalled 40,343 *livres*, and exports 42,355 *livres*, the remainder being paid for in money.<sup>[85]</sup> In 1742 imports in Canada from France<sup>[86]</sup> totalled 1,894,162 *livres*, and exports 1,955,996 *livres*, or an excess of exports of 71,834 *livres*. Imports from the West Indies totalled 211,614 *livres*, exports 55,553 *livres*, or an excess of imports of 156,060 *livres*. Imports from Cape Breton totalled 77,092 *livres*, exports 70,357 *livres*, or an excess of imports of 6,734 *livres*. Canada therefore had an unfavourable balance of 162,795 *livres* with the West Indies and Cape Breton, and a favourable balance of 71,834 *livres* with France, or a net unfavourable balance of 90,960 *livres*. Aside from the effects of the bad harvests of that year, a statistical unfavourable balance was probably offset by more intangible factors.

Expansion of trade in Cape Breton involved smuggling and collusion of French and other officials. As early as 1725 the English trade was alleged to be favourable to certain individuals “qui se trouvent en espèces de ces gens là et ne vendent pas pour cela à meilleur marche au publique”.<sup>[87]</sup> The merchants of St. Malo alleged in 1727 that M. de St. Ovide encouraged English trade by prohibiting the delivery of cod to merchant vessels until the middle of September, thereby facilitating smuggling with the English and delaying French vessels until November and December, and exposing them to grave danger of loss at sea.<sup>[88]</sup> In 1738<sup>[89]</sup> a letter from the “habitans pescheurs” charged “Sieur Duvivier capitaine d’Infanterie du détachement de la Marine en cette garrison” with trading over a period of years to their disadvantage. In the spring of 1738 he purchased a large part of the cargo of vessels from France, and forced the residents of Louisbourg and the surrounding district to pay a higher price, with the result that fishermen migrated to Gaspé and other centres. A cargo of supplies sent from Niganiche to relieve the residents was also acquired by Duvivier to the prejudice of fishermen of Louisbourg, Lorembec, Baleine and Scatary. The first cargo from the West Indies was likewise purchased by him and sent to Boston, where he arranged a society by which a monopoly of English goods

was obtained and the fishermen forced to pay in specie. The advantages of freedom of trade in the exchange of products of the West Indies for those of New England had disappeared. A competitor from Martinique with a cargo of rum and molasses was alleged to have the smallpox on his vessel, and was not allowed to discharge, but forced to go on to Quebec. As a result, Duvivier was able to raise the prices of his two cargoes of West Indies products. Again, he acquired control by devious means over a retail butcher shop. His brother was charged with favouritism in the purchase and sale of cod, to the disgust of captains of vessels. Duvivier purchased cod at Petit Degrat and forced down the price of cod in Louisbourg. Finally he was accused of securing news of a deficit of provisions in Canada and of obtaining a corner on existing supplies “ce qui est contraire aux sentiments d’un chrétien”.

The increasing importance of trade with the French West Indies offset in part the effects of a decline in production of fish. The total production of Ile Royale declined from 166,500 quintals in 1718 to 156,520 in 1719, to 121,160 in 1723, and to 114,680 in 1717 (after a recovery to 140,900 in 1726). In 1730 it had practically reached the 1718 level with 165,530, and it reached its peak in 1731 with 167,540. A slight decline to 165,365 in 1733, and a marked decline to 139,810 in 1734, were followed by increases to 142,493 in 1735, to 151,110 in 1737, and to 152,470 in 1738. From the latter date decline was rapid to 143,600 in 1739, to 123,150 in 1740, to 88,720 in 1743, and to 69,430 in 1744.<sup>[90]</sup>

The problem of French West Indies molasses and tafia, which contributed to difficulties in relations between the English colonies and the British West Indies, was extended to Louisbourg. Restriction of trade in the West Indies contributed to expansion in Louisbourg. The fishing industry of New England at Canso declined with the increasing demands of the colonies for molasses. Fish, ships, and supplies were sold by the English colonies to secure tafia and molasses from the West Indies and to support the fishing industry of Cape Breton. The fishing interests of New England complained of competition in Europe,<sup>[91]</sup> and joined with enthusiasm in the attack on and capture of Louisbourg in 1745. According to D’Ulloa, William Pepperell, “one of the largest traders in Boston”, was “not ignorant of his interest and saw all the weight of the proposal”.<sup>[92]</sup> The governor of Rhode Island noted that “we had not the same dependence upon and expectation of advantages from the fishery as Massachusetts and New Hampshire had which undoubtedly was a main inducement to their people to list so cherefully as they did”.<sup>[93]</sup>

The return of Louisbourg to France brought a re-establishment of the fishery. Production of cod<sup>[94]</sup> increased from 90,560 in 1750 to 95,580 in 1751, but declined to 83,130 in 1752 and 72,000 in 1755. Dependence on New England trade continued. Trade in poultry products and fresh meat with the English<sup>[95]</sup> in 1750 was followed by the shipment of 12,000 barrels of flour from New York in 1751 because of the inability to obtain supplies from Canada<sup>[96]</sup> or France. Exporters received 12s. to 15s. per barrel and took “their payment in rum and molasses and other French merchandize”. “The factors from Boston bought up their [New York] flower and the trade was chiefly from Boston and Rhode Island who barter their goods for rum and molasses and run it into the colonys and not one tenth part pays a shilling duty—I doubt if Louisbourgh could subsist if it was not supported from our colonys”.<sup>[97]</sup> In 1754 “we sometimes see six or seven sloops in a day pass this harbour [Halifax] loaded for that place [Louisbourg] and we have certain intelligence of thirty vessels now in that harbour who sail’d lately from Boston loaded with provisions”.<sup>[98]</sup> “Sans les farines acheptées à la Nouvelle Angleterre . . . il m’eut été impossible d’approvisionner cette colonie et tous les postes qui en dépendent et qui sont a sa charge”.<sup>[99]</sup> Vessels were sold in exchange for molasses. In 1749 Louisbourg residents purchased 14 vessels of 635 tons, and West Indies merchants 10 vessels of 660 tons. The following year 30 English vessels were purchased, and in 1754 24 vessels, valued at 170,600 *livres*. The technique of New England vessel construction for the bank fishery was the basis of the Cape Breton schooner fishery. With molasses from the French West Indies French fishermen “à se fournir de batteaux et goélettes qu’ils ont à meilleur marché qu’en France, où on ne connoit guerres ces espèces de constructions propres à toutes nos colonies”.<sup>[100]</sup>

The West Indies exported to Louisbourg in 1752, 543,262 *livres* worth of molasses (1969 casks in 1740, and 9,877 in 1752), 445,770 *livres* of tafia (2,308 casks in 1740, and 4,953 in 1752), 52,377 *livres* of coffee, 22,104 *livres* of tobacco, and over 75,000 *livres* of sugar, out of a total of 1,180,246 *livres*. Of these quantities, 6,056 casks of molasses (333,080 *livres*), 2,595 casks of tafia (233,550 *livres*), 40,350 *livres* of sugar, 27,000 *livres* of coffee, and 15,500 *livres* of Bordeaux wine, out of a total of 654,680 *livres*, were exported to New England. Imports from Canada totalled 13,276 *livres*, and from France 1,124,139 *livres*, including Bordeaux wine, 131,800 *livres*, haberdashery, 100,386 *livres*, ropes, 101,292 *livres*, salt, 97,417 *livres*, biscuit, 45,991 *livres*, and numerous other items, chiefly dry goods, provisions,<sup>[101]</sup> and fishing supplies. Statistics for the following year gave a

total of 1,063,337 *livres* imported from France, including Bordeaux wine, 248,475 *livres*, salt, 201,957 *livres*, and the remainder dry goods, provisions and fishing equipment. Imports from the West Indies totalled 1,112,883 *livres*, including 539,880 *livres* of molasses and 436,860 *livres* of tafia. In return, goods valued at 735,805 *livres* were exported to France, including 605,680 *livres* of cod; goods valued at 673,863 *livres* to the West Indies, including 488,256 *livres* of cod; and goods valued at 111,157 *livres* to Canada, including 59,760 *livres* of tafia.<sup>[102]</sup> The British West Indies became increasingly inadequate as the source of supplies of molasses for the English colonies. The English “seront seurement obligés d’en venir chercher ici [Louisbourg] des qu’on tiendra sévèrement la main a St. Domingues et a la Martinique à n’y recevoir aucun étranger et qu’on y servira exactement”.<sup>[103]</sup>

Complaints of official collusion continued. St. Malo merchants<sup>[104]</sup> stated that they had lost heavily on their cargoes, chiefly provisions, in 1750, as a result of the arrangement of the French government by which residents were given free food supplies for two years, and in later years as a result of English competition in flour, bread, biscuits and other provisions and dry goods. It was alleged that the purchase of English dry goods implied a heavy drain of specie, as not more than half the cargo was paid for with molasses; and this in turn forced St. Malo merchants to sell the bulky and relatively unprofitable foodstuffs to the poor fishermen on a credit basis. Prices of flour were forced down to 15 *livres* per quintal, and peas and lard in proportion. The officials were charged with having made enormous fortunes as a result of smuggling activities, and individuals with no money in 1749 were at the head of a fleet of 15 vessels by 1753. English trade could be carried on with very little risk, vessels could make three trips annually from New England in contrast with one trip from France, and profits were enormous. The French were forced to receive cod, often low grade cod at 15 to 16 *livres* per quintal, in return for their products, in contrast to 10 to 12 *livres*, for the best grades before the war. On the other hand it was urged in 1755<sup>[105]</sup> that Canada had failed to meet the requirements of Cape Breton, particularly with the demands of the army, and that provisions and supplies brought from France were sold at too high a price—bread up to 30 *livres* per quintal. The importance of the sale of other merchandise to the residents had even forced the Malouins to rely on the English for provisions.

The cause of the continued decline of French influence in North America after the treaty of Utrecht were vitally related to the problems of settlement in Cape Breton. In an industry which (as a result of the size of the unit, and the diversity of the producing areas, of centres of development in Europe,

and of markets, and as a result also of low costs of navigation), was essentially competitive, the influence of governmental intervention was direct, far reaching, and severely limited. Expansion of the fur trade from the St. Lawrence to the interior of the continent, following pressure from Albany in the south and Hudson Bay in the north, became increasingly exacting in its demands on New France, and weakened the possibilities of support to Cape Breton. Growth of the sedentary fishery in Cape Breton was dependent on foodstuffs and fishing equipment from France, from New France, and from Isle St. Jean, territories under French control, and from Nova Scotia and New England. Limitations in agriculture, in the production of wheat in New France, and in the emphasis on livestock in Acadia involved dependence on the English colonies, particularly for flour. On the other hand, support from the English colonies to the sedentary fishery enabled Cape Breton to compete more effectively in the market for the better grades of fish in Europe. Competition encouraged aggression from the colonies, and dependence on them for supplies weakened the position of Cape Breton with the outbreak of war with England. Difficulties in obtaining an adequate supply of foodstuffs weakened the boat fishery, as shown in labour problems and the position of the French fishery in the European market. Possibilities of securing articles to export to the English colonies in return for foodstuffs were improved with legislation, such as the Molasses Act of 1733 prohibiting the purchase by the English colonies of molasses from the French West Indies. As a by-product of expanding and low cost sugar production in the French islands, and as a basic product to the manufacturer of rum (which was restricted in its sale as a possible competitor of brandy in France), molasses came into the expanding market of the English colonies by numerous and devious routes. Production of lower grade fish with schooners on the banks by the English at Canso and by the French, involved increasing sales in the West Indies and increasing demands for schooners for fishing and for trading. As a result of the Molasses Act the schooner fishery increased, and schooners, fish, and other products were purchased from New England and Canso in return for molasses from the West Indies. With cheap molasses and rum, the English colonies began to compete effectively with the French, who were restricted to brandy in the fur trade of the interior. The profitable character of the trade and its dependence on official surveillance contributed to the weak position of the boat fishery. English legislation brought Cape Breton into close dependence on New England and contributed to its downfall; but in contributing to its downfall the treaty of Paris failed not only to meet, but actually aggravated, the fundamental problem of deficiency of supplies of



molasses from the West Indies, and paved the way for the treaty of Versailles. Colonial policy moved in a mysterious way.

The more deeply rooted factors in the complex history of the period were evident in the organization of the sugar industry in the British West Indies, which was responsible for legislation restricting the trade of the politically less powerful and economically less adequately organized English colonies. The extent of the French coast line, and the diversity of interests of widely separated ports, continued in opposition to a definite centralized policy. The technique and organization of the fishing industry as prosecuted by these ports failed to support an influence which would register in French policy. The more compact coast line of Great Britain facilitated the organization of economic interests, even in the case of the fishing industry of Newfoundland, and particularly in the case of the sugar industry. But the more effective representation of economic interests in colonial policy in England, in contrast to France, was not adequate eventually to control the diverging interests of the North American continent. The dangers of the varying degrees of effectiveness of representation of industries differing in technique and organization, and the problems of vested interests which followed, contributed to the movement toward free trade in the next century.

The French empire failed, in part, because of its chief concern with the bank fishery and the home market, and with a dry fishery which tended to be a variant of the bank fishery, producing with settlement primarily a high-grade product for the European market, rather than a low-grade product for the West Indies. The concentration of England on dry fishing meant that the bank fishery was developed as a variant, with a lower grade product designed for the West Indies. Relative abundance of salt in France emphasized the bank fishery, the domestic market, lack of development of the sedentary fishing, and weaknesses in the French West Indies trade. The relative scarcity of salt in Great Britain emphasized the dry fishery of Europe and the West Indies.

The Molasses Act forced New England to dispose of poor grade Canso fish at Louisbourg, in exchange for molasses from the French West Indies. The French concentrated on better grade fish for the European market; but the increased sale of molasses to New England strengthened the position of the bank fishery, and enabled them to buy schooners for this fishery from New England. The significance of legislation becomes less striking as the importance of technique is appreciated. In the expanding economy of New England, legislation designed to restrict its activities contributed to its

success. Restrictive legislation brought results opposite to those intended, and favoured rather than handicapped New England expansion. The expanding economy of New England, with its demands for molasses and other products, sapped the life of the weaker adjoining regions, and struck its roots deep into the economic soil of the French empire in the New World.

---

[1] See a detailed account of the problem *Mémoire touchant le commerce de Canada aux Isles Antilles francaises de l'Amérique*, Can. Arch., C11A, III, 151-161. *Select documents in Canadian economic history 1497-1783*, ed. H. A. Innis. (Toronto 1929), 320-4.

[2] A tax on coal from Cape Breton was removed on January 29, 1715, and on fish and fish oil imported to France in 1716, and later on products of the West Indies imported by Louisbourg. These exemptions ran for ten years and were renewed. J. S. McLennan, *Louisbourg from its foundation to its fall* (London, 1918), 43-4; H. A. Innis (ed.), *Select documents in Canadian economic history* (Toronto, 1929), 68.

[3] J. S. McLennan, *Louisbourg from its foundation to its fall* (London, 1918), ch. I. This volume is a classic on the period.

[4] Can. Arch. C11B, I, Pt. 2, 652-60. *Select documents in Canadian economic history, 1497-1783*, ed., H. A. Innis (Toronto, 1929), 68. Holland regarded Louisbourg as "one of the worst spots on the island for soil and climate". In spring it was subject to ice, and was cold and barren, and impossible to strengthen because of bad anchorage and susceptibility to storms. See D. C. Harvey, *Holland's description of Cape Breton Island* (Halifax, 1935), 75, 94.

[5] Can. Arch. C11B, I, Pt. 2, 372-4, *ibid.*, 74-5. Cod came in very early in the spring and continued until July, when it proceeded to Cape North and the gulf. It returned in August.

- [6] J. S. McLennan, *op. cit.*, 39-40.
- [7] J. S. McLennan, *op. cit.*, 39-40.
- [8] Can. Arch. C11B, VII, 96; *ibid.*, 81.
- [9] Can. Arch. C11B, VIII, 20.
- [10] Can. Arch. C11B, XX, 45; *ibid.*, 89.
- [11] Can. Arch. C11B, XIV, 108; *ibid.*, 81-2.
- [12] Can. Arch. C11B, XIV, 273; *ibid.*, 82.
- [13] Can. Arch. C11B, XVII, 38; *ibid.*, 82.
- [14] Can. Arch. C11B, I, Pt. 2, 626-30; *ibid.*, 87.
- [15] Can. Arch. C11B, II, 82; *ibid.*, 83-4.
- [16] Can. Arch. C11B, II, 86; *ibid.*, 80.
- [17] Can. Arch. C11B, I, Pt. 2, 626-30; *ibid.*, 86-7; also C11B, III, 143-5; *ibid.*, 88.
- [18] According to an English account (1736) “the men draw one-third of the fish for their labour and the owners draw the other two-thirds for the expense and outset”. “The fishermen have one-third and all things furnished them at the owners expense who draws the other two-thirds for his outset in catching and his labour in curing the said fish”. Can. Arch. N.S.A. XXV, 154; and *ibid.*, XXIV, 201; *ibid.*, 76-7.
- [19] Can. Arch. C11B, VII, 20-1; *ibid.*, 88.
- [20] Can. Arch. C11B, XIV, 66-68; *ibid.*, 88-9.
- [21] *Memories sur les habitants de l'isle Royale*, 7 Mars, 1730, Can. Arch. C11B, XXI, 208 ff; *ibid.*, 90-6.

[22] When wintering in the colony, the half passage (or 19 quintals) was paid. The fishermen were also entitled to half the oil.

[23] Can. Arch. C11B, V, 31-3; *ibid.*, 98-9.

[24] Can. Arch. C11B, VII, 21-2; *ibid.*, 104-5.

[25] Can. Arch. C11B, III, 47-8; *ibid.*, 105.

[26] Can. Arch. C11B, XXI, 208 *ff*; *ibid.*, 94.

[27] *Population in 1718*

	<i>habitants</i>	women	children	men	
Louisbourg	69	50	142	372	
Balaine	13	10	26	176	
Scatary	21	15	39	323	
St. Esprit	4	2	6	40	
Port Toulouse and Petit Degrat	35	27	95	142	
Port Dauphin	18	17	32	66	
	---	---	---	----	
	160	121	340	1,119	Total 1,740

[28] Can. Arch. C11B, II, 175-6; *ibid.*, 127.

[29] Fishing vessels from Niganiche to Port Dauphin were ordered to retreat to Port Dauphin alter August 15, according to Holland.

[30] *Chaloupes de marchands*, Can. Arch. C11B. III, 143; *ibid.*, 87. An English estimate gives 400 shallops in 1735, 170 in 1736, and 500 in 1739.

[31] “These men have no wages out or home are allowed by the owners nothing but bread and small fish and one pound of butter a day for ten men, and at their return to France they have two-fifths of what fish they have caught amongst the master and crew and the owner of the ship has the remainder; some of those ships fish in shallops but most in schooners from twenty to forty tons who go to Isle Sable bank, bank Quero, St. Peters banks and all the banks on the coast of Nova Scotia and catch their fish there and make great part of them in the English uninhabited ports on that coast in 1720—the French fishery consisted at most of about fifteen or twenty sail of ships, few shallops and no schooners but have gradually increased ever since; besides those French ships that load for Europe, there are yearly above thirty sail of large sloops, schooners and briggs load for the French settlements in the West Indies”. Can. Arch. N.S.A. XXIV, 201-205; *ibid.*, 78.

[32] Can. Arch. N.S.A. XXV, 154-8; *ibid.*, 76-7.

[33] J. S. McLennan, *op. cit.*, 383.

[34] Can. Arch. C11B, XXIII, 22; *ibid.*, 120. The fishery “being the most profitable occupation and the gain less uncertain very few employed themselves to the cultivation of the country; indeed—husbandry seemed to want a requisite time for the products to attain their proper maturity”. 1745 A. D’Ulloa, *A voyage to South America* (London, 1772), II, 376. Plaster was obtained from Plaster Cove, freestone from Just au Corps, lumber from Verseronne, Franckline Harbour and Dartmouth Harbour, coal and lime from Dartmouth Harbour, grain and vegetables from Mary river. Small vessels were built at Just au Corps and small fishing craft at Cheticamp. D. C. Harvey, *Holland’s description*.

- [35] Can. Arch. C11B, III, 34; *ibid.*, 104.
- [36] Can. Arch. C11B, XIV, 61; *ibid.*, 108-9.
- [37] Can. Arch. C11B, XIX, 50; *ibid.*, 109.
- [38] Can. Arch. C11B, XX, 45; *ibid.*, 110.
- [39] Can. Arch. C11B, XXIV, 65; *ibid.*, 82-3.
- [40] Can. Arch. C11B, XIX, 112; *ibid.*, 109.
- [41] Can. Arch. C11B, X, 55-7; *ibid.*, 107.
- [42] D. C. Harvey, *The French régime in Prince Edward Island* (New Haven, 1926); also *Select documents in Canadian economic history* (Toronto, 1929), I, 119-123.
- [43] Can. Arch. C11B, VII, 140; *ibid.*, 118; see also complaints in 1727 *ibid.*, XX, 25-7, p. 106.
- [44] Can. Arch. C11B, XIV, 145-7; *ibid.*, 108.
- [45] Can. Arch. C11A, LIV, 44-5 (Oct. 4, 1731); *ibid.*, 417.
- [46] Can. Arch. C11B, XXI, 156; *ibid.*, 113.
- [47] J. S. McLennan, *op. cit.*, 49-50.
- [48] Can. Arch. C11A, LXXXIII, 14-5; *ibid.*, 423.
- [49] Can. Arch. N.S.A. IX, 142-4; *ibid.*, 124.
- [50] Can. Arch. N.S.A. XI, 10; *ibid.*, 125. In 1720 a regulation was introduced fixing the price of grain in Nova Scotia at 40 sols per bushel. Can. Arch. C11D, VIII, Pt. I, 90-2; *ibid.*, 219.
- [51] Can. Arch. N.S.A. XVII, 33-4; *ibid.*, 125-6.

- [52] Can. Arch. N.S.A. XXVI, 35-6; *ibid.*, 126-7.
- [53] Can. Arch. N.S.A. XXVI, 30-3; *ibid.*, 132.
- [54] Can. Arch. C11B, II, 84; *ibid.*, 103-4, also J. S. McLennan, *op. cit.*, 43-4.
- [55] Can. Arch. N.S.A. XVII, 33-4; *ibid.*, 126.
- [56] Can. Arch. C11B, VII, 138-40; *ibid.*, 127-8.
- [57] Can. Arch. C11B, XII, 35; *ibid.*, 128-9.
- [58] Can. Arch. C11B, XIV, 49; *ibid.*, 129-130.
- [59] Can. Arch. C11B, XXIV, 80; *ibid.*, 130-1.
- [60] Can. Arch. C11B, XXV, 187; *ibid.*, 133.
- [61] Can. Arch. C11B, LI, 175-6; *ibid.*, 127.
- [62] Can. Arch. N.S.A. XII, 166-7; *ibid.*, 153.
- [63] Can. Arch. N.S.A. XVIII, 122-3; *ibid.*, 154-5.
- [64] *Ibid.*, 159.
- [65] In 1732 Marblehead produced more dried fish than all the rest of New England, with 120 schooners and 50 tons each carrying 7 men aboard and having one on shore or a total of 1,000 men, 200 quintals a trip or 120,000 quintals. In 1747 there were only 70 schooners. William Douglas, *A Summary, Historical and Political, of the first planting, progressive improvements and present state of the British settlements in North America* (London, 1760), 303.

[66] The fish which was caught and dried by the schoonermen were sold to the sack ships which came out from England. It was taken to Spain and Portugal, and with the return provisions (flour, bread, pork and beef), cordage, canvas, lines, nets, tackle, woollens, linens and other supplies were brought out and purchased by New England schooners. In addition the troopship brought pewter, brass and ironware. Fish was also taken to New England in the schooners. Faneuil, as agent for a Bristol firm, sent goods to Bordeaux, and brought salt to Canso, from whence a cargo of fish was taken. Apparently by 1732 fishermen from Exeter and the west of England, and even from Nova Scotia, were engaged in the fishery but they were in a small minority.

[67] Can. Arch., N.S.A. V, 109-101; *ibid.*, 163.



Schooners varying in size from 25 to 40 tons, with 5 and 6 men, the outfit costing about £30 sterling and including the vessel from £200 to £300 sterling, caught fish on the banks from 16 to 20 and 40 leagues distant. These were split on board the vessel, and salted at the rate of 10 hogshead or 80 bushel of salt per 100 quintals. After ten or fourteen days “according as the winds and the weather presents”, or possibly a month or five weeks, they brought in the load of 150 to 250 quintals to the shore. The fish were then washed and piled in large stacks on the beach for about twenty-four hours to drain. In uncertain weather the fish were then spread singly on the flakes or brush raised about two and one-half feet from the ground. After being frequently turned on the flakes it hardened, and was made up into small parcels of about twenty fish each for about three weeks. Finally, on days with excellent sunshine, large piles of about fifty quintals were built to be left for a fortnight; when, after being again spread out to dry for another day, it was piled in 100 quintal-piles and left until ready for shipment. It was spread again before shipping. (*Select documents*, I, 154.) The flakes were granted by the governor running 60 yards back from the water, with a width of 8 feet space, and sufficient to dry twenty quintals. They were granted in return for an annual quitrent, and in proportion to the size of the sloop or schooner. An owner of a single vessel would have room for four to five hundred quintals, and those with “six, seven, eight, twelve or more” made flakes in proportion.

The Canso fishery, as conducted by New Englanders, was conspicuous for its lack of boats and vats for securing the oil, as the livers were put in tubs on the vessels on the banks. The fishermen fished on shares but were often paid in liquor and clothes. The shoremen kept the stores and sold the drink and clothes. In the share principle the men were given one-half the catch, the remaining half going to the owner to pay for wear and tear, salt and provisions. A few labourers were employed on the wage basis, and came from New England “at forty shillings going or coming paid in fish or worked out”.

Unfortunately, the public house and the shoremen with ample supplies of liquor were responsible for the beginnings of the debt system. Rum, tobacco, sugar and molasses were important items in the wages. Fishermen came from New England about March and returned about October, leaving some servants to look after the stages.

- [69] Can. Arch. N.S.A. XXII, 201-3, *ibid.*, 161.
- [70] Can. Arch. N.S.A. XII, 166-7; *ibid.*, 153.
- [71] *Ibid.*, XXIV, 205; *ibid.*, 162.
- [72] See F. W. Pitman, *Development of the British West Indies, 1700-1763* (New Haven, 1917), *passim*.
- [73] Can. Arch. N.S.A. XX, 134; *ibid.*, 129. In 1728 a vessel of 80 tons from Saint Dominique, with molasses, tobacco, sugar, brandy and soap for Louisbourg, was boarded by a pirate. Can. Arch. C11B, X, 136; *ibid.*, 141-2; also J. S. McLennan, *op. cit.*, 75.
- [74] Rum was not exported from the French West Indies. Tafia and molasses were the basic products and were consumed locally or re-exported to the English colonies for the manufacture of rum.
- [75] “Sorts and sizes of fish for the different ports to which they are carried by the French Lisbon, Marsailles, Leghorn, Naples, small white fish, Cadiz, Allicant, Civile, Latter fish of all sorts one with the other, Bordeaux, Nantes, Bayonne, Bilboa and all Biscay—large black fish, Dunkirk, Havre, St. Maloes, large winter fish, French West Indies mostly refuse fish”. Can. Arch. N.S.A. XXIV, 201-5; *ibid.*, 77-9.
- [76] Can. Arch. N.S.A. XXV, 154; *ibid.*, 76.
- [77] Can. Arch. C11B, XXII, 207; *ibid.*, 130.

- [78] Can. Arch. C11B, XXV, 15 (1743); *ibid.*, 133.
- [79] Can. Arch. N.S.A. XXVI, 30 (1743); *ibid.*, 132. “Spanish iron, French linnens, sail cloth, woollen cloths and almost all sorts of goods with rum, molasses, wine and brandy and this in considerable quantitys, the inhabitants being computed to be 20,000 great and small besides this there is so great an illicit trade carried on by the people of Massachusetts Bay and New Hampshire”. Can. Arch. N.S.A. XXVI, 50-51; *ibid.*, 131.
- [80] Can. Arch. C11B, XXV, 107; *ibid.*, 133.
- [81] A. D’Ulloa, *op. cit.*, 375-6.
- [82] J. S. McLennan, *op. cit.*, 390.
- [83] Another account for 1741 states that products sent to Martinique totalled 589,045 *livres*, and included dried cod, 204,925 *livres* (an increase from 10,522 quintals in 1740 to 24,098 quintals in 1741), flour, 174,950 *livres*, planks and boards, 85,008 *livres*, salmon, 34,650 *livres*, fish oil, 26,760 *livres*, grind stones, 14,160 *livres*, peas, 15,200 *livres*, and other minor items, including beef, butter, horses, and coal.
- [84] This item had increased as a result of the war between Spain and England, particularly as a result of the embargo on exports of salt provisions from Ireland.
- [85] Can. Arch. C11B, XXIII, 126-133; *ibid.*, 142-4.
- [86] Can. Arch. C11A, LXXIX, 376-383; *ibid.*, 421-2.
- [87] Can. Arch. C11B, VII, 138-140; *ibid.*, 128.
- [88] Can. Arch. C11B, XX, 25-7; *ibid.*, 106.

- [89] Can. Arch. C11B, XX, 207-11; *ibid.*, 110-2; also J. S. McLennan, *op. cit.*, 398-401, especially a letter from a merchant who had handled over a period of sixteen years four or five vessels of supplies for the fishery annually from a merchant of Nantes, and who stated he had been forced to reduce his trade to supplies for three or four schooners and about ten shallops under his own supervision, as a result of Duvivier's activities.
- [90] An estimate of 1745 gives Cape Breton 500 shallops with 5 men each, producing 300 quintals, or 2,500 men and 150,000 quintals, and 60 schooners with 15 men, each 600 quintals, or 900 men and 36,000 quintals,—the dry fishery employing 93 ships and 5,260 men. J. S. McLennan, *Louisbourg from its foundation to its fall* (London, 1928), 380-1.
- [91] The poor quality of fish purchased from the English at Canso injured the market for French fish in Europe, but it was suited to the West Indies trade. See J. S. McLennan, *op. cit.*, 104.
- [92] A. D'Ulloa, *op. cit.*, 383.
- [93] J. S. McLennan, *op. cit.*, 134, note 2, also ch. IX, *passim*.
- [94] J. S. McLennan, *op. cit.*, 382. Holland's estimate of 1,459 shallops owned by the French is a gross exaggeration. It includes Petit Degrat—100, Ardoise—10, Michoux—4, St. Esprit—60, Fourchet—50, Gabarus—50, Louisbourg—300 (decked vessels, 300), Lorembec—80, La Baleine—160, Anse au Canne—30 (owned by 3 vessels from Bayonne), Scatary—200 (smaller shallops hauled on shore in winter), Indienne—50, Petite Bras d'Or—60, Dundasse's Island—30, Niganiche—230 (30 owned by a company of Louisbourg merchants), Nigashou Cove—15, Aspee bay—30 (owned by vessels from Bayonne).

- [95] See a letter dated April 7, 1751 suggesting the necessity of trade with the English and that without it “le commerce des isles de l’Amérique avec cette colonie va cesser entièrement parcequ’il est certain que les Bastonois ne viendront plus icy prendre les tafias et mélasses dont viennent charges les bâtimens des isles et qu’ainsi voilà le principale branche du commerce de cette colonie annéantié”. J. S. McLennan, *op. cit.*, 403-4.
- [96] The harvest had been a failure in New France in 1751. Can. Arch. C11A. XCVIII, 86; *ibid.*, 366-7.
- [97] Can. Arch. N.S.A. XLIII, 138-140; *ibid.*, 135-6.
- [98] Can. Arch. N.S.A. LV, 119-20; *ibid.*, 139.
- [99] Can. Arch. C11B, XXXIV, 103; *ibid.*, 139.
- [100] *Mémoire sur le commerce de l’Isle Royale . . .* janvier 1753. J. S. McLennan, *op. cit.*, 403.
- [101] 206 quintals of flour and 500 quintals of biscuit, chiefly from St. Malo, in 1752. Can. Arch. C11B, 32, 162. It was estimated that 15,715 quintals of flour and 3,147 quintals of “legumes” were necessary to carry the colony over a year. *Ibid.*, 163-5. This included provisions for 40 fishing schooners and 130 shallops, totalling 1,086 quintals of flour, 217 quintals of “légumes”.
- [102] See J. S. McLennan, *op. cit.*, 392 *ff.*
- [103] Can. Arch. C11B, XXXV, 168; *ibid.*, 139-40.
- [104] Can. Arch. C11C, IX. 236-243; *ibid.*, 136-8.
- [105] Can. Arch. C11B, XXXV, 76; *ibid.*, 140.

## TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Mis-spelled words and printer errors have been corrected. Where multiple spellings occur, majority use has been employed.

Punctuation has been maintained except where obvious printer errors occur.

Title text is a combination of words from the cover and the article to clearly show its provenance.

A cover was created for this ebook which is placed in the public domain.  
[The end of *Cape Breton and the French Régime* by Harold Adams Innis]