
ARTICLE 14.—*Notes on the Resources and Capabilities of the ISLAND OF ANTICOSTI.*
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[Read before the Society, 4th October, 1853.]

In the midst of the progress which is going on throughout British North America in reclaiming the wilderness and in seeking out and developing new sources of wealth, it is a matter of astonishment to those who observe that progress with a view to increase it where it already exists, or to introduce it where it has not begun, that no account has been taken of a valuable island, large enough to become a province of itself, lying nearly in the centre of our North American colonies, and at the threshold of the most important colony of the whole; that, while all is life and healthy activity about and beyond it, and a commerce, second hardly to the commerce of any one channel in the world, is carried past its shores, the seasons roll on without bringing to the latter any change in that state of desolation which invests it with frightful yet imaginary terrors, and which has done more to injure the reputation of the St. Lawrence navigation than all those real dangers upon the main shores of the river and gulf, where so many gallant vessels have been wrecked and so many valuable lives have been destroyed.

Various circumstances have combined to give the worst character for the dangers of its coasts and for the inhospitality of its soil and climate to Anticosti, the island which

it is the object of the writer of this communication to rescue from the state of neglect in which it has existed up to the present moment: a state which not only makes it useless to its proprietors and to the Province of Canada, of which it forms part, but which renders it injurious, and to a certain extent, destructive to the best interests of the latter.

Among the circumstances which have repelled all proper inquiry and all enterprise from Anticosti, and which have done much to injure the province by giving a worse character to its great outlet than it really deserves, are the disasters from famine, which occurred there before provision posts were carefully kept up, and the opinion which has hitherto prevailed, that a greater proportion of vessels have been wrecked upon the island than have been lost in any other part of the river or gulf. Thus the mariner has been taught to regard his approach to Anticosti with intense dread, the island having been described as presenting the greatest dangers to him when afloat, and as affording no sustenance for him if cast upon its shores. But, whatever unfavorable conclusions have been drawn from a recollection of the deaths from famine which took place there many years ago, and however far the opinion of the dangers of its coasts may have been received as a faithful one, those conclusions and that opinion have been based upon unsound foundations and been supported by erroneous comparisons, and have equally borne unjustly upon the condition and prospects of the island.

Those, who, from a consideration of the former disasters, and of the few and superficial examinations which have been made along the beach, have pronounced the soil and climate of Anticosti to be unsuited to the growth of any of the fruits of the earth, have lost sight of the fact

that persons cast ashore on any uninhabited place, (not situated within the tropics, or, at least, not abounding with wild and nourishing fruits), would starve to death if left without supplies, and without the means of removal to where they could be procured, and that, in an equal state of neglect and solitude, even England would be found as inhospitable in regard to food as Anticosti has proved to be upon one or two occasions. That the latter should be condemned upon the result of the exploration of two or three spots along the beach, is also as unjust and absurd, as if the whole of England had been declared barren and useless, from an examination of a great portion of the shores of Cornwall, or from the appearance of the bleak and tree-less country in the neighbourhood of Brighton. Assuming, however, that all were true which has been said of Anticosti, that its soil is incapable of producing anything in the shape of food, still, if it can be shown to contain other resources, which may be employed in industrial and commercial pursuits, and which may be exchanged, not only for food and raiment, but for all the necessaries, and even for the luxuries of civilized life, sufficient will remain to convince every intelligent and unprejudiced person, that it can be made to support, and that it will, (at the present rate of progress of British North America), probably contain, at no distant period, a considerable population. That it is not only capable of yielding food, but that it possesses natural products and resources, which may be turned to account, and be exchanged for all that can be required to sustain a population, will be presently shown, as soon as the other bugbear, the reputed dangers of its coasts, shall have been disposed of.

To those who have drawn conclusions unfavorable to the island, from the number of wrecks which have been

reported to have taken place upon it, it is necessary to point out, that the wrecks, which in returns appear so formidable in the aggregate, under the head of "Anticosti," have not occurred at one spot, but at many spots widely separated, extending over a distance of 320 miles, that being the circumference of the island, and consequently the extent of coast front, not taking into account the indentations caused by bays, creeks, &c. Take the same length of coast upon any part of the main shores of the river or gulf, and it will be found, upon proper inquiry, that six times as many wrecks have occurred within it each year, as have for the same period taken place upon Anticosti. Instead of the wrecks upon the latter having been compared with the number of wrecks spread over the same extent of coast on the former, they have been generally regarded as having occurred at one spot, and have been compared with those only which have happened at some one place on the main shore of the river or gulf, of a few miles, or of less than a mile in extent, lying in the course of fewer vessels, yet wrecking annually nearly as many. From an estimate, made by the writer of this communication, of disasters in the River and Gulf of St. Lawrence, during the ten years ending November, 1849, it appears that half as many wrecks occurred upon the Manicouagan shoals, as took place upon the island in that period, and that Cape Rosier, Matane and Green Island each wrecked upwards of a third of the number of vessels, which were stranded during the same period upon the whole of the 320 miles of the much libelled coasts of Anticosti. The Manicouagan shoals, Cape Rosier, Cape Chat, and other spots upon the main shores of the river and gulf, are places not only much more to be dreaded by the mariner than Anticosti, on account of the number of wrecks which occur upon them,

but in consequence of the great loss of life, which sometimes accompanies those wrecks, while, from the shelving nature of the beach at Anticosti, there are few instances recorded of wrecks upon the latter having been attended with loss of life. While the circumstantially related, and carefully preserved account, of the fate of the crew of the *Granicus*, wrecked in 1828 near Fox Bay, (who, in the course of a long winter, died from famine), has created in the minds of many, who adopt, without reflection, any popular fallacy placed before them, a belief that every poverty of soil, every drawback of climate, and every danger of coast must belong to Anticosti, those greater dangers and those more numerous disasters upon the main shores of the St. Lawrence, attended with greater loss of life, have been almost entirely lost sight of, or if thought of in connection with the former, have been set down as unimportant, when compared with the unfairly estimated disasters and the imaginary dangers of Anticosti.

The evil reputation which still hangs over the island, became attached to it many years ago, before its coasts were thoroughly surveyed, when it was laid down in the chart as being many miles shorter than it actually is, in consequence of which many vessels ran upon it in places where deep water was supposed to exist, and before light houses were placed there, since the erection of which and the late survey of its coasts, wrecks upon the island have become less frequent. Most of those which now occur there, are caused by the neglect of using the lead in foggy weather, many of them through the incapacity or drunkenness of masters, who, generally, are shamefully underpaid, and some of them through design, for the purpose of cheating the underwriters. Of these latter cases the Insurance offices are perfectly aware; but, instead of endeavouring to meet them by preventive measures, they

increase the rates of insurance so as to cover such losses, by estimating for them in a certain proportion to the whole; thus making the entire trade pay for the dishonest acts of the rogue. This having the effect to increase the price of freight, by which the public are the sufferers, in having to pay a proportionably increased price for all articles imported, the Government should in future institute a strict inquiry into the loss of every ship in the river or gulf, by means of a naval police, and be empowered to inflict punishment, where criminal design, or even gross carelessness or drunkenness, may be proved to have attended such loss. Those masters, who desire to lose their ships, generally select Anticosti for the purpose, because they can always manage to run them ashore there without any danger to life, and without much risk of the circumstances attending the act being witnessed or understood by persons on shore; and the provision posts being now well supplied, there is no danger, as there was formerly, of their suffering from the want of food. Thus many of the wrecks which take place there, are produced in consequence of the ease with which a vessel may be beached, with safety to life, on many parts of the island, and not through its dangers of coast. In regard to the latter, those masters, who know the coasts of the island well, generally make free with them, (unless there happen to be a fog), in perfect confidence and safety, by which they gain headway much faster than by keeping in the centre of the channel, or along the south shore of the mainland. To whatever extent plausible reasons may have once given a bad name to Anticosti, there is no just reason for that name being perpetuated; and those, who yet view the island as it was regarded shortly after the wreck of the *Granicus*, can neither comprehend the unjust grounds upon which it was then condemned,

nor appreciate the importance to every country bordering upon the St. Lawrence, of many recent events, attending the rapid progress of the trade and general prosperity, which, with the exception of Anticosti, is going on in all parts of British North America. That the island should participate in that progress, it is necessary to divest it of the evil reputation through which it has been hitherto blighted: and this will be best accomplished by making known, in addition to what has been already advanced in its behalf, what it has yielded to the trifling labors of agriculture which have been attempted upon it, what its climate has been found to be by those who have resided there for many years, and what its natural resources and its important advantages of position really are.

The island lies W. N. W. by E. S. E., between the 49th and 50th parallels of North latitude, and the 61st and 65th degrees of West longitude, about four hundred and twenty miles below Quebec, three parts of it being in the gulf, through which it stretches out towards the south-west coast of Newfoundland, and the remaining part in the river, the waters at the entrance of which it divides into two channels. It contains nearly two millions of acres, being upwards of one-fourth larger than Prince Edward's Island, which is a province of itself, with its Lieut. Governor, its legislature and a population of eighty thousand souls. It is about one hundred and thirty miles long and thirty-five broad in its widest part, which is at the South West Point, nearly in the centre, whence it gradually narrows to both ends, the one terminating in Heath Point, with Fox Bay lying a few miles round the point upon its northern shore, and the other end terminating in West Point, with Ellis Bay a few miles short of it, looking towards the south. Thus there is a harbour upon each side and at each extremity of the island; but

Ellis Bay is better situated for the general shipping of the St. Lawrence, has greater depth of water, and is much more spacious than the other, being about two miles wide and four deep, with good anchorage. The excellent position of the island in regard to ships, commerce, &c., becomes at once apparent, when we consider that every vessel must take either of the channels formed by Anticosti, upon entering or leaving the river, whether having passed from the Atlantic, or intending to pass to that ocean, through the Straits of Belleisle, (now coming much into use, and about to be lighted), through the more frequented passage between Newfoundland and Cape Breton, or through the Gut of Canso, or whether running between Quebec and those portions of Canada, and of the Lower Provinces, lying upon the Gulf of St. Lawrence. In taking either of the channels formed by Anticosti, vessels pass close to the island, in consequence of the moderate breadth of the northern one, and of the strong south-east current which always runs along the southern channel, to avoid which, and the risk of being driven upon the truly dangerous coast of the south shore of the gulf and river, where, for several hundred miles, there is no harbour or place of shelter for any craft larger than a schooner, and where, for long distances, there is not one foot of beach outside the perpendicular cliffs to land upon, vessels generally stand out till they make the West Point of Anticosti, close to which is situated the convenient harbour of Ellis Bay, occupying a spot nearly mid-distance between the northern and southern banks of the St. Lawrence, and of easy access from both channels of the river. Considering that about two thousand vessels from Europe alone, will have made this point in the course of the present season, some slight idea may be conceived of the capabilities of position attached to the island, and in particular to Ellis

Bay. The inner anchorage of this bay has a depth of from three to four fathoms at low water, with excellent holding ground, (gravel and mud), is of as large capacity as the harbour of Montreal, and has been found, by experience, to afford perfect shelter, in all winds, to vessels of upwards of 500 tons; while the outer portion of the anchorage could be materially improved at a trifling expense, so as to be able to contain in safety, during all winds, almost any number of vessels of the largest size. Docks, with a patent slip, &c., could also be easily constructed there, which would be admirably situated for the repair of vessels, stranded or receiving other damage throughout the lower St. Lawrence, most of them becoming broken up by the action of the sea, and, in some cases, dismantled by wreckers, before they can obtain assistance from Quebec, or the intelligence of their condition can be conveyed there; which port, strange to say, is the only place from the Atlantic to Montreal, (a distance of upwards of eight hundred miles), where vessels can be properly overhauled, or be supplied with the commonest stores, such as anchors, chains, sails, &c. For steam tugs, employed for the relief of vessels in distress, Ellis Bay might also be made an excellent station. With the facilities there for procuring shelter for our shipping in a portion of the St. Lawrence, where a spacious and deep harbour is more wanted, than in any other part of the river or gulf, it is astonishing that no attention has yet been directed to that spot. This neglect, however, cannot long continue. It could be made, not only a fine commercial harbour, but also an excellent naval station, in the most convenient and central spot for commanding, with a few steam-vessels or gunboats, the two entrances of the river, and for sending out cruisers up the latter, or to any part of the gulf. And it is not impossible that the want of such

an armament in our waters may be felt before the termination of the present difficulties in Europe. For the good order of those engaged in our fisheries, (whether foreigners or our own fishermen), which, under the reciprocity treaty, will be much resorted to by the Americans, some of the most valuable of the fisheries being in the vicinity of Anticosti, the presence there of such a force would be very useful. Its influence as a check upon "wreckers," (who swarm in the St. Lawrence more than is generally supposed), might also be enlarged upon. For these objects of commerce, of defence and of police, the fine harbour of Gaspé Basin, (situated twenty-five miles from the gulf), is too much out of the way, besides which a fair wind for taking a ship out of it, and of its out-let, Gaspé Bay, becomes a head wind, as soon as it becomes necessary to tack to come up the St. Lawrence. For the same objects, the harbours of Mingan and Seven Islands, upon the north shore of the river, are as much out of the way, and are too long closed by the ice. As for the improvements of Ellis Bay, it appears that they need be very slight to make it one of the finest harbours in British America: merely the erection of piers upon the flat limestone reefs running out from Cape Henry and Cape Eagle, which form the entrance, these reefs being uncovered at low water, and already affording a considerable shelter to the outer-anchorage of the bay. In magnitude and coast, these improvements could not be compared to what has been recently accomplished in the harbours of the Bahamas and Bermuda, by labor and science combined. Besides the advantages which have been glanced at as belonging to Ellis Bay, some of the best soil, and some natural meadows, producing excellent grasses, six feet high, are found upon its shores, where the resident in charge of the provision post, grows every

description of vegetables ; but wheat, or any other grain, has never been tried in that part of the island. It is also stated, that, within a few miles of the bay, wild hay could be cut sufficient to feed a thousand head of cattle during the winter. Nor is this spot barren in scenery ; for, upon approaching it, a most pleasing view is obtained of the spacious bay, having in all parts a fine beach, which at each side is bounded by wooded cliffs, those on the east side showing table land and other heights beyond, and at the head of the bay the beach gently rises and expands into a slightly rolling country, containing forest and meadow land ; the whole being relieved in the distance by two hills of moderate height, covered with trees. Near the centre of the bay, a few yards from the beach, stand the buildings, the garden and fields of the resident, close to a picturesque trout stream. When Anticosti shall be properly known and occupied, this spot will probably become the resort of many of those, who now seek health or recreation, at the less bracing and less interesting watering places upon the main shores of the river ; and of the salubrity of the climate there can be no doubt, for all who have resided there, describe it as being the most healthy place in the world. The first seigneur, (to whom it was granted in 1680 for services rendered to the Crown of France), used to reside every summer upon the island, and it is supposed that he was buried there. At this spot there are many substantial elements for the growing up of a large and flourishing town, some of which are alluded to in other parts of this communication.

For large schooners there is excellent shelter at Fox Bay, at the north-east end of the island, and also at the South West Point, where it is quite practicable to make a harbour of refuge for the largest ships ; which would be of great use to homeward-bound vessels in the Autumn,

whenever south-east winds set in, to run into and anchor, instead of being driven back for several hundred miles, and having to encounter again, under the worst circumstances, the most dangerous part of the whole navigation between the Atlantic and Quebec. There are also several good roadsteads, such as Bear Bay, situated on the north side of the island, sheltered from most winds, with good holding-ground ; and there is shelter for schooners at the entrances of many of the rivers, some of which are navigable for small boats, or canoes, a considerable distance. Observation River, lying five miles west of South West Point, has sometimes six feet of water at the entrance ; and there is hardly a mile of coast on any part of the island without its stream of fresh and delicious water, many of them proceeding from lakes, one of which, at the head of Observation River, is supposed to be nearly twenty miles long and several broad. Some of the rivers have very high banks, with very beautiful falls, and excellent mill sites, and these falls have a good supply of water during the whole summer. The island on the south side generally rises from about twenty to sixty feet above the beach, (but at the entrance of Observation River it is between 200 and 300 feet high), and is nearly level to the centre, where a range of moderate sized hills appear to run its entire length, and upon the north side to terminate in steep cliffs. It is mostly covered with a thick forest of trees, stunted near the shore, (like those upon a great part of the coasts of England and of other countries), but which become gradually larger as they approach the interior, and are less exposed to the influence of the wind and sea. This is very remarkable upon some of the bays, where, at the exposed points, they are very small, and gradually increase in size from each side to the centre ; those nearest the sea being some

times quite white in appearance, from the salt which is thrown, and crystalizes upon them. It is the stunted growth of the wood upon the sea shore, which has given a coloring to the reports of those persons, who, having landed upon the beach for a few hours only, have pronounced judgment upon the whole island from what they saw there. The trees are spruce, fir, red and white birch, ash, quantities of very fine tamarack, and upon the north side of the island, some good sized pine. With the tamarack and pine growing there, and the immense quantities of valuable timber drifted upon the island from Quebec and other places after every easterly gale, many ships might be built every year. Like the valuable meadows for cattle and sheep, which have recently been discovered in Minnesota in the "Far West," there are here many very fine natural meadows, producing rich grasses, five and six feet high; and in some parts there are alternate ranges of wood and open plain. On the south side of the island there are several peat bogs of some extent, and some salt marshes, caused by the overflowing of the sea at certain periods, which must tend to fertilize rather than to impoverish the land, and, near the South West Point, there are some large salt ponds, which, were labor plentiful there, might be turned to account in the manufacture of salt: a manufacture which would become of some value to a great part of our North American fisheries, which, as well as the whole of Canada, are now supplied with salt from England or the United States, and, for curing fish and provisions, bay salt, formed from the sea and from salt ponds, is the most valuable. In consequence of there not having been a sufficient supply of salt upon the island, an immense quantity of fish, caught at Anticosti last year, had to be thrown away; and, during the present season, the fishermen at Arichat, Cape Breton, were forced to sell mack-

erel at from six pence to ten pence a hundred, or to see them rot upon the beach, through not having enough salt to cure them with. This latter circumstance occurred at a time when mackerel was selling at Boston for nineteen dollars a barrel. Some of the Bahama islands are retained merely on account of the salt ponds which they contain ; and at Ceylon a large revenue is derived from the salt works carried on in that island. The importance of the trade in this useful article may also be understood, from the fact that two-thirds of the vessels, lately captured by England from Russia, were laden with salt. For the manufacture of this article, and for other pursuits, almost any amount of cheap labor could be procured from Metis, and other populous places, situated upon the south shore of the St. Lawrence ; but if industrial pursuits were opened out there, and land offered for sale, settlers would soon be attracted to the island. Several persons, who have been engaged there for many years in fishing and hunting, or in charge of the light-houses and provision posts, have already expressed to the writer their desire to purchase land upon it, and to combine agriculture with their present occupations ; but, without any permanent interest in the soil, they have little inducement to use much exertion in clearing and cultivating it, or in attempting to improve the island in any way. It is from personal inquiry of many of these parties, as well as of others, who have resided there for many years at former periods, and from an examination of every authority relating to the island, that the writer is enabled to bring forward so many facts, in support of the views which he has adopted, in regard to its resources and capabilities.

Rearing of cattle and sheep at Anticosti, for the supply of those engaged in the fisheries, of shipping, and of the dear markets of Quebec, would, no doubt, pay very hand-

somely. While the natural grasses are as rich as any upon this continent, it appears that cattle can be left out to graze there longer than they can be at Quebec: a circumstance which has just been communicated to the writer by the present lessee of the island, who has at this moment several head of fine cattle of the Ayrshire breed, at the South West Point. But if the natural grasses should not be found sufficient for numerous herds of cattle, the famous tussac grass of the Falkland Islands, which delights in a salt atmosphere, and which has been carried to the Orkney Islands, and been found to flourish there, might be introduced. At the former it grows upon peat similar to that which exists at Anticosti. The seed of this grass has already become an article of profitable export from the Falkland Islands; and the grass is found upon many parts of the coast of South America, where wild cattle abound. When we consider that remote and inclement Iceland raises her flocks and herds, her sheep numbering 500,000, her horses 60,000, and her horned cattle 40,000, and exports the finest fleeces, also dairy and other produce, we have every reason to hope, that Anticosti, situated in the midst of the fisheries, which employ many thousand men, of a vast traffic, carried on by upwards of two thousand ships, and within easy approach of many valuable markets, may be made as profitable a grazing country as any portion of British North America. It was, however, at one time condemned even in this respect. Because some cows, which were taken down there some years ago, happened to die in the course of the winter, a report was immediately spread and generally believed, that cattle could not live upon the island: that there was some poisonous substance in the grass, or in the air, which must prove fatal to all cattle coming within its influence; and this belief is even entertained

by many at the present moment ; yet, upon proper inquiry, it appears that they died from neglect alone, having been repeatedly left for several days together without food or water. Since that period cattle have been taken down there, and been found to thrive remarkably well. At the South West Point, both Mr. Corbet, the lessee of the island, and Mr. Pope, the light-house keeper, have several head of cattle, as well as pigs and poultry, all of which are in excellent condition. Of the former, Mr. Corbet says, they look better in the spring than cattle do at that season at any place upon the St. Lawrence below Quebec.

Resting upon a substratum of limestone, the soil of Anticosti should be a warm one, and if cleared to any extent, and thereby exposed to the sun, and drained where it may require drainage, it would no doubt become a productive one. For the purpose, either of drainage or of irrigation, as the one or the other may be desirable, every facility is offered by the numerous rivers and rapid streams existing in all parts of the island. The composition of the cliffs alone, some of which, according to Capt. Bayfield, R. N., contain sand, clay and limestone, indicates that there must be good soil of considerable extent in many parts of the island, which only requires clearing and cultivation to yield very fairly ; for, with these substances, and the fine mould of the vegetable deposits, which have been accumulating in the woods for ages, what better farming lands could be desired? In Prince Edward's Island, where the soil requires to be enriched, immense quantities of limestone are imported for that purpose from Nova Scotia. Mr. M'Ewan, who resided upon Anticosti for fourteen months, in the employ of the Hudson's Bay Company, (which Company, however, as well as the late North West Company, had no right to hunt and fish there), mentions that the cliffs rest

upon a foundation of limestone, that the second stratum is often composed of the cream colored clay, and sometimes of sand and gravel, and that the clay often reaches the top or surface, but at times is covered with a thickness of peat; the land in the latter case running into extensive plains. This peat, which produces excellent natural grasses, and also the finest vegetables, where they have been tried upon it, may be turned to many useful purposes. In Ireland a large "Peat Company" is in active operation, having a factory at Kilberry, where they supply their furnaces entirely with peat or turf, and also manufacture from it the following articles: tar, oil, paraffine, naphtha, sulphate of ammonia, charcoal and gas. A substance, from which so many articles, possessing powerful heating properties, can be produced, it is to be hoped will some day be made to supply one great want of the present age: cheap and compact fuel for steam-engines. Enough, however, has been shown to prove, that, instead of its presence at certain spots at Anticosti being considered as any drawback, the peat, which is found there, may be regarded as a valuable resource of the island; for what is now being accomplished with it in Ireland, may at some future period be attempted with it at the former.

Of the interior of Anticosti, Mr. Corbet, who has resided at the South West Point for ten years, and who, in his various excursions, has seen more of the island than any other person, describes the soil to consist generally of "black light soil, clay and sand," and states that, "from the immense quantities of sea-weed with which the shores abound, he believes the land could be made to yield every description of farm produce. In the same statement he refers to what he and Mr. Pope have accomplished at the South West Point. The writer had, however, obtained a

similar statement from the son of Mr. Pope last autumn. At this spot, which Lieut. Baddeley, R. E., who visited it in 1831, declared to be the most barren and uninviting in the whole island, Mr. Pope grew last year the finest crop of oats, 300 bushels of the best potatoes, (the potato disease never having reached the island), and every other vegetable in perfection which is grown in Canada; and this he did upon a patch of land adjoining the bleak point where the light-house stands, where the soil consists of a description of black peat resting upon the limestone. Mr. Pope supposes, though he has never tried it, that wheat might be successfully cultivated in the interior, which has never been explored beyond ten or twelve miles from the beach, along the banks of some of the rivers, and then generally by hunters or fishermen; parties not likely to look for or to care about agricultural resources. How much, therefore, must still remain to be explored in an island 130 miles long by nearly 40 broad! But so long as oats and other produce raised there can obtain the present high prices in the Quebec and other markets, it will be of very little consequence whether wheat, which can now be purchased in Canada for less than an equal quantity of oats, will succeed there or not. Yet there are many persons ready to condemn, as utterly unfruitful and worthless, any place which could not number wheat among its productions. Of vegetables, Mr. Pope could have disposed of any quantity to ships bound to Quebec, which are often becalmed off South West Point after a month or six weeks' voyage, with a prospect of being nearly another month in reaching their destination. The supplying ships under these circumstances, especially when conveying cabin passengers and emigrants, may become a very profitable occupation to the settler. Vegetables, meat, fish, soft-bread, &c., could

be easily taken off to vessels in boats, as they are at Portsmouth, Yarmouth, and a number of other ports in England, under circumstances far less favorable, by bum-boats, the owners of which realize immense profits.

The statements made by Mr. Corbet and Mr. Pope regarding the island, have since been confirmed by accounts received from several other parties, who have been engaged there in hunting and fishing at various periods during the last fifteen years, some of whom are still employed there. But not only do the present and the recent residents speak well of the island, but the accounts of those who have passed considerable periods upon it many years ago are equally favorable. Mr. Morrison, a person well known in Quebec, who, (having been previously employed at Anticosti by the North West Company), was sent there about fifty years since, to explore a portion of the island for the purpose of forming a settlement, after mentioning in his report the excellency of the soil, and the timber which he found there, including ash, large pine and tamarack, says: "I had a house erected on the south side of the island, around which we made a clearance, and sowed wheat, barley, and oats, all of which grew very luxuriantly and ripened. Vegetables and garden stuffs of every description grew remarkably well, and came to as great perfection as any I have seen in Canada. There is very good clay on the island, of which I made some bricks, and built an oven, and whilst there I imported some cattle from Nova Scotia, and found that they throve well." Why the explorations and labors of Mr. Morrison led to no result at that time, is thus explained in his statement, made in 1842, to the present proprietors of the island: "After I returned to Quebec and made my report, Mr. Grant, the then proprietor of the largest portion of Anticosti, at once came to the deter-

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mination of settling it, and offered to me the superintendence. During the winter of 1804, I engaged by his directions eighteen men, intending to proceed with them to Anticosti in the spring, and to immediately set about cutting a road across the island ; but, unfortunately, Mr. Grant died about that time, and the intention which had been entertained of colonizing the island was abandoned, a circumstance much to be regretted." Many statements equally favorable as to the agricultural capabilities of the island, made by parties, whose residence there for considerable periods, should give them some pretension to a real knowledge of its worth, in that and in other respects, might be quoted ; but sufficient has been given, to convince every reasonable mind, that the island is not the utterly barren and miserable place, which so many, who have merely touched there, or have sighted it at a distance, have declared it to be. If it were what the latter would wish to make it appear, those who have resided for any time upon the island, would certainly not combine to speak well of it, and express a desire to continue there ; nor would many of them have voluntarily made it their abode for ten or fifteen years.

While the accounts of these parties generally agree as to the timber and the nature of the soil, they represent the climate to be milder than that of Quebec. Mr. Wright, a surveyor, who wintered there in 1765, during what he then considered a very severe season, shows, by his observations taken there, that the thermometer only fell as low as 15 degrees below zero, and both Mr. Corbet and Mr. Pope informed the writer, that the winter before last there were only six weeks of sea ice in the neighborhood of the island. This mildness of climate when compared to that of Quebec, and of the opposite shores of the St. Lawrence, is easily accounted for by its insular position ; the island being

surrounded upon all sides by a wide expanse of salt-water, the modifying effects of which upon climate in all parts of the world, even where the width of sea may be less than a mile, is well known to all who have ever considered the many influences, which will bear upon climate, irrespective of latitude. The island lying nearly east and west, and having highlands running its entire length, along its northern shore, much of its surface must be protected by the latter from the coldest winds, and, even among the range of highlands, there must be many green and sheltered valleys and slopes with a southern and western aspect. In regard to degree of heat and cold, its climate is much like that of Newfoundland; but it is not so subject to fogs. The navigation at the former is open for about six weeks or two months longer than it is at Quebec, and it is probable that, with properly constructed and properly manned steamboats, or with Lieut. Halket's boats, (so favorably spoken of by Lieut. Osborne, Captain M'Clure, and other Arctic navigators), a communication between the South West Point and the south shore of the St. Lawrence could be effected occasionally in the winter months, according to the weather and the state of the ice, which never extends across or blocks up the whole channel. The experience of recent, as well as of former Arctic navigation, should convince us of the practicability of the undertaking. A communication, during that period, could certainly be often kept up from the island with Mingan on the north shore of the river. When the island shall have advanced so far as to make the establishment of a winter communication with the main shore of importance, it would be advisable to employ for the purpose men who have served in some of our Arctic searching ships, or have belonged to some of the Greenland or Davis' Straits' whalers, who

could also be employed in the valuable whale and seal fisheries, which exist upon both sides of the island. In smooth weather a few of the enterprising, skilful and industrious Esquimaux would easily accomplish it in their *oomiaks*, and they would at that season be the best seal hunters which could be procured. And no natives of this continent are so susceptible of being civilized as these brave and estimable people. This is fully proved by the accounts of the abilities displayed by, and the gallant and devoted conduct of those who became interpreters to our several Arctic expeditions. Many men have obtained a monument to their worth, who did not deserve one more than Augustus, the invaluable Esquimaux interpreter to Franklin in his first and second expeditions ; who, in an attempt to reach and assist Back in a third expedition, gave up his life rather than fail in his voluntary mission, after his companions, in dismay at the dangers encountered, had turned back to Fort Churchill, on Hudson's Bay. If a people, numbering many such as Augustus among them, could be planted in a civilized state upon the north shore of the St. Lawrence, whence many of them were cruelly driven two centuries ago, and be employed in connection with Anticosti, many humane as well as useful and profitable objects would be accomplished by the settlement of the island. To return, however, to the difficulties which ice presents to the navigation of the St. Lawrence. Were the vessels in the Quebec trade constructed with a view to having to navigate a sea occasionally encumbered with ice, and were they commanded by men, who had made one or two voyages in a northern whaler, we should seldom hear of a shipwreck in the ice, consequent upon an early winter setting in, or upon an unusually late arrival of the spring: two events which have recently happened, and, together, have caus-

ed the loss of upwards of one hundred ships. Upon being beset by the ice last November, many masters of vessels, finding themselves in a difficulty which was quite novel to them, and for which they were entirely unprepared, became perfectly bewildered, and left their ships unnecessarily, while others immediately cast anchor, which was the worst step they could have taken under the circumstances, the drifting ice cutting the resisting vessels entirely through. Though the writer has made many inquiries, he has not been able to discover more than a very small proportion of officers or men, employed in this trade, who have ever made a voyage in a northern whaler.

It is now time to notice those resources belonging to Anticosti, which, being wholly independent of soil and climate, may be turned to immediate account. These resources principally consist of its sea and river fisheries, which, although comparatively neglected by Canada, may be classed among the most valuable fisheries of British North America.

In the recent report, published by the New Brunswick Government upon the fisheries of that province, mention is made of the valuable whale and cod fisheries existing upon the coasts of Anticosti; and it is stated that the Jersey houses fit out vessels to carry on the former upon both sides of the island, and up the St. Lawrence as far as Bic, some of the whales, ("hump backs"), being seventy feet long, and yielding eight tons of oil; while the fishermen of Gaspé frequently resort to the east end of the island and take cod in great abundance. In his work entitled "Newfoundland in 1842," Sir Richard Bonnycastle states, that "the whale fishery is pursued along the coast of Labrador, in and through the Straits of Belleisle" [close to Anticosti,] "and that whales of all

sizes are taken, from the smallest finner to the largest *mysticetus*, or great common oil whale of the Northern Ocean, which occasionally visits these regions." It thus appears by these authorities, that on every side of Anticosti valuable whales abound; the pursuit of which, and of seals and cod, it is not improbable, could be carried on in winter as well as in summer, were the attempt to be properly made; but, without a trial, the undertaking may ever remain unjustly condemned as impossible. Should such an attempt be successful, it would not be the first instance of that being accomplished upon trial, which theory, timidity and prejudice had long declared to be impracticable. Here, again, the experience of our northern fishermen, and of the Esquimaux, who fearlessly encounter all difficulties and dangers, of the ice and of the weather, and who fish in winter and summer, might be successfully brought to bear.

Of cod, Mr. Corbet, in his statement made to the writer, remarks that "one boat, with two good fishermen, could take off South West Point, or at Fox Bay, eighteen hundred of these fish in one day;" while Mr. Morrison states that cod, halibut, and a variety of other fish, could be caught all round the island in incalculable quantities, and that no finer cod is caught on any part of the coast of America, or on the banks of Newfoundland, than is to be met with there. To this may be added the testimony of Capt. Fair, R.N., of H. M. ship *Champion*, who states that he met a few shallops from the Magdalen Islands, at the east end of Anticosti, where they found cod in great abundance, and of excellent quality.

Of hardly less value than the former is the seal fishery, which could certainly be carried on in winter, as well as in summer, many seals being seen on the ice during the former season and in the spring, and thousands of

them being observed during the summer and autumn, at the entrances of all the bays and rivers, where they remain almost entirely unmolested. To show the value of this fishery in the gulf, the New Brunswick official report, already cited, brings forward an instance of a schooner engaged in it from Sydney, Cape Breton, having cleared £14,000, within three weeks of her having left that port. Yet at Anticosti, where seals abound more than in most parts of the gulf, this fishery is at present almost entirely neglected; the Americans and others, who resort to its neighbourhood, being principally engrossed with the still more profitable cod and mackerel fisheries. For the storing and preservation of seal, whale and cod oil, the temperate degree of heat at Anticosti during the summer, is particularly favorable.

At the present moment the mackerel fishery is the most lucrative one in the St. Lawrence, and is the most extensively pursued; mackerel now selling at Boston for nineteen dollars a barrel, and at Halifax and Quebec for a few dollars less than that sum. No part of the gulf abounds with this fish more than the neighbourhood of Anticosti. Many schooners visit the coasts of the latter from the United States, the Lower Provinces, and a few from Gaspé, to carry on this fishery, in which they are very successful; and Mr. Corbet states that the mackerel he has seen in July and August come in shoals so thick and so close to the shore, that as many as one hundred barrels could be taken in one haul of the net. A few hours' work will thus sometimes pay the whole expenses of a schooner during the season.

Herrings, as fine as any in the world, are as plentiful about the island as mackerel; but, from the wretched manner in which they are cured, they obtain a much less price in the market, and are, therefore, comparatively neglected by the fishermen. To make this fishery as valu-

able as the former, a few of the Dutch North Sea fishermen should be engaged, who would introduce their mode of curing the fish, which has long obtained for "Dutch herrings," the highest price in every market in Europe. By adopting that mode, the Scotch fishermen are beginning to compete successfully with the former.

At the entrances of all the rivers and creeks immense quantities of lobsters are thrown up by the sea; the collection of which, and the preserving them on the spot for distant markets, or sending them fresh in vessels containing wells, to our home markets, might render this fishery a very profitable one. Eels are also very numerous and very fine, and are often collected by parties of Indians, who come over for the purpose from Mingan, and who obtain a high price for them from the Americans. Some of the halibut, which are found off the coast, attain the weight of three or four hundred pounds.

The caplin, which are now merely used as bait for cod, are so abundant around the island, that they are sometimes thrown up by the sea and cover the shore to the depth of two feet. Were they properly cured and exported, they would find good markets in Europe; or oil of an excellent quality could be made from them by the simple process of boiling.

The number of schooners which resort to the shores of Anticosti, from the United States, the Lower Provinces and the Magdalen Islands, in pursuit of the cod and mackerel, is so great, that there are sometimes as many as one hundred vessels fishing between the East Point and Fox Bay at one time; all of which are generally very successful. If these fisheries can be so profitable to extensively fitted out schooners, (of from 40 to 150 tons), some of which come a distance of fifteen hundred miles, and have to bring every supply, including provisions and

salt, with them, how much more profitable would they become to parties residing upon the island, who would have their supplies upon the spot, and who could carry on their operations in boats. How important also to the latter, would become the trade which might be created with the former: the supplying them with provisions, often with fishing gear, and with every description of marine stores; and how soon would such a trade lead to more extensive transactions, in regard to the purchase of fish upon the spot, and the disposal of it in the best markets, and to a further trade in West India, South American and Mediterranean produce, obtained in exchange for fish, and being in great demand in Canada. It might also lead to the gradual rise, at different points of the island, of good sized villages, and ultimately of towns. Many large towns in various parts of the world, which are now places of great wealth, have risen from elements quite as slight as these. Even the frozen shores of Spitzbergen may be pointed out, as having been, for upwards of a century, the site of a flourishing settlement supported by the Dutch whale fishery alone. Of this settlement of Smeerinberg on the island of Amsterdam, N. W. coast of Spitzbergen, Scoresby, in his "Arctic Regions," thus speaks: "Such, indeed, was the bustle produced by the yearly visitation of 200 or 300 vessels, that the place had the appearance of a commercial or manufacturing town; and of such consideration was this village, that the incitement of an advantageous traffic drew a number of annual settlers to the place, for the purpose of vending such stores as brandy, wine, tobacco and other commodities in constant demand. Not only shopkeepers, but bakers and other artizans resorted thither. Thus the naturally barren and desolate shores of Spitzbergen were made to assume the appearance of a populous country; and such

was the flourishing state of Smeerenberg, that it was compared by the Hollanders with their famous settlement of Batavia, which was founded about the same time." But we need not confine ourselves to the past for examples as to what the enterprise and energy of man, properly directed, may accomplish in places the most inhospitable, or as to the advantages of carrying the fisheries on from stations planted in their immediate vicinity, the intelligence having this moment reached us of the extraordinary success, which has already attended the efforts of the gallant Arctic voyager, Capt. Penny, to establish a permanent whale fishing settlement upon the bleak shores of Davis' Straits.

Shore-whaling has been very successful at New Zealand, and may be made so at Anticosti, around which whales are so numerous that they are sometimes found stranded upon the beach. While the men engaged in the pursuit would be able to devote the whole of their time, from the first opening to the latest period of the season, to the capture of the whale, (towing each one ashore as soon as caught), their families could be employed in cutting up the blubber, extracting and storing the oil, preparing the whalebone, &c. ; so that no useful portion of the animal would be lost, and the capture of the greatest number of whales would be ensured. The parties on shore could likewise be employed in making casks and other articles used in the "try-houses" for boiling the blubber. Under the usual system many opportunities of a capture are lost, in proceeding to and returning from the fishery, and much time is wasted in the extracting, stowing and disposal of the oil, while much that would be valuable, were it preserved, is thrown overboard, and a good deal of oil is lost by leakage. In regard to the fisheries generally, the advantage of being

able to cure the fish upon shore, in proper houses, instead of curing them carelessly on board, must be apparent to every one. What add to the value of Anticosti as a fishing station, are the numerous creeks and rivers, affording perfect shelter for boats and schooners, with a fine beach to land upon, which are found on both sides of the island.

So long, however, as distant fisheries can be carried on with a profit, there can be no reason why Canada should not participate in the latter, as well as in the former, should she, with her large and increasing resources for successfully embarking in any undertaking, begin to evince that spirit of enterprise, which led the earlier colonists of the neighbouring States, to fit out vessels for the pursuit of the most distant whale fisheries, as well as to carry on in boats that which existed upon their own shores. Anticosti, where there is excellent accommodation for any number of vessels of from 300 to 400 tons burden, (the size mentioned by Scoresby as best adapted for the Greenland and Davis' Straits fisheries), might eventually be made, in regard to the great southern, as well as to the great northern fisheries, such a station for the fitting out of whalers, and for the exportation of their produce, as Nantucket and New Bedford have long been for the fitting out, and the reception, of the whalers of the United States.

Of the river and lake fisheries of Anticosti, Mr. Corbet, who leases them, as well as the right of hunting the whole island, but who keeps up a very small establishment, and consequently makes use of his privilege to a very slight extent, says: "I have frequently, along with two Indians, taken in the month of July, in one day, twelve hundred salmon-trout, and upwards of two hundred salmon, out of Observation River, near the South West Point, the

majority of the salmon-trout weighing four pounds, and the salmon from twelve to fifteen pounds;" and Mr. Morrison states, that the first day he went up Salmon River he caught, in a very short time, with a small net, from two hundred to three hundred fine salmon; and that, too, by confining his fishing to only two or three of the numerous holes to which salmon resort in that river. Even in winter Mr. Corbet has caught quantities of fine trout, by cutting a hole in the ice, and fishing with a hook. This gentleman owns a schooner, in which he sends the produce of the fisheries, and of the chase, obtained by him, to the Quebec market, where it commands a high price. The master of this schooner is one of many parties, who are desirous of purchasing land, and settling entirely upon the island, with which he has been connected for fifteen years.

Though all the rivers of Anticosti abound with the finest salmon, few of them are fished to any extent, in consequence of there being but a small number of persons residing upon the island, and those who come there not being prepared, and not having the right to fish in the rivers; which, with sufficient attention and judicious management, might be made almost as valuable as the best salmon rivers in Scotland, for each of which a rent is obtained of from five to fifteen thousand pounds, sterling, per annum. The markets for fish in the United States, being about to be thrown open to Canada, under the Reciprocity Treaty, will soon become quite as remunerative as any in Europe, and will consequently raise the value of our river fisheries to what is obtained for the most valuable of the former.

The porpoise fishery, which is successfully conducted at Tadousac, at the entrance of the Saguenay, each porpoise caught being worth £25, in the leather and oil

which it is made to yield, might also be carried on at Anticosti at a considerable profit, the latter being as well situated for the purpose as the former.

The hunting upon the island is of considerable value, though of far less importance than its fisheries. The animals consist of black bears, martins, otters, and the silver gray, the red, the black, and sometimes the white fox; all of which are very numerous, and for the skins of which Mr. Corbet realizes excellent prices in the Quebec market; those of the silver gray and the black fox fetching from £15 to £20 each. But Quebec being principally a mart for other and dearer markets, much higher prices would be obtained for the Anticosti furs, could they be sent to the latter markets direct; and this would be easily effected, were the settlements and establishments, contemplated in this article, made upon the island, which would create objects there of sufficient importance to attract vessels from various parts to its shores. The bears upon the island are quite harmless, and, living upon the rich berries and wild fruits, such as currants and gooseberries, which abound everywhere in the summer and autumn, are very good eating during those seasons. Deer were formerly met with, but have not been recently seen there. Fortunately, the island, like the country immediately north of Quebec, (though they abound still further north), is entirely free from wolves. There are mice, but neither rats nor frogs; nor are there snakes or reptiles of any description.

Great quantities of ducks, geese, partridges, and other fowl, resort to the lakes upon the island, some of which are of a species peculiar to England; and a duck, called the *muniack*, remains about the shore all the winter. It is probable that the eider-duck, which frequents the main shore further north, will be found there; in which case eider-down might be made a profitable export from the island.

Thus, even in respect to food, Anticosti, in an uncultivated state, is not so inhospitable as it is generally supposed to be ; for, with its fish, its bears' flesh and its fowl in abundance, what active sportsman is there, who could not often obtain a meal there, with his rod, or with his gun ?

With so many other resources, it is of little consequence whether or not Anticosti shall be found to possess valuable minerals. There is no account of its ever having been visited by a geologist ; but iron ore of great richness, and quartz are frequently met with on the island, and recently some substances have been discovered resembling mineral paints. Plumbago may also exist there, as it has been found among limestone of a similar character to that of the island upon several parts of this continent ; and Mr. M'Ewan mentions having found freestone there, some of it as fine as water of Ayr-stone, and some as coarse as grindstone. The fossiliferous limestone, which exists in great quantities upon the shores in thick horizontal strata, is of so fine a grain and color, and so hard, that it is most deservedly classed under the head of marble. Were this marble quarried to any extent, large profits could be made by disposing of it to builders in the chief towns of the province, whose wealthy inhabitants are beginning to vie with each other, in the beauty of their residences, and the style of their living. To Quebec and Montreal it could easily be conveyed as ballast. Being very durable, as well as very beautiful, there is little doubt that, were it brought to those cities, in any quantities, it would be selected for many public buildings. The contemplated erections for the Government and the Parliament Houses could not be made more imposing in appearance, so far as the material is considered, than by the use of

this marble in their construction. It has already been used for several light-houses in the St. Lawrence besides those upon the island. Both Lient. Baddeley, R. E., who touched at several parts of the island in 1831, and Sir Richard Bonnycastle, R. E., who landed at the entrance of Jupiter river in 1841, speak of the value of this marble. The former says, "its structure is crystalline, and its consequent lustre upon fracture is high; it is sufficiently hard to receive a good polish, and is sufficiently solid and massive to turn out some excellent ashlar, so that, whether it be desired for the construction of a house or for its interior embellishment, it is equally applicable." Sir Richard Bonnycastle states, "the limestone cuts well, and looks very beautiful, being, in fact a sort of marble;" and adds, "I procured some large and valuable encrinital remains, yellow blende, and some fine white marble, and have no doubt that a rich treat would be afforded to the collector who had leisure sufficient in this vicinage." A specimen of a stone, suitable to the purposes of lithography, found upon the island some years ago, was placed in the museum of this society, and many specimens of iron ore, quartz, marble, and curious fossils, have been obtained there upon various occasions. Anticosti having been evidently formed at the same period as the rest of North America, and not having been created by the alluvial deposits of the St. Lawrence, as, from its position, some might suppose, there is no reason, upon its being explored by a geologist, why some of those minerals and ores should not be found there, which are known to exist upon this continent. It is only very recently that coal, silver and copper have been discovered upon the western coast of Newfoundland, among a limestone formation similar to that of Anticosti.

Taken separately, the resources of Anticosti, as they are yet known, may not appear so important as those of countries more favored by careful attention, by settlement, and by a fair expenditure upon them of labor and science combined, under which their resources have been partially developed ; but, viewed together, they cannot but be regarded, by any unprejudiced observer, as of considerable value, and as giving promise, (upon the introduction there of those agencies which have been successfully at work elsewhere), of becoming a source of wealth and prosperity to the whole province. No comprehensive view of the resources and capabilities of the island having ever been taken, is one reason why it has been so long neglected ; and why, throughout its three thousand three hundred square miles of territory, it yet gives shelter to no more than some fifteen or twenty residents, distributed between the fishing stations of the lessee, the light-houses and the provision posts, all of which are situated upon the south side of the island ; the fishing stations being at the South West Point and the entrances of Observation and *Becscie* Rivers, the light-houses at the East Point and the South West Point, and the provision posts being also at the light-house stations, at Shallop Creek, about half way between them, and at Ellis Bay. The state of desolation in which the island remains, is shown by the necessity for keeping up these provision posts for shipwrecked sailors, as, in former days, wells were dug, shady trees planted, and caravansaries maintained in the desert, for the relief of pilgrims and travellers by the Arab and Indian princes ; but, unlike the deserts of the East, (though even there fertile spots have been often discovered and been made to " bloom as a rose"), Anticosti has hitherto been condemned to desolation, not on account of its being incapable of being made to sus-

tain a population, but because of the superficial examinations of its soil, bordering upon the sea shore only, which have been made from time to time, and of the reports and general rumours, based upon those examinations, similar to those unjust popular rumours, which have for many years kept back many other countries, since become known and now arrived at a flourishing condition, and which, until the last few years, condemned Newfoundland to be a mere fishing station. Even Prince Edward's Island, now the garden of our maritime provinces, was for a long period kept back by prejudices, as absurd and unjust, as those which long operated against the progress of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, and which, up to the present time, have rendered Anticosti worse than useless : a terror to the mariner, and an inhospitable wilderness at the threshold of the province, frowning upon, and depressing in spirit, all who seek Canada by the route of the St. Lawrence.*

* As there are few persons in England, or even in Canada, who do not still regard Newfoundland as possessing no resources beyond its fisheries, and who look upon Nova Scotia almost in the same light, the following extract is inserted here from the speech of Mr. Morrison at the meeting of the agricultural society, held at St. Johns, Newfoundland, in 1842, and presided over by Sir John Harvey ; as bearing upon the past condition and the recent progress of those countries, and upon the present state and what may be the future progress of Anticosti : " Travels, voyages, histories, geographies, even school books, in which the name of Newfoundland is introduced, represent the soil so barren, the climate so severe, as if nature had raised an impassable barrier to its agricultural improvement. Little more than twenty-five years ago the same prejudice that had been the bane of Newfoundland prevailed in Nova Scotia. The possibility of raising wheat, barley and other grain for the subsistence of the inhabitants, was ridiculed and scouted as chimerical. Fortunately there was one among them of experience in the improved system of Scottish agriculture, who roused the people by his appeals, led them to form agricultural societies, under the operations of which the insane prejudice that had so long existed against the soil and climate of Nova Scotia became dispelled ; and in the history of no country has there

Should properly conducted, and sufficiently extended explorations be made at Anticosti, and commensurate exertions be expended upon it, results will be produced there, similar to those which have followed proper inquiry into, and proper efforts for developing the resources of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland: a fair proportion of good as well as of bad land will be discovered; the former will be made to yield every description of grain and vegetables which can be successfully grown in those countries, and to raise any number of cattle and sheep; while the entire island will be made to export, in addition to furs and fish, oil, tallow, tar, potash, dairy produce, and the finest ice from its lakes and rivers, and to support a large and a thriving population of fishermen, mechanics, traders and agriculturalists. But what the writer conceives to give more value to Anticosti, than its capabilities of soil and climate, or its many other resources, whether belonging to the sea, to the rivers, or to

ever been recorded a more radical and instantaneous change than has been witnessed in that country. So in Newfoundland, by following the example of Nova Scotia, lands have already been cleared and cultivated in many parts, north and south; a great portion of the substance of the inhabitants is now raised from the soil, and at a moderate calculation made from the statistical returns in the last Census, the agricultural produce of the island is little short of two hundred thousand pounds per annum. Some of the farms, at St. Mary's and Placentia Bays, have thirty, forty and fifty head of horned cattle." Besides many other authorities to the same effect, Sir Richard Bonnycastle may be quoted, who, in his work upon Newfoundland, says: "Wheat is growing within a mile of the house I am writing in. It was sown in the fall of the year, and in this month of April has survived all the severe alterations of the winter. The poorest soil in Newfoundland is around St. Johns, yet wheat grows there. On the western side of Newfoundland," [opposite to Anticosti] "the climate is less severe; the land more rich in consequence of limestone prevailing, and is now known to be quite as capable of cultivation as Cape Breton, Prince Edward's Island, and Nova Scotia. Even the East coast might be made to support its own population."

the land, is its position at the entrance of the St. Lawrence, in the direct and only channel of an immense traffic, which, within a very short period, is certain to become vastly increased, not only by the throwing open to the Americans, of the navigation of the St. Lawrence, under the reciprocity treaty, recently concluded, but also by the extension of the trade of the province to all parts of the world. Whether viewed with regard to this future trade, or to the existing maritime trade of the province, which is confined to England, the United States, the Lower Provinces and the West Indies; to the establishment of an *entrepôt* in the direct channel of that trade, and of a coal-ing station for the three lines of steamships about to run between England and Quebec; or viewed as affording the most favorable points for establishing fishing stations, and of settlements and villages for supplying the fishermen belonging to the island, as well as those who will be attracted to its coast fisheries from a distance, and who will be desirous to rent certain portions of the shore for the purpose of drying their fish there; the position of Anticosti is a most admirable one, and if the island were composed of nothing but rock, without soil sufficient to produce a blade of grass, its position alone would render it capable of being made of more value than the most favored island in point of soil and climate, not possessing the advantages of that position. In regard, either to an *entrepôt*, or a *depôt* for coals, Ellis Bay offers a most convenient site for every vessel, whether taking the north or the south channel at the entrance of the river; and having a depth of 21 feet at low water in its most sheltered part, (secure in all winds), and having no bar, the fine steamers employed in running between England and Quebec, which only draw from 13 to 17 feet water, could enter and lay there at all times. *Depôts* for coals might

also be established at the South West Point, where there is a depth of 4 and 5 fathoms of water close to the shore ; and at Bear Bay on the north-east side of the island, which is an excellent roadstead, with good anchorage. The latter points are nearly five hundred miles nearer to England than Quebec is ; which is about the distance steamers have to make when getting short of coals upon the voyage from Europe ; and several instances have already occurred of their having to run a considerable distance out of their way to procure coals at a cost of two or three days' delay, when, could they have obtained them at Anticosti, they need not have lost more than a few hours. For these depôts, coals could be easily brought from Pictou and Cape Breton, or be purchased from ships carrying them from England as part of their cargoes to Quebec. Thus the furnishing coal for the steamers touching at Anticosti, would, of itself, create a considerable traffic with the island. These steamers could also take some of the produce of the fisheries, &c., obtained there.

By establishing an entrepôt on the island, for the purpose of carrying on some of the traffic between Canada and Europe in the early spring, when for several weeks an intercourse between it and Quebec could be frequently kept up in small vessels, before ships from sea can traverse the same space, and later in the autumn after every ship from the latter has left for Europe, six weeks or two months would be virtually added to the period of open navigation at Quebec. While such an intercourse by colonial schooners or small steamers, (for which there is shelter almost every where), could be maintained at those seasons, ships from sea could arrive earlier, at and depart later from Anticosti, than they can arrive at or depart from Quebec, and those ships that might choose to dis-

charge and obtain their cargoes at other periods at Anticosti, could easily make three voyages instead of two. By doing so, they would avoid the worst part of the present voyage, (from Cape Rosier to Quebec); would secure six weeks or two months more of open navigation, and, in the three voyages, would save two thousand five hundred miles. Vessels also, which, coming out late in the autumn, are sometimes obliged, after reaching the gulf, to run back to ports in the Lower Provinces, and winter there, having to continue their voyage on to Quebec in the spring, would avoid the loss of about six months, by being able to unload and obtain a cargo at Anticosti. Although the Baltic can be navigated by the largest ships, yet the trade of that sea is generally carried on by small vessels, in consequence of the dangers which exist there to the former; and, so in the gulf and river St. Lawrence, there are an immense number of small craft employed in all parts, and at the earliest and latest periods, among which we seldom hear of a wreck occurring, while, year after year, numerous Quebec traders, (of from 500 to 2,000 tons burden), are cast ashore in the river this side of Anticosti, before reaching it, or after having passed it in safety, and an immense amount of property is destroyed. The comparative immunity from disaster of the former, is to be attributed to the intimate knowledge of the navigation of the gulf and river, possessed by masters of colonial vessels, constantly employed in the same waters, in addition to their vessels being adapted for taking shelter in the numerous rivers and creeks, which exist along the coasts both of the river and gulf, where, for long distances, large vessels can obtain no safe anchorage. Only last summer a Liverpool vessel for Quebec was driven from her anchors at Bic, which is considered to be about the best anchorage in the river,

and was stranded upon Rimouski. It cannot, therefore, but be allowed, that it might be advantageous to employ, to some extent, small colonial craft within the river for such commodities as they could conveniently carry. Among the exports from the Province, they could easily take deals and boards, staves, pot and pearl ashes, flour and grain of all descriptions, pork, fish and furs, &c., and, with the exception of machinery and railroad iron, all articles of import landed at Anticosti, could be as easily brought by them to Quebec. This would partly upset the present system, and perhaps be unpopular with the merchants of Quebec; but many ship-owners and ship-masters, with several of whom the writer has conversed upon the subject, would be highly in favor of it, and would never send a ship to Quebec whenever she could obtain a cargo at Anticosti. And if underwriters and shippers, here and in England, could be shown that goods conveyed in this manner would not be liable to one-tenth the risks to which they are now exposed; that not one-tenth of the present number of wrecks would occur, and that, at a moderate cost, harbours fit for the largest trade could be made at Ellis Bay and the South West Point, they also would gladly lend their aid to carry out such an arrangement. As for the proprietors of the island, they, no doubt, would most readily give their assistance to that which would make their property worth in the market twenty times its present value there. Thus by combining the interests and the means of many, (who, as yet, have no knowledge that their interests may be made identical), towards establishing such a system of commercial intercourse as that which has been pointed out, the undertaking might be accomplished, notwithstanding any difficulties which other parties might oppose to it. It would not depend upon whether the latter would

favor it or not, but whether those, having an interest in carrying it out, could, by organization, by economy of management, and by steadiness of purpose, place and maintain a sufficient quantity of well-selected articles upon the island, and be able to dispose of them at about the same rate as that at which they would be sold in the markets to which they might properly belong. For the intercolonial trade of the St. Lawrence, the island might be made a convenient centre, from whence the whole of it could be easily carried on.

Besides the main trade of the province, conducted from Quebec, the trade of the flourishing settlements up the Saguenay towards Lake St. John, which are rapidly extending, may be made to contribute to the importance of Anticosti; the whole of those settlements being then supplied by the latter, as well as many of the extensive and populous settlements along the main shores of the lower St. Lawrence. At a future period a further trade by the Saguenay may be looked for, coming across from the St. Maurice, from the Upper Ottawa and from Lake Huron, through a magnificent country, which will rapidly become occupied; whose commerce will seek the nearest outlet to Europe; and, whenever a railroad shall be constructed, to connect the Saguenay with Lake Huron, much of the trade of the "Far West" will come the same route. Ultimately such a road will become a branch of the great railway, which is at no distant period to cross this continent to the Pacific. Instead of assisting to divert the trade of Canada to channels passing through the United States, by which we lose the value of one-half the traffic before it reaches the ocean, and our ships lose the whole of the freight to Europe, it would be much more beneficial to the province, if our leading mer-

chants would encourage the use of routes passing through our own territory to the Atlantic.

Anticosti may also grow into importance as an emporium for a portion of that commerce, which Canada is now in a position to open out with all parts of the world; for, to large vessels coming long voyages from the East Indies, China, &c., it would be of some consequence to avoid the delay, and the dangers, of coming up the St. Lawrence. The island may then almost become such a mart as the ancient Taprobana, (the Ceylon of the present day), was in regard to the trade between China, India, the Persian Gulf, Arabia and Africa, when "she received and dismissed the fleets of the East and of the West"; her position alone enabling her to extract more wealth from that trade, than was derived from it by the countries to which it properly belonged.

Since the foregoing was written, the writer has visited the island which he has endeavoured to represent as it appeared to him, after an examination and a comparison of every authority bearing upon it, and an inquiry into its present condition, of nearly every person now residing, or who has lately resided there. He will now, therefore, add the result of his own observations, made upon the spot.

Having taken passage at Quebec about the middle of July in the steamer "Wilmington," which was sent to Anticosti with the object of assisting a ship, wrecked last November about twelve miles from Ellis Bay, (which had remained there ever since, almost uninjured by the ice or storms of an unusually severe winter), he visited that bay as well as the South West Point three times, and was upon the south side of the island for about three weeks. He also twice visited Gaspé Basin. At Ellis Bay the steamer ran in for shelter upon each occasion, and upon the last remained there for three days.

She anchored about two miles up the harbour in $3\frac{1}{2}$ fathoms at low water, about a mile distant from the shore upon either side, and a mile and a half from the head of the bay, which appeared to be, from point to point, (Cape Henry to Cape Eagle), from eight to nine miles round. Upon looking out from this position towards the sea, every appearance of the most complete security was presented, the limestone reefs from the two points stretching out south-east and south-west towards each other, the one a mile, the other three quarters of a mile in length, and forming complete breakwaters, quite uncovered at low water, and which, being covered to only a very slight depth at any time, stop the force of the sea even at high water, as was indicated by the surf which they then caused, as the waves broke upon them, and which clearly directs ships to the channel between them, of six hundred fathoms wide. This channel, too, is much protected by the water shoaling immediately outside to six fathoms, which, although deep enough to admit the largest vessels, tends to break the force of the sea. This was experienced upon one occasion, when, in a heavy southerly gale, the steamer ran in from a tremendous sea outside, in which she pitched nearly bowsprit under, and anchored in water almost as smooth as a mill pond. To all on board the almost sudden cessation of violent motion, appeared as extraordinary as it proved agreeable. The same afternoon a large American schooner ran into the bay for shelter, and anchored nearly a mile outside the Wilmington in perfect safety, where she remained till the gale abated the following morning. During the several periods the steamer lay in this harbour, heavy winds were experienced from every quarter, yet she rode through all as calmly as if she had been moored in front of Quebec, and in the spot where she

was anchored, nothing less than such a hurricane as would cast vessels adrift and sink them, either in the harbour of Quebec, or in the Liverpool docks, could effect a vessel there. Mr. Gamache, who has resided for twenty five years at the provision post at this bay, informed the writer that the harbour was perfectly secure in all winds, and at all periods, that, besides other vessels, the "Sir Richard Jackson," of about 600 tons burthen, had twice lain there for several months each time, and that her Captain had said it was as safe a harbour as any he had ever entered. Mr. Gamache has, himself, built two vessels there of a considerable size. A gentleman on board the *Wilmington*, a member of Lloyds, who had come out from England, and had chartered the steamer to proceed to the wreck at the island, and who had been three times round the world as Captain of an East India Company's ship, declared that he considered the harbour "a most excellent one;" so much so, that he should on his return to England make it specially known at Lloyds. But, as some persons, who have never been in Ellis Bay, or have not been there when there were heavy seas outside, imagine that it must be exposed to southerly winds, the following extract is given from the log of the *Wilmington*, which should convince them of their conclusion in this respect being an erroneous one: "Monday, 2nd August, 1854,— It looking very wild and bleak to south-west, with heavy rain and quick flashing lightning and thunder, proceeded direct to Ellis Bay. It then blowing strong from south-south-east with rain and sea rolling in with a thick fog, kept the lead going, and went along the coast in sight of breakers, seeing them when we could not see the land. Made out Cape Eagle by 9 A. M., rounded its armed, (protecting), reef, sounded

up the bay, and came to with both anchors by 9.40 A. M.—3 P. M., wind south, blowing strong and about right up the bay. We ride smoothly and safe. Coming in between the reefs there is a swell, which might make a stranger fear the safety of his ship, but as you run up the bay, it becomes less, and at anchorage smooth riding and good holding ground.” This, and the fact of a sailing vessel having run in for shelter the same afternoon, when the wind had increased in violence, not only show the safety of the harbour during the worst winds, (and as the steamer made for it upon this occasion, Captain Rudolph and his officers exclaimed that its security would be well tested in such weather), but they also prove how easy it is of access under the worst circumstances : a strong southerly wind blowing directly in, a heavy sea outside, and a thick fog. Though, the latter apparently continued out at sea, when once in the bay, there was only a slight haze perceived. The thickest fog, however, encountered during the cruise, was in coming up the river, from Metis to Green Island. At Anticosti, although there were occasional fogs, it was often clear enough to see across to the south shore, a distance of forty miles. Much might be added here, in favor of Ellis Bay, as a harbour, but the fact of such vessels as the “Sir Richard Jackson” having been repeatedly there in all weathers, without any of them having been cast ashore, or having dragged their anchors, should be sufficient. No instance has ever occurred of a craft of any description having dragged her anchors, or been injured there in any way; and Captain Rudolph stated that the Wilmington would have ridden just as safely with a single anchor as with two. As the underwriter on board, belonging to Lloyds, remarked, there are many places in England, and other countries, carrying on a large

maritime commerce, which have not so spacious, so deep, or so safe a harbour as Ellis Bay.

The appearance of the shores of this bay has been already pretty accurately described. They are generally thickly wooded with spruce trees, of a better growth than those near the sea upon other parts of the island, and on the higher ground in the distance, a good many hard wood trees were seen of a still larger size. A conspicuous and picturesque clump of birch trees stood out from the spruce close to the shore, one of which, the writer measured at five feet from the ground, where he found it to be five feet in circumference, its height appearing to the eye to be almost sixty feet. The five substantial buildings of the resident are very prettily placed near one of the three or four fine trout streams, which flow into the bay, where he has several acres cleared and divided by excellent fences, and where he had growing, and looking remarkably healthy, every description of vegetables, and some fine timothy grass. The potatoes there were looking more advanced than they were at Quebec, when the steamer left the latter place a few days previously. The soil, though not very deep, appeared to be very good, consisting of a dark loam, with sand and gravel below; and there is little doubt that it could easily be made to produce some of the hardier grains; to ripen which, or even wheat, there must be quite sufficient heat, the thermometer upon one or two occasions during the Wilmington's stay there being as high as 81° in the shade, and 105° in the sun, and at no time going lower than between 50° and 60° during the three weeks the steamer continued in the neighbourhood of the island. Round the bay many beautiful wild flowers were seen; also the sarsaparilla plant and the sweet pea; and on the beach, the writer picked up a piece of sponge, which had been

detached from the bottom by the action of the sea. The salmon-trout in the river, near the resident's house, were so numerous that they might almost have been caught by the hand as they moved in shoals from one part to another, upon being disturbed by the sailors, who attempted to take them with buckets. Quantities were obtained and found to be delicious eating. A number of very fine salmon were also purchased of the resident, whose assistant happened to enter the bay with fifty he had just caught in the *Bescie* River, in the course of about an hour; and several large lobsters were taken in the bay, and sent on board. But what appeared of extraordinary interest to those in the steamer, was the sight every day, when the tide was out, of some three or four hundred seals sleeping or playing round the bay, generally entirely out of, but near the water, and some of them occasionally swimming close to the vessel, whose round heads looked very much like those of a human being. One of them, the resident mentioned, he had killed, a short time previously, upon the step of his door. The bay must therefore be a favorite resort of theirs. A great many whales, at least fifty, were also seen between the island and Gaspé, and several between the former and Bic, each of which must have been worth from £200 to £400; yet only one vessel was met with, or heard of, in pursuit of them: a large schooner from Gaspé. Both the whale and seal fisheries could be carried on much more conveniently from Ellis Bay than from the former or from any other place within the gulf. With this sheltered spot everybody on board the steamer was much pleased: from the excellency of its harbour, the inviting appearance of the country around it, and the objects of interest which were met there; and even the sailors expressed a desire to take up their

abode upon its shores. One sailor, who had belonged to a vessel wrecked upon the island last November, and who had wintered there, became so charmed with the place, that he had already become a permanent resident, employing himself in fishing and hunting; and the captain and the whole crew of a ship, that went ashore in a fog about eight miles from Ellis Bay, when the steamer was in the harbour, informed the writer that if they could obtain land there, they would send to Hull, whence they had sailed, for their families, and settle on the island in a body.

At the South West Point, where the steamer could have run close up to the shore, and been moored to the flat limestone rocks, which form complete natural wharves, the five or six buildings, including a very large stage and store-house for fish, were so disposed near the magnificent lighthouse, which towers above all, as to present quite the appearance of a village. Upon landing, this appearance was rather heightened than diminished, as a number of fine fields, neatly divided by straight fences, in which were growing very luxuriantly many vegetables and grasses, came in view, and a horse and four fine cows, all in excellent condition, were seen feeding upon a common close by. Added to these indications of civilized life, were a number of fowls in all directions among the houses, and several fat pigs venturing further back, to rob the bears of the rich berries and wild fruits which abounded there. Near to the landing place two persons were employed in cutting up a huge shark, which had just been caught, having, no doubt, been enticed out of his usual latitude by the shoals of fish which proceed from the Atlantic towards the island. The same day immense quantities of mackerel were seen close under the point upon which the light-house stands.

By their praiseworthy exertions, Mr. Pope and his son have shown what may be accomplished by well-directed industry in places, apparently, the most unpromising ; for, this spot must be about the bleakest upon the whole island, being completely exposed to the north-west winds. Last year they grew most excellent oats, and next year they purpose to grow both oats and barley, seed for the latter of which the writer has just sent to them. Some of their potatoes of last year, of the few they had remaining, which the writer brought to Quebec, weighed three to the pound, and some of this year's growth, taken out of the ground on the 5th September, and sent to the writer, are of a still larger size, and of an equally fine description. If there were a few more industrious and intelligent settlers upon the island, like Mr. Pope and his family, who are the most deserving people that could be met with, it would soon obtain a very different character, in regard both to climate and soil, than has hitherto been accorded to it. The first frost which appeared this year at the South West Point, Mr. Pope, in a letter to the writer, says, took place on the 27th August, but was not sufficient to do the slightest injury to his potatoes : at Quebec the tops of the potatoes were blackened by frost about the same time. The soil at the South West Point has been already described ; but the writer penetrated about two miles into the woods there, where he found the soil very similar to that in many parts of Canada in the original forest, deep with vegetable deposits, without stones or a particle of rock to be perceived. At Gaspé, with a less genial soil and climate, the writer saw several fields of excellent wheat. The trees, which, near the sea at the point, were about a foot high and spread out their tops like mushrooms, improved gradually, but rapidly, as he entered the woods, and at a dis-

tance of a mile back, were sixty or seventy feet high. This alone would indicate the existence of large and valuable timber in the interior; but he was informed by all whom he saw on the island, that quantities of such timber were to be met with in many parts. A number of pieces of particularly fine grained tamarack he saw piled up with some other wood near the light-house; and the fire-wood; which the steamer procured, both at the South West Point and at Ellis Bay, proved to be much better than that obtained at Gaspé, or at any part of the south shore of the St. Lawrence where the steamer took in fuel. After being three times in the bay at the South West Point, and examining the greater portion of it, and after having being caught in a north-west gale there, which obliged the steamer to run out to sea, the Captain of the *Wilmington*, who has a good knowledge of the construction of harbours of refuge, and who proved himself to be a thorough seaman upon several trying occasions, declared that, at an expense of £2,000, he could build a breakwater upon the reefs running out from the point, which would render the bay a secure shelter in all winds for the largest vessels. A harbour could also, probably, be made at Salt Lake Bay, about eight miles further to the east. As at Ellis Bay, many wild flowers and fruits, and the sarsaparilla plant were met with at the South West Point; also a plant, resembling the cotton plant, and the reindeer moss. The cranberries which are very numerous in certain parts of the island, might be made profitable exports, as they are at the Magdalen Islands, and Prince Edward's Island, whence many barrels are sent to the United States, where they are eagerly purchased. At the present time cranberries are selling in Montreal for 12s. a bushel. Mr. Pope mentioned that Admiral Coffin touched at the South West Point

in the early part of the summer, and after making many inquiries about the island, said that it could be made to produce anything which can be grown in Canada. The finest clay soil, however, appears to be found upon the banks of Observation River, (the scenery at the entrance of which was very beautiful, as viewed from the steamer as she passed), and also on the north side of the island, where there are many spots among the hills, sheltered entirely from easterly and north-west winds; those parts having been pointed out to the writer by persons acquainted with them, as containing the richest soil of that description on the island, so far as it is yet known. But it is very evident that not one-tenth of the island has ever been explored, or even traversed, the hunters and fishermen, and others who have ever been upon it, having confined their excursions to the sea shore and the principal rivers, hardly ever venturing any distance back from the latter. Like all countries, Anticosti must contain much bad land as well as good, and the former might be supposed to prevail along the shore, where, in some parts, there are quaking bogs, like those of Ireland, (which, however, may be drained and be turned into the richest soil), and a good deal of rock; but, whether the good or the bad land predominate to any extent throughout the island, there can be no means of ascertaining, without a thorough survey of the interior. That much good land, besides those fertile spots which have been pointed out, by the various parties referred to in this communication, is likely to be discovered by such a survey, the writer is now enabled to show upon one of the highest authorities existing upon this continent; namely, that of Professor J. Hall, Palæontologist of the New York State geological survey, and author of the "Palæontology of New York," who, having examined a number of fossils brought from Anticosti by

the writer, among which he discovered a new species, described them in writing, and added the following lines as to the conclusions which may be drawn in regard to the island from their presence there: "The specimens indicate the occurrence of limestone beds with alternations of shale, and the decomposition of these will furnish a productive soil in consequence of the abundance of calcareous matter." These specimens, and some others, which they had not time to properly examine at the moment, both Professor Hall, and our own talented and indefatigable geologist, Mr. Logan, considered so interesting, that they expressed themselves strongly to the writer upon the importance of the Government undertaking a thorough geological survey of the island, with the object of making discoveries there which would give it an economic value. A specimen of the marble brought from the island, obtained the first prize at the recent Provincial exhibition held at Quebec.

As Anticosti belongs to a number of persons, some of them residing in Canada and others in England, who are not likely to combine in any comprehensive plan for developing its resources, but who would no doubt be prepared to dispose of their interest in it at a reasonable price, it is to be desired that, either the Government, or some public company in Canada, or England, or one belonging to both countries, should purchase the island, and expend sufficient means, which the present proprietors could not afford, in turning its resources to account. Of the two, a company, which could enter into the several undertakings glanced at in this communication, would be the more suitable for the purpose; but the field may be made to embrace so many, and such varied objects, that it could well give employment to several distinct companies. There might then be a colonization com-

pany, a fishing company, and a commercial company; the first purchasing the whole island, and selling, or leasing to the others, those portions of the coast at which the operations of the latter could be most conveniently carried on. A thorough survey, however, of the whole island might be well undertaken by the Government in the mean time; for, although it belongs to private individuals, it is of the highest public importance, for many reasons, which must suggest themselves in the course of this communication, that the island should not be allowed to continue in its present state of desolation; besides which, every large addition made to the inhabited seaboard of the St. Lawrence, must materially increase the commerce, the shipping, and the wealth of the province.

