

FISHERIES.

The Early Fisheries.—Sea fisheries largely depend upon two habits of fish—those of spawning and feeding in their accustomed resorts in estuaries and the open sea. In Canada the feeding grounds are northerly and are remarkable for the coldness and purity of their waters. The earliest frequenters of the “banks”, especially of the “Grand Bank”, were Breton and Basque fishermen who, according to Fernandez de Navarrete, came in their small vessels before 1502. The fishing was done by hand line from barrels made fast outside of the bulwarks, so that the lines would not foul on the sides of the ship. The vessels remained on the “bank” as long as fine weather lasted, then returned to France with their catches of from 30 to 50 thousand cod. Voyages up and down the coast soon showed that cod were as plentiful inshore as on the outer banks, and so it became common for a crew to anchor in a bay, build a hut on shore and make daily excursions in small boats to the inshore fisheries. Such an establishment was at Tadoussac, founded by Chauvin in 1599. The fish was salted and dried on shore, and at the end of the season was loaded into the ship to be taken to France. Soon the fishermen stayed all winter in America and built the first fishing villages. By the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 Britain became absolute owner of Newfoundland, excluding France from the rights of fishing and drying fish on certain sections of its coast, but France retained the fisheries of Cape Breton and the Gulf. The Seven Years War put a stop to continuous fishing. At its conclusion, the Robin family of Jersey came to Canada and by gradual acquisition came to control all the former French fishing stations. The firm of Charles Robin and Company devoted itself to the capture of cod, so that until the arrival of the Loyalists all other fish were neglected. Inshore fisheries only were developed, the Labrador coast fisheries being included under this term; no deep-sea fishing vessel put out from Lunenburg, which is now the chief centre of the deep-sea fishery, until 1873.

Methods of Fishing.—The fisheries of Canada are distinguished as Atlantic, Inland and Pacific. Of the annual yield, the Atlantic fisheries give 45 per cent, the Pacific 42 per cent and the Inland 13 per cent.

Sea fisheries are for convenience described as inshore and deep-sea. Of the inshore fisheries those from one to five miles out are frequented by boats carrying two or three men and those twelve to fifteen miles out by small vessels carrying from four to seven men. The fish are largely taken with gill net and trawl. A gill net hangs like a wall in the water, buoyed and weighted to keep it upright. The fish in trying to pass through are meshed by the gills and strangled. A trawl is a line of any length to which are attached at intervals short lines or snoods, each one with a baited hook at the end. The deep-sea fisheries are worked by vessels of from sixty to one hundred tons, carrying from twelve to twenty men. Dories are carried on board which, when the vessel anchors, are sent out with two men in each who use trawls to take the fish—cod, haddock, hake and halibut. The inshore fisheries allow a man to farm as well as fish. This, added