

INDUSTRY'S PIONEERS HAD VISION

# Markets for P.E.I. fish forecast 135 years ago

In this age of radio telephone, echo sounders, trawlers and factory ships it is relatively easy for many in the fishing industry to minimize or even forget the dreams, visions and accomplishments of the pioneers.

The jet and missile age was far off — 135 years to be exact — when a scheme was mooted to make this Island the principal station of an English joint stock company for carrying extensive fisheries in the Gulf of St. Lawrence with the employment of steam vessels. The proposal was outlined as follows in the London Courier (England) of August 22, 1827.

"The Gulf of St. Lawrence and its vicinity abounds with fish, namely cod, herring and mackerel; this is elucidated by a fact well established that on an average 2,000 sail of American shipping owned and manned the United States, resort annually to these shores for the purpose of catching cod fish, to which, as a matter of trade, they confine themselves. These are vessels of 100 to 150 tons burden, well equipped, and with crews on an average of at least ten men each, making a total of 20,000 men. They prefer this station to the Banks of Newfoundland, thus establishing the superiority of the fishing ground — they come through the Gulf of Canso, and proceed along the north shore of Prince Edward Island, by the coasts off the Bay of Chaleur, Gaspe, and up the straits of Belle Isle, along the coast of Labrador, somewhat to the northward of these straits, a distance of 1,000 miles to 1,300 miles from their own home.

"Two voyages are made by treaty from drying their fish on our shores, and therefore carry it back for that purpose to their own, split and salted, and from the great distance can thus make but two voyages in the season. They carry on their business scientifically and well, and the whole crews are generally partners in the fate of the trip, and are thus bound by self-interest to strenuous exertion. This far for the conduct and management of the fishermen of the United States, and as it is their constant manual practice, it may fairly be presumed to be profitable.

"As to the British side of the question, it is suggested that a Prince Edward Island, situated in this Gulf, and distant about 100 miles north of the north entrance of the Gulf of Canso, and 10 to 20 miles north from Nova Scotia, would be the most advantageous position for the general, or principal establishment of such a company.

"This Island abounds with fine harbors, and an ample supply of wood for ship building, and for all other purposes connected with the fisheries, and the shores are admirably fitted for all the necessary buildings and appendages for drying the fish. It is completely in the vicinity of all the fishing grounds named. Labrador, the most distant, may be from 100 to 150 leagues; there the fish, in the months of July and August, are successively abundant, and an extensive catch is regularly made.

"In addition to the cod, is the herring and mackerel fishery, for pickling and barreling. At Prince Edward Island and some of the adjacent harbors, herring arrive in immense shoals, in their easy draft of water — the month of May, to spawn in these harbors, where vessels could be easily loaded with them. And at Fox Island, near the south entrance of the Gulf of Canso, mackerel arrive in similar quantities in the month of October, so much so that fish equal to 1,000 barrels have occasionally been enclosed in one seine.

"To embrace these objects it is submitted that steam vessels of 300 to 400 ton burthen would prove a desirable medium. The great accommodation such vessels would afford on deck, for catching, cleaning and splitting the fish and saving the oil — these capacities storage below deck, and the ready access to the easy draft of water — the hands could be procured easily from Newfoundland to superintend and assist in the fishery, and a few men from the United States might be employed to instruct in their knowledge of the fishing grounds, and their system of catch which is superior to ours.

"A company to carry forward such objects, it is presumed, ought to possess a capital of at least 30,000 pounds solid; but one-fourth of this sum might be sufficient for a partial trial — say one steam-boat, with the necessary supplies of salt, seines, sails, etc., provisions and supplies for the men and other requisites, in temporary buildings on shore for necessary accommodation in the process, a should the speculation be found not to succeed, the property so vested would be, in a great degree, tangible, as far regarded the steam vessel, which could be sold or converted to other purposes.

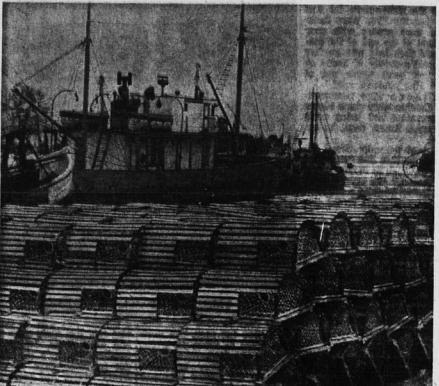
"As to the building of steam vessels, it is probable that nearly half the expense that is gone to in England might be saved by building in Prince Edward Island — the coppering, carving,

and high finishing of the interior would, for such purposes, be quite unnecessary; all wanted would be for the purpose of active effect and plain accommodation, and it is presumed they could be built there copper fastened, for six to seven pounds British per ton measurement, of the best American materials.

"The whole, it is thought that the project is well worthy investigation. The speculation appears widely different from many of those recently entered into, under the uncertain protection of Foreign Governments, while this may be considered a fair one and, contemplating objects of commercial importance, encouragement towards the progressive improvement of our Colonies in America, a great nursery for seamen, and thus a degree rivaling those who are in our own waters, making soft, but sure strides upon us in this serious particular.

home profit, speedy return, and encouragement towards the progressive improvement of our Colonies in America, a great nursery for seamen, and thus a degree rivaling those who are in our own waters, making soft, but sure strides upon us in this serious particular.

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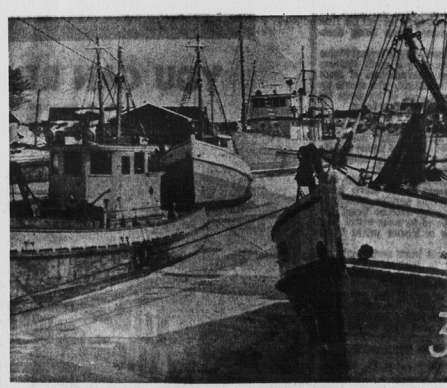
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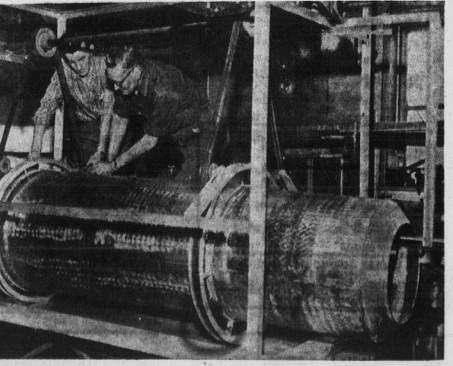
### Island misses lobster order

Although lobster is exported to European countries in fairly large quantities there is not enough caught to meet the demand in the North American continent. Only this Spring a buyer from Florida visited the Maritimes and sought to place an order for six to eight million pounds for distribution in the southern states. The order could not be filled.

Shipments of live lobster by air are increasing. The cruetans are crated in 50-pound boxes with dry shavings and in a very few hours are delivered to dealers mainly in France, England and Germany.

Sweden is probably the greatest lobster importing country followed by Germany and Denmark. Others include France, Switzerland, Holland and Finland.

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