

The Dutch, Mun said, were taking the bread out of our mouths, seeing that fishing was the foundation of their wealth and strength—in the words of a States proclamation of 1624, ‘the chiefest trade and principal gold mine of the United Provinces,’¹ and that it was carried out in British waters. ‘The glory and power of these Netherlanders . . . consisteth in this fishing of herrings, ling and cod in His Majesty’s seas.’² It will be remembered that in the year 1664, when Mun’s treatise first saw the light, Great Britain went to war with the Netherlands, and Henry Bennet, Lord Arlington, who gave the licence for its publication, and who was then Secretary of State, no doubt welcomed it as a brief against the Dutch, which would carry more weight in that it had not been written for the occasion but over thirty years previously, and as being calculated to bring home to Englishmen the strength of the Netherlands and their menace to England. The advantages derived by the Dutch from their fishing trade at the expense of Great Britain was a favourite theme in the seventeenth century. Writing in 1675, Roger Coke described the Dutch fishing trade as the basis of all their commerce, and wrote of the Dutchmen as for four months in the year following the herring in numerous fleets from Scotland to Yarmouth, and employing threefold more vessels and twofold more mariners than were employed by the English.³ In 1680 the author of ‘*Britannia Languens*’ wrote that ‘according to modern calculations the mere fishing trade for herring and cod

¹ P. 186.

² P. 188.

³ *A Discourse of Trade*, Treatises III and IV: *England’s Improvements in two parts*, Treatise IV (1675), p. 87.