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that sum. There is food to be had, it is true; but the means to purchase it is wanting." This shortage of cash forced settlers, particularly those in remote areas, to rely on credit with the few merchants who could afford to carry their debt. Such merchants as William Kidston in Baddeck, Peter Smyth at Port Hood, and William McKeen at Mabou imported large quantities of food for the starving settlers. McKeen, who was the chief merchant of Inverness County, had dealings from Cape North to Judique. The Reverend D. MacDonald in Cape North and Vicinity described the arrival of McKeen's ship during the famine. "At last McKeen's vessel with provisions arrived at Mabou, and word got quickly around. People gathered from North, South, East and West with empty bags and no money. A few had horses to carry sacks; the rest would carry loads home on their backs. McKeen hesitated to open the hatches. He told the people he could not afford to give away the cargo without pay. His credit would be gone. One Gaelic man asked what McKeen had said. He was told, and then came the exclamation in Gaelic, 'Oh Lord, how can we go home empty and our families starving?' Mr. McKeen asked what the man had said, and when told, he called to his men, 'Off the hatches, boys; we are not going to let people starve.'" Though the settlers went deeply in debt to these merchants, they all but worshipped them. Peter Smyth was later lauded, since he "never at any time refused an applicant for goods on credit, no matter how poor he was, or how impossible the prospect of payment. The calls on him in the hard cold year of 1848 were many." The most valuable commodity the settlers could exchange was their land. In 1849 alone, McKeen received, for nominal sums, 1,100 acres and continued accumulating settlers' properties until 1855. An example of this sort of transaction is seen in the case of a settler named John McKinnon who wrote an I.O.U. to McKeen for goods valued at \$11, on August 27, 1849. Less than two months later, McKinnon sold his 200 acres of land to McKeen for \$15.95.