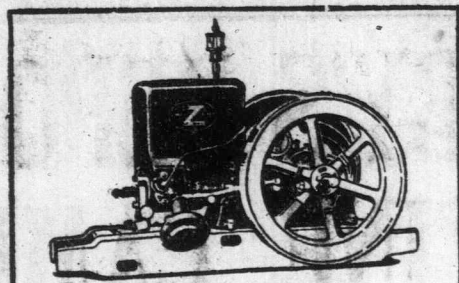


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The Newfoundland Fisheries

Lecture by Lord Morris
A full meeting of members gathered at the rooms of the British Sea Anglers' Society on October 30 to listen to a lecture by the Right Hon. Lord Morris, recently Prime Minister of Newfoundland, on "British Fishing in and Around Newfoundland." For over an hour, with the aid of lantern slides specially prepared, Lord Morris told an enthralled and delighted audience the story of the Newfoundland fisheries. He said that in this country we had been accustomed to associate Newfoundland entirely with its cod fishery, and to a certain extent this was correct, as the cod fishery was the great staple of Newfoundland. But he made it quite clear that a very large field for exploitation and development, even apart from the cod fishery, exists in Newfoundland waters. Newfoundland not only abounds in cod, but it has the monopoly of the great northern seal herds that come down from Baffin's Bay; its herring fishery, though at present limited, is capable of an extension quite equal to that of the Scotch herring fishery, and the fish itself, according to authorities (quoted by Lord Morris) who had visited Newfoundland recently, is quite equal to anything produced on our own coasts. Then again fishing for halibut, which is found in large quantities on many banks and fishing grounds, has not yet been seriously prosecuted by the Newfoundland fishermen; the product of the lobster fishery is cured, canned and exported—before the war it was very largely disposed of to Germany; fatfish of various descriptions abound all round the coast, and the fishing for these fish with hake, smelts, caplin and turbot, has also not yet been developed.

Lord Morris pointed out that in 1913 "wet" fish amounting to 600,000 tons was consumed in these islands working out at less than 1 1/2 oz. per head per day of the population, and this small quantity out of a general daily average of 40 oz. of food per head. If this small quantity was only doubled—and in the interests of cheap, nourishing, and healthy food it ought to be trebled—and if people ate 3 oz. of fish out of the 40 oz. of food they daily consumed, just eight times as much fish would be required in these islands as was at present caught annually off the whole coast of Newfoundland. This would give employment, Lord Morris said, to 140,000 returned soldiers, enabling each man to earn £100 in the fishing season of about seven months, and this increase in the amount of fish eaten would be in substitution of foods—very often inferior canned goods—not containing the essentials for building up the system, and more over, largely imported from outside the Empire. Not only so, but these 140,000 families, or, at five to a family, 700,000 people, who would help to fill up the fertile valleys of Newfoundland.

The same is true of the herring fishery. Never seriously prosecuted merely in sight of the fishermen's homes by dropping down nets, except for the winter herring fishery, prosecuted on the west coast and to a small extent on the north east coast, the whole value of the Newfoundland herring fishery today is only about £80,000. Inspector Duff, of the Scottish Fishery Board, who at the request of Lord Morris visited Newfoundland in 1914, says that this herring fishery can be made as valuable as the Newfoundland cod fishery, which in the year was worth over two and a half millions. This herring fishery would give employment to 32,000 more soldiers, yielding them £100 for the herring fishing season, and would still further help, not alone to give them permanent and comfortable homes but also to settle and develop Newfoundland itself.

Lord Morris went on to say that there was no question whatever as to a market for this increased supply because not only did England require it, but the whole world would show an increased demand for fish owing to the decrease in the production of meat and the increased price. Lord Morris also stated that millions might be made in the development of fisheries in Newfoundland that up to today had hardly been touched. Dogfish, eels, sea-bream, skate, haddock, which are found everywhere off Newfoundland, smelts, caplin, hake, turbot and other varieties of fish might all be caught in much greater numbers. Hitherto the whole of a catch of cod was salted down, dried, and cured in the sun, and sent to the Mediterranean markets—Spain, Italy, Greece and Portugal—and to Brazil and the West Indies. The salmon and lobsters were canned, and the herring salted for the American and Canadian markets, and the seal fat and skins exported to England and the United States. Only last year, for the first time, an up-to-date cold storage plant, with refrigerators for the railways, which now traverse the whole of Newfoundland and touch all the important bays and

fishing settlements, was installed by the Reid Newfoundland Company, whose headquarters are at St. John's, and who operate, under lease, the whole of the Newfoundland lines. With a system of cold storage in the small steamboats around the bays, as well as the refrigerator cars on the branch lines of the railways, a very large portion of the codfish, as well as other fish, are certain to be cold-stored after the close of the war and sent to this country, as well as to the United States and Canada.

Lord Morris said he had pointed out over and over again the value as food for the people of these islands of some of the unknown Newfoundland fish. He particularly mentioned the caplin, a small fish of about 6in., which comes in to spawn on the sandy beach in June. The coasts of the country are then black with this fish, which is most deliciously appetising, and tourists, American, English and Canadian visiting Newfoundland have said that there is nothing like it. It compares favourably with any edible fish, and if landed fresh it would command any price. There are millions of tons all round the beaches, and the Newfoundland people use them as a fertiliser. All that it is necessary to do is to go down on the beaches and shovel them up. They are about the size of an ordinary smelt.

When we know what has been accomplished in bringing the Scottish fishery to what it is today, it can be readily understood what immense possibilities await development on the Newfoundland fishing banks when seriously taken up. The Scottish herring fishery in 1913 was worth three millions, and employed over 61,000 persons, who handled one and a half million barrels. To show how proper prosecution, proper curing, proper barrelling, proper salting, proper packing, and, above all, Government branding has developed this fishery, Lord Morris pointed out that the total catch in 1809, a little over a hundred years ago, was only thirty-four thousand barrels, worth about £34,000, while today the catch was worth three millions. As Mr. Duff in his report pointed out, "the herring fishery in Newfoundland is practically untapped and possesses the greatest possibilities." For years before the war there was a serious shortage of beef-cattle in the world, and the situation has become worse as a result of war demands. The American authorities now pronounce the situation as daily growing more serious and acute, the slaughter of breeding cattle aggravating its gravity. The shortage at home here would not be so serious a matter, from the consumer's standpoint, if there were an abundant supply in other countries, but this is not the case, because statistics show that while the population of the various countries that rear cattle has been increased, a considerable decrease has taken place in these countries in the reduction of cattle.

No one who heard the lecture but was satisfied that here indeed is an opportunity for capitalists to invest money in one of our dominions in great ocean farms, that, as Lord Morris said, required no seeding, no ploughing, and no fertilising to enable them to gather rich harvests in their barns.

The lecture was accompanied by a large number of excellent lantern slides, which were shown by Mr. J. Cooper Ashton.

The chair was taken by Mr. Cecil Harmsworth, M.P.

After Lord Morris's lecture a vote of thanks to him was proposed by Mr. Hannam, seconded by the chairman (Mr. Cecil Harmsworth), supported by Mr. R. Blair, and carried unanimously. A vote of thanks to the chairman was proposed by Mr. Stern, seconded by Mr. C. Wallington, and carried unanimously. In replying to Mr. Harmsworth said that it had been a great pleasure to him to preside at the meeting. With regard to the prevalent idea that Newfoundland was a land of mist and fogs, this was a popular delusion, as the climate was a very good one, and it was a country of infinite possibilities as regards sport, particularly fishing, both sea and salt water. He had himself, he said, done a good deal of freshwater fishing there, and he had found the land-locked salmon (the ouananiche) the most sporting fish he had ever handled.

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THE QUEST OF THE WISE MEN

Why and wherefore, pilgrims,
O'er the dreary sands?
Seek ye scenes of splendor
In Judean lands?
Wisdom, might, or glory,
Majesty or grace?
"Nay! to lookin wonder
On a Baby's Face."
Why and wherefore, pilgrims,
O'er the desert waste?
Hath Judea guerdons,
That ye come with haste?
Seek ye rank and honor,
Come ye here to shine?
"Nay to bow in worship
To the Babe divine."
Why and wherefore, pilgrims,
O'er the mountains cold?
Think you that Judea
Holdeth stores of gold?
Would you laud its richness
On your camels' fleet?
"Nay! we lay our treasures
At the Baby's feet."
—C. J. Junkin.



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