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OUR POINT OF VIEW

Monopolies On Labrador

AMONG the outward passengers of the Florizel last Saturday we notice the name of Mr. James Hansen. Mr. Hansen is the gentleman who was brought here from Labrador, at the instance of the Government, and has been sent back to New York, whither he had come a little while ago.

It seems this gentleman had engaged in the fur buying business on Labrador, and in some manner, being a stranger we suppose, aroused the suspicion in somebody's little mind that he was a German spy.

In the present hysterical state of the popular mind such a suspicion soon magnifies itself into a certainty and the certainty grows until a state of alarm is engendered that will not be laid until the object of the first little narrow suspicion is removed from sight and ken. That accomplished the agitation soon settles down and the incident is closed, but in the case of Mr. Hansen, the incident is not by any means closed, if we are correctly advised.

We had not the pleasure of seeing the gentleman when he was in town, but from what we can learn, he intends to push the matter of what he considers undue interference with his perfectly legitimate business, and unnecessary losses to which he has been subjected. Mr. Hansen claims to be a British subject, though residing in the United States.

There is a strong suspicion in the minds of the public that the Government has not been very wisely advised in this matter, and that there has been an undignified precipitation on the part of the Department of Justice or the military (?) whoever is responsible for the outrage against a bona fide British subject.

Why has Mr. Hansen been deported, who will volunteer a straight forward answer to this question. It is a subject which demands immediate attention, for it affects more than Mr. Hansen. Have the monopolistic Hudson Bay Trading Company had anything to do in the proceedings?

Is there anything of the Fox and the Shepherd dramatic incident in it? If there is, then it will be highly interesting to note, if the Department of Justice, which is the shepherd in this case, will make proper enquiry into the motives which moved the crafty insinuating fox, to complain of this supposed wolf.

Has the H.B. Co. found Mr. Hansen too generous on the Lab-

rador and for that reason desirous of getting rid of him, as some people suppose. It is time at any rate that a strict enquiry be held into the dealings of that large company which controls such a bulk of the business of the Labrador Coast. But where will we find a government with the courage to tackle the question.

Hudson Bay factors are in all cases also Post Masters and we do not consider this a proper arrangement. Mail couriers are frequently employees of the company, and it is said that there is a great deal of discrimination in the matter of delivery of the mail.

In all cases, we are informed where the weight of mail forbids the portaging of the whole bulk there is discrimination in favor of the H.B. Co. This we contend is unjust, and if this injustice is being committed, it should be put a stop to. The poor have as much right to get their letters on time as have the factors of the H.B. Co. It is possible too that this keeping of letters may result in big losses to independent dealers in furs, by giving the H.B. Co. unfair advantages.

Returning to Mr. Hansen's case, it seems to us to be very unfair to have taken him from Labrador, where he was prepared to spend so much money among the poor people along that shore, and where his presence as a fair competitor in the fur buying was sure to result in the best prices to all.

By removing him not only has an injustice been done him and his company, but a great injury has been done the people among whom he traded, because they have been robbed of a chance to get some good honest American money, a something they cannot get in the H.B. Co. stores, or anything that might be considered equivalent to it. At the H.B. Co. stores it is a question of barter, and very little cash is ever passed out over the counter.

We fear that the Government has acted very much against the welfare of the poor people of Labrador, in their hasty and ill considered deportation of Mr. Hansen. It is also a blow against the whole country. This is a time when we should be holding out every fair inducement to American capital, and not antagonizing it. We are not likely to receive much from England or Canada for some time to come, therefore we should be more circumspect in our conduct towards any gentleman who may come here from the United States.

Mr. Hansen was no mere paltry adventurer. As far as we can learn, he has considerable wealth behind him, and is also very influential.

From enquiries here in town among those with whom he has had any business dealings we find that there is a feeling of great respect for him and also one of regret, that he has been so harshly dealt with.

The question is asked, why was Mr. Hansen deported, why? If he was a spy the proper place for him would have been Donovan's. He was allowed full liberties here in town, and is now on his way to New York where nobody can prevent him unloading any information he may possess. It seems a ridiculous procedure from beginning to end, but is perfectly in harmony with the qualities of the gentlemen who have by some freak obtained the reins of Government.

"What will Germany do when the fall rains begin in Russia, to be followed by the heavy snows of the land of the Slav?"

The Ottawa Journal says in reference to this utterance of a "spasm"-producing morning contemporary:

"Haven't we been depending just a little too much on the snow and some other more or less Heavenly things to beat the Germans?"

Proceedings of the House of Assembly

DR. LLOYD—A little while ago, Mr. Chairman, we were discussing expenditures on executive responsibility. We are debating now, not expenditure on executive responsibility, but taxation on executive authority. What is the difference? My objection is that the executive council should not have any say in the matter. It is the function of this House not of the executive council to decide such matters. If there are to be changes made, let them be made here.

MR. MORINE—Mr. Chairman, I don't see the advantage of this bill. I ask the Government to drop this two cent business. This will bring in no or very little revenue as far as I can see, and will confuse and worry everyone. The increase in revenue will not justify the trouble that will result. If I were to buy anything at any of the large stores, I should not ask them to put a stamp on a receipt that I get there. Most of the people will not know about this new law. Take our fishermen for instance, what will they know about these stamps? Then by and by they may find out that their receipts must be stamped. It was the experience of Canada some years ago that this sort of thing was not desirable and did not work at all; and so they abandoned it. I urge upon the Government very strongly to abandon this idea.

MR. HICKMAN—Mr. Chairman, in the case of a Bill of Lading where a vessel is chartered, the person who chartered the vessel had to put the stamp on the Bill, but the man who owns the vessel should do that. The thing ought to be clearly defined; otherwise there is going to be a lot of confusion as there was last year. If a fisherman who sells his fish has got to give a receipt, it should be specified whether he is to put a two cent stamp on that receipt or not.

MR. GRIMES—Mr. Chairman, I should like to say a few words in connection with this matter. This stamp duty has already caused great confusion. The first time it went into force, there was a lot of difference of opinion as to who should put the stamp on the cheque. The practice of this new rule is sure to end in a lot of confusion. Then there is room for great deal of fraud, because the giver, knowing that he can cancel it himself, can put any sort of a stamp on it. The Government would save a lot of trouble if they made it that the person who received it should put the stamp on it.

MR. HALFYARD—Mr. Chairman, his bill is going to create a lot of confusion and be a nuisance generally. If you were to depend on this for revenue you would find yourself in a very bad condition. The Government ought to get their revenue in some other way. It will only take up a lot of time and labour. We are too busy to have to put a two cent stamp on every receipt that is issued.

MR. WINSOR—Mr. Chairman, there is something that I wish to understand about this bill. Who has to put the two cent stamp on the receipt? If a receipt is not given, what about it then? I oppose the measure for his reason. A lot of trouble is going to follow from this.

MR. LLOYD—Mr. Chairman, there is one other point; an ordinary bill is not a receipt unless it is marked paid, is it not possible that a person could pay for his goods without taking his receipt? I have too much respect for the loyalty of the people in these districts not to feel that they will with pleasure put a stamp on their receipts, in the same way as will be done all over the country. It is only a temporary law and we all hope and trust that it will not be of long duration. Now I would like to point out to my friend that this will not be as great a hardship as has been suggested, and the great amount of revenue is going to come from the people doing the big volume of business, and the casual man and the small business man will not be inconvenienced to the extent suggested here.

HON. MINISTER FINANCE AND CUSTOMS—About \$25,000.

MR. COAKER—Then you must have a wonderful idea of how many receipts there will be if you can estimate it that way. You will do well if you get \$5,000.

RT. HON. PRIME MINISTER—If we get only \$5,000 it cannot cause much inconvenience.

MR. COAKER—Even then it will cause inconvenience. Put a tax on something else that will not cause so much trouble, and if you want \$25,000 you will get it. You have told us that this is a war tax; but even if it is I intend to vote against it. I do not intend to go to the Northern Districts, or any outpost and try to justify voting for putting a two cent tax upon receipts. I voted for every other one of your war taxes, but I am not going to vote for this.

MR. CLIFT—Mr. Chairman, I think the last time this matter was up it was deferred by the Minister because

it was too indefinite. The meaning of the word "receipt" was not properly defined, and it does not seem any more clearly defined in the present Bill.

HON. MINISTER FINANCE AND CUSTOMS—It says: "receipt for any sum of money exceeding ten dollars."

MR. CLIFT—It seems to me to be indefinite, and it does not say who shall pay the tax. It seems too indefinite to vote upon in its present form.

HON. MINISTER FINANCE AND CUSTOMS—The man who gives the receipt pays the money.

MR. CLIFT—That may be your opinion, but it does not say so in the Act. I am not objecting to the matter of taxation; but you might put a special tax of one cent on letters like they do in Canada. That would be better than putting it on receipts. While not objecting to the tax itself, I think it ought to be got differently. Any measure imposing taxation ought to be definite, so that we shall know exactly who has to pay the tax. There is no penalty for not putting on these stamps on receipts, and nobody charged with the duty of seeing that it is done. I would suggest that the Minister reconsider the matter.

MR. KENT—I think there is a general penalty in the Act of 1898, I am not referring to the Act passed last year; but I mean the Act of 1898. I think there is some penalty for issuing unstamped documents.

MR. HIGGINS—Mr. Chairman, in the War Session Act of 1914, there is a penalty of \$10 for drawing cheques on a bank and not stamping them, and I think in the Stamp Act of 1898 there is a general penalty for not stamping documents which require to be stamped, and it would appear that that hardily could be enforced in cases under the present Act. There is one principle I think that the hon. member opposite ought to bear in mind, and that is the principle which the hon. member for Trinity, Dr. Lloyd, suggested. As he has suggested we are now dealing with a war tax and I do not think that this enactment any more than the measure of 1914, ought to be viewed merely in the spirit of taxation such as would be levied in ordinary circumstances. It is merely a war tax, such as is being levied everywhere else.

Now there is another point. We must all acknowledge that there was considerable force in the position that Opposition took the last time this matter was up, that two dollar receipts were too small to levy this tax on; but now we must remember that ten dollars is the amount. That I think, fairly corresponds with the class of receipts that are taxed in other countries. Again, it must be remembered that it is not much of a hardship on a man who is paid ten dollars to put a two cent stamp on the receipt. I do not think that men will do as suggested by the hon. member for Brigus, make out a number of small receipts in order to evade this two cent tax. Of course it may cause a temporary upset and confusion, and there will no doubt be people from whom we will not get this tax at all; but I think generally, Sir, you will find that as in the case of the 1914 enactment in the main the people from whom we get the revenue will follow out the law.

Now I am sure my friend, Mr. Winsor, did not mean what he said about the trouble this tax is going to cause for the Government in the Northern Districts. I have too much respect for the loyalty of the people in these districts not to feel that they will with pleasure put a stamp on their receipts, in the same way as will be done all over the country. It is only a temporary law and we all hope and trust that it will not be of long duration. Now I would like to point out to my friend that this will not be as great a hardship as has been suggested, and the great amount of revenue is going to come from the people doing the big volume of business, and the casual man and the small business man will not be inconvenienced to the extent suggested here.

MR. MORINE—Mr. Chairman, that is a very clever bit of special pleading. Apparently you can cover anything under the name of war and then it becomes right. This is no more a war tax than any other tax. It is all going into the Consolidated Revenue Fund, and is all to be spent for the general requirements of the country. It is not a question of raising money to spend on war, but as to where we are going to get money to pay our bills. It is a very clever bit of special pleading.

MR. HIGGINS—I only spoke on the same lines as the hon. member for Trinity, Dr. Lloyd.

MR. MORINE—If that is so, I disagree with him also. It is not a question of how we are going to spend the money, but how we are going to raise it; and we should not raise it

in this way. Now it would be much better to put an additional cent on letters and have the postage three cents instead of two.

Now the point has been raised that a receipt need not be stamped to make it valid. I need only be stamped when you have tabled it in court. Not one in ten thousand will ever come before Court; and if one does, you can stamp it before going into Court. This enactment is altogether unsuited to our conditions of business. It is true that this stamping of receipts is common in the Old Country, but there conditions are altogether different from here. It is going to cause great confusion and inconvenience. Now I do not object to your getting this revenue, but I think you ought to get it in some more suitable way; and do not try to justify everything with the plea of war. If you have to raise this money raise it some other way.

MR. LLOYD—Mr. Chairman: I still adhere to my statement that this is a war tax. This method of taxation was introduced last session—the War Session—and this Bill is merely an amendment of the Act passed then. These taxes were found necessary to meet the conditions that then were I do not say it is a better way of raising revenue than by increasing the postage on letters; but it is infinitely better than trying to raise it through the Custom House, where the cost of collection would come out of the revenue.

MR. MORINE—I entirely disagree with my learned friend. The cost of collecting the revenue would not be increased one iota. You have all the necessary machinery there now. This enactment is altogether undesirable. It can be violated in a thousand ways and the amount you will get from it is small.

Mr. Morine proposed an amendment which was lost.

Mr. Coaker proposed an amendment which was lost.

MR. CLIFT—Before you put the vote I wish to say that I shall vote against the Bill because I consider it too indefinite.

MR. KENT—I am going to vote against the amendment. My reason is this. I consider the responsibility for this tax rests upon the Government, and I have already expressed the opinion that I do not like the tax. I think it is wrong and going to lead to confusion, but at the present time in a matter of this kind, I think the responsibility rests on the Government and I am going to vote against the amendment.

Mr. Speaker resumed the Chair.

The Chairman from the Committee reported that they had considered the matter to them referred, had passed the Resolutions without amendment, and recommended the introduction of a Bill to give effect to the same.

On motion this Report was received.

On motion for the adoption of the Report Mr. Morine moved an amendment that the second Resolutions be stricken out.

Whereupon the House divided, and there appeared for the amendment:—Messrs. Morine, Clift, Hickman, Coaker, Halfyard, Jennings, Targett, Winsor, Abbott, Grimes, (10); and against it: Rt. Hon. the Premier, Min. of Finance, C. H. Emerson, J. C. Crosbie, Minister of Marine and Fisheries, Messrs. Devereaux, Downey, Morris, Moore, Moulton, Parsons, LeFevre, Currie, Higgins, G. Kennedy, Young, Walsh, Kent, Lloyd, Stone (22); so it passed in the negative.

Whereupon the original motion was put, and there appeared for it: Right Hon. the Prime Minister, Hons. Colonial Secretary, Minister of Finance, C. H. Emerson, J. C. Crosbie, Minister of Marine and Fisheries, Minister of Public Works, Messrs. Devereaux, Downey, Morris, Moore Moulton, Parsons, LeFevre, Currie, Higgins, G. Kennedy, Young, Walsh, Kent, Lloyd, Stone (22); and against it: Messrs. Morine, Clift, Hickman, Coaker, Halfyard, Jennings, Targett, Winsor, Abbott, Grimes (10); so it passed in the affirmative and was ordered accordingly.

The bill entitled "An Act to amend 5 Geo. V., Sess. 1, Cap. 10, entitled 'An Act respecting Stamp Duties,'" was then introduced and read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time on to-morrow.

At half past 6 o'clock, Mr. Speaker left the Chair until 8 o'clock.

Kind words are never lost—unless a woman puts them in a letter and gives them to her husband to mail.

A man may deliver a convincing barroom oration concerning a free country, and then be required to put his money on the counter before being served.

"Why do they speak of the execution of painting?" "Because in the natural order of things it's got to be hung."—Baltimore American.

THE HARVEST OF THE SEA.

Interesting and Useful to The Toilers of the Sea.

AMERICAN CUSSEDNESS

Americans seem to have singular methods of interpreting laws, and even in the fish trade, we find them hair-splitting. Since the enactment known as the Underwood Tariff went into operation, several shipments of salt-bulk codfish have gone into the United States markets, from Nova Scotian ports and from Newfoundland. Recently the customs' officials have been working overtime to hamper the importation of salt-bulk fish.

A singular incident in connection with this gnat-straining process occurred some time ago in connection with a shipment of fish to the firm of Cunningham & Thompson of Gloucester, Mass., a firm that does a large business on our West Coast. The cargo was held up by the U.S. Customs and appraised by them as "boneless cod," subject to a duty of 3/4 cents per pound. The consignees paid the duty under protest and have referred the matter to the Washington authorities.

"It seems to us," says The Canadian Fisherman, "that the United States Customs people are hair-splitting in this case and seeking an excuse to place a tariff upon a largely imported article. Everybody in the fish trade knows that salt-bulk is not 'boneless' in the accepted sense of the term, nor is it sold as boneless fish. If such quibbling is to be followed up, the so-called 'Free Fish' is liable to become but an empty phrase."

The question is now before Washington for adjustment; and as we are largely interested in the decision of the Government on the subject, we shall watch the ruling with considerable interest. Uncle Samuel does rather strange things occasionally, and one never knows "what's goin' to happen next!"

CHASING RAINBOWS

This paragraph has nothing to do with meteoric phenomena, nor has it any reference to the Newfoundland Game Protection Society's "helping" our inland fisheries by the re-stocking of the ponds around St. John's with Rainbow Trout; it deals with something of deep interest to our toilers—the younger generation especially who may be afflicted with wanderlust (nothing to do with German spies!)

A Canadian exchange says: "Many fishermen have drifted out to British Columbia only to find that her fisheries are spasmodic. During the 'runs' of the salmon there is plenty of work. The other great branch of the industry, the Halibut fishery, is out of the reach of the shore fisherman. British Columbia's waters swarm with other fish, commonly called 'small fish,' such as herring, smelts, soles, etc. But the market for these at present is so limited that the fisherman has not much encouragement to follow these 'small.'

"Again, the newly arrived fisherman found that with the building up of a new country, he can make more money at other trades. The Canadian and Newfoundland fisherman is essentially a 'handy man' so that big wages offered in building and such trades, drew him away from his original occupation. Real estate with its tempting opportunities also spread its lure over the fisherman. But now he finds, owing to economic conditions, that he has to fall back on his old calling; and he has discovered that his field is very limited."

We commend this to our young fishermen, and advise them strongly that, if they spent half as much energy in developing our own fishing possibilities as they must abroad, they would be much more comfortable, and decidedly more

prosperous. Here in Newfoundland, living is less expensive, and our needs are fewer than elsewhere.

AN INTERESTING NOTE

Several New York firms keep regular agents in Norway who devote their exclusive attention to fishery matters. The reports from these agents are in the main most reliable, so they have an interest for us.

The agents report that the fisheries are now over. Sixty-seven million codfish have been caught, of which a little short of 15,000,000 have been prepared for round fish, against about 18,000,000 from a catch of about 81,000,000 last season. About 1,800,000 pounds of splitfish were prepared, against about 2,900,000 pounds last season.

"This," says an American exchange, "shows quite a shortage and indicates high prices for stock fish this coming season."

Brief and Breezy

T. P. O'Connor is optimistic about the condition of Britain and her Allies just now, and he sees as they are in England. Writing to The Chicago Tribune of recent date he says:

"A year after the opening of the war leaves England under the almost universal impression that her positions are enormously stronger than at the beginning. Her unpreparedness in men and munitions is being gradually overtaken, and while admitting that the war will be longer and more costly than was anticipated, she has confidence that her superiority with her Allies, over Germany makes her exhaustion impossible, and Germany's certain."

Germany seems willing to pay a high price for the neutrality of Bulgaria; but if the Bulgarians have any political brains it is hard to understand how they can benefit by such action. Germany offers Bulgaria a bait in the way of territory; but even were she victorious, does anybody imagine that Berlin would keep its pace with the Balkans longer than it would be profitable to the Kaiser?

Germany is bankrupt in international morals and will remain bankrupt for years to come. The story of the "scrap of paper" will live in history; and the world will for many generations be inclined to write an interrogation mark after the good faith and morality of the Germans.

The Balkan problem has now reached an acute stage. So many factors enter into it, that the solution is difficult in the extreme.

First, there is the presence of a immense army on the northern frontier; and the German hordes are an immediate fact. They have swarmed across Galicia and over marshes of Poland, and they are now a menace to Roumania. Then Roumania and Bulgaria have large harvests to sell. Russia will not be a purchaser; Turkey is willing to buy but is unable to pay. Germany still has gold to lavish—on those who are friendly to her. Now that Italy has declared war against Germany and Turkey it seems possible that Roumania is likely to side with the country with which it has so much in common. Then, on the other hand, Bulgaria has a king, as Teutonic as the Butcher of Potsdam. Heaven only knows what will be the outcome.

Hatred of the Turk is almost negative; fear of the Hun is positive; and the Hun is at the gate. If we add to this the other outstanding factor—Oriental dislike of definite and binding decisions, the impulse to procrastinate and dissemble—we have an idea of the seriousness of the problem which diplomacy has not yet solved. The outcome is causing great anxiety in both Teuton and Allied camps.

It is understood that a female impostor was properly shown up in Long Island society recently, she never having been raided at the faro game.