

An Appreciation of
Newfoundland.

(By R. E. Grosnell, of the "Canada Food Board" Party.)

Julius Caesar once paid a visit to Great Britain to which he wasn't invited, and afterwards wrote about it in a book, in which he said: "I came, I saw, I conquered." The circumstances of our coming to Newfoundland were somewhat different to those which induced Caesar to make this descent on an unsuspecting people over two thousand years ago. I have started off with: "We came, we saw, we were conquered." For the sake of maintaining literary form I should have written the introduction as Caesar would have written it; that is Mr. Greenwood, the only one of the party who really gives himself on his Latin, was not quite sure of the proper use of the phrase, or whether it was the mood in which it should be rendered, I was forced to make considerations of safety to write the plain English: "We were conquered." I do not know that had I said it in Latin it would have been any nearer the truth. We had some ideas, at least I had, and I think I can speak for Mr. Greenwood as well, that our entrance on this island would constitute a sort of "do resistance" on our part. On the contrary we were overcome, welcomed, and pleasantly put in our places, and after all we found it much nicer and more comfortable than if we had been able to cling to the original notion of carrying all before us. We were taken completely in hand. Every one from His Excellency down, or from every one to His Excellency up, handled us, not exactly with gloves, but with a subtle reassurance showing of hospitality that left in the hearts of each of us an indelible desire to come again. The very of St. John's were not rudely thrust into our face, it is true, but everywhere we went we found them waiting before us. We found the smiles all on the outside, each bearing the alluring legend of "Pull the string and walk in. I even saw in one of the St. John's newspapers editorial reference to "our distinguished visitors," and I immediately cut it out and placed it in my scrap book of treasured memories. Never were we so impressed with the significance of the scriptural truth of prophets being without honour in their own country. I am speaking in the collective sense. I do not see this instance wish to involve the Lord Controller of Canada, or my friend, Greenwood. It is entirely the editorial sense that "we" is used. Here we were—I mean I was—enjoying a sensation new in life. It was all very pleasant and even to the "intoxicating" in the richest metaphorical sense—how otherwise just now?—and if the good people of St. John's can ever feel regret for their kindness and trouble in making a few days' visit pleasant, the fact that three men who came as strangers to their city, went away feeling thoroughly at home, highly pleased with everything, and tickled to death with themselves, must be the reward. We have no other reward to show, having an appreciation of favors which even Mr. Greenwood, in the richness of his vocabulary has not the language to properly express.

When we landed in this country we were speculating on the possibilities of the future. When I am in a boat or train the first thing that presents itself to my mind—and the Lord Controller of Canada has something of the same mental kink—is what will this country grow? What is good for? And we speculated on the possibilities of the future as we saw it. I understand that it was the last winter, now Lord Morris, who made himself famous by expounding a policy of making two blades of grass grow where only one grew before, good many of the Newfoundlanders took him too literally, but all the time the policy is a sound one to follow as an ideal in production. If a country leans too much on one resource, as we did for a time in British Columbia on real estate, on wheat, or on fish as they do in New-

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foundland, the country is bound to have its years of lean and its years of fat alternating as its particular staple production is affected by conditions each year. If this country has had its great "ups and downs" as its historians tell us, it is because of the too entire dependence in the past on its one great resource, fish. So that diversification of industry to the fullest possible extent is a most important factor of success. If one thing fails something else is bound to make good.

After getting on the trail at Port aux Basques we were wondering for many hours as we were not asleep what could be made of what is lying dormant. It isn't really the kind of country you see from the car windows that one can flatter the people about. It isn't a case of where "every prospect pleases," but exactly out of such resources as lie revealed here and there may a country become great. Making two blades of grass grow where one grew before means doubling your produce and then doubling them again if possible. Ten millions of acres of peat in the way of fuel and fertilizer and farming ought to be of untold value. It is a question of finding out how they may be made valuable. With plenty of lime, and the admixture of sand and gravel, peat can be made into valuable meadow land. I thought of your blueberries, your strawberries and raspberries, wild cranberries, and your partridge berries, and bask apples which grow in such profusion all over the island as sources of big and profitable industry. It utilized commercially. I thought of the possibilities of hay, of potatoes and other root crops and of live stock, the most potential of all industries in Canada and Newfoundland or of almost any other country. I have come to the conclusion, after a week in the country, that notwithstanding that 99 per cent of the population is native born the people of Newfoundland have not yet waked up to their own possibilities. You know there is such a thing as living with people all your lives and still not knowing them; and the same is true of the ordinary things by which we are surrounded. We get so familiar with them that we do not appraise their value properly. One of your historians, for instance, tells us that Newfoundland has the best and purest water in the world. Not being exactly a prohibitionist I did not at first appreciate the value of that fact as I might have done, coming from another dry belt; nevertheless, with the "ponds" it has, Newfoundland should become the greatest fresh water fish country in the world. The lakes should be kept well stocked up for all time to come. We have discovered in Canada since the war broke out that our great lakes are a mine of wealth, not only for ourselves, but for the United States, our partners in the war. In the development of a dairy industry, for which Newfoundland is admirably suited, pure water and plenty of it is a prime essential.

One thing particularly striking and significant is that from one end of the island to the other everywhere there was a bit of ground devoted to potatoes or roots of any kind, or to hay, the crop was splendid—vividly green and healthy. There can be no better proof of capabilities than that. I saw a farm in the vicinity of St. John's which had been developed out of land, which in its original state (a sample of which still exists) gave but the smallest promise. I never saw better timothy than around the city of St. John's. A hand book of the island published under very respectable auspices tells us that the area of agricultural lands is 7,000 square miles, or about 4,500,000 acres. In our own province of British Columbia, which is not strictly speaking an agricultural country, because only about one-twentieth of it is susceptible to agriculture, last year's total production was valued at \$35,000,000. Only a very small acreage if the total farming lands is yet under cultivation, and if your farm lands of Newfoundland were all under cultivation and produced at the same rate per acre you would have a production of \$450,000,000. Of course, no country, except perhaps, Germany or Denmark ever does produce the limit of its ability. I am only hinting at possibilities.

Talking about fish, Newfoundland owes its existence and everything it has to fish and it would be the veriest impertinence for any person to come to St. John's and try to tell anybody about it. Coming, however, from another fish province, in which about one-half of the whole production of Canada is found, one might be pardoned for saying something even about fish. The greatest future of Newfoundland, as that of all of Canada, will be found to be bound up in cold storage, and in the standardization of fish commercially, whether dried, preserved or fresh. The possibilities of improved modern methods and co-operation are simply immense. All my life I have believed that the solution of labor troubles, which are not by any means peculiar to Newfoundland, is co-operation. Capitalism and labor, notwithstanding all their acute differences, will yet work together for a common purpose and a common profit. The big interest and the big industry is apt to be regarded with suspicion, but either simply represents the organization of money and resources on a commercial basis—the nation's ability to carry on and do what otherwise would be impossible in a small individual way. We saw in St. John's the beginning of a great industry, whereby a resource of the country in a new way can be utilized profitably to all concerned. You have a cold storage plant, which has cost an immense sum of money, but which has not yet shipped a pound of fish. An industry founded on faith in the fresh fish future of the Ancient Colony and right business ideas. It is very perfect in all its details and only in Prince Rupert in British Columbia is there a bigger plant in British North America. Through cold storage Prince Rupert has been enabled to become the fish emporium of the North Pacific Coast, and in St. John's the fishermen are finding and will continue to find great benefits from its establishment. The old method of drying of codfish will never die out, because there is market peculiarly its own for a product that has worldwide fame; but along side of it will develop the cold storage system, the importance of which is so great that we think that Canada should in her own interests give it all possible assistance and encouragement. On cold storage from a live stock point of view, which only be said to include at its widest angle fish, cattle, sheep, hogs, cheese, butter and eggs, the future of Canada depends in a peculiar way. It ought to be regarded as a national policy.

I have often had to walk the rope metaphorically speaking, but I never saw a rope walk until I came to Newfoundland. It is an industry peculiar to the requirements of the country. You can't beat it. Some time or other big industries will develop besides cold storage and rope-walks. If the vision of the famous geologists and mineralogists who have visited this country was good, you will also have shipbuilding on a large scale, iron and steel works, and smelters. Unfortunately for St. John's perhaps, Sydney owns the iron deposits so far developed, and on account of which that city is building up a possible Pittsburgh but the iron had to be taken to the coal or the coal to the iron. The object lesson is, however, apparent in keeping your natural resources as much as possible at home and developing them locally. The pamphlet to which I have already referred speaks of a long list of minerals in which appear in addition to iron and coal and copper, nickel, cobalt, manganese, asbestos, clays and also limestone. These are among the elements of a country based on big industry under modern conditions to which must be added forest and water power. I have not referred to your pulp and lumber industries, which we understand are operated on a large scale, but which limitations of time did not permit us to see. In Canada we have not all that Newfoundland has to the same extent, nor has Newfoundland all that Canada has; but between the two countries we have everything, along with the West Indies, to make a self-contained Empire in North America.

Newfoundland is an ideal country for sheep and goats; and the people ought really to make more out of wool and mutton than out of their codfish. Your caribou is a species of reindeer and, therefore, your country is ideal for reindeer, of which on your present waste land you ought to have a herd of at least one million. I have it on the highest authority that the caribou crossed with the Lapland reindeer, will give a perfect domestic animal, suited to your requirements. The reindeer moss upon which the caribou feed is everywhere and in abundance. You may look upon your caribou rather in the way of an asset for sportmen. To me it is not sport to kill. Our excuse in the way of game killing should be for human food. Your caribou should be conserved for food and not slaughtered simply for the sake of their heads. Newfoundland, like Vancouver Island on the Pacific Coast, stands out as one of the keeps of the British Empire, a sentinel, an outpost, and has a remarkable strategic importance in relation to the Empire and to British North America. Nature has made Newfoundland the keeper of the Atlantic Coast so far as British interests are concerned. It is its position as such which must determine the political future of Newfoundland. It is the keynote to much bigger things that have yet been predicted of it. Having an appreciation of its political and material possibilities and of all we have seen and heard a week's stay, I think I can speak for our humble delegation when I say that we were surprised and delighted beyond the power of appropriate expression and with what the good people of St. John's did for us. I feel certain that Mr. Thomson, as in a sense food dispenser for the Dominion, will keep the requirements of Newfoundland fully in mind and that in this and in every other way in which he can voice the wishes and sentiments of the Dominion of Newfoundland at Ottawa conformable with their best interests, he will do so. Mr. Thomson has his own way of arriving at results and he always gets them. We wish to thank the citizens for a supply of literature, which included the writings of Sir Patrick McGrath, Mayor Goaling and Messrs. LeMessurier and Prowse. It is a credit to any country from every point of view. While I write this, Messrs. Thomson and Greenwood are deeply absorbed in their pages. By the time they reach Ottawa they will know Newfoundland by heart as well as have it at heart. We have now reached Port aux Basques with the whole hinterland behind us and the sweep of the ocean and possible submarines before us. It is with profound regret we shall wave farewell to your shores when we reach the deck of the Reid steamer for North Sydney. In lines by Thomas Churchyard dedicated to Sir Humphrey Gilbert in 1578:

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