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The Mail and Advocate

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ST. JOHN'S, N.F.L.D., JULY 22nd, 1915

OUR POINT OF VIEW

The Fishery

THE catch of codfish with traps this week continues fair in Fogo district. Other northern bays are doing very little, while hook and line men have not caught one quintal each the past week. The reports of the banking fleet show that the Bank fishery on caplin bait is not up to the usual average; while the fishery in the district of Placentia, St. Mary's, Ferryland, and part of Fortune has been fair, yet the catch is below an average. Burn district shore fishery is very poor, about as bad as Twillingate district.

Another ten days will see the end of this season's trap fishery.

If bait is plentiful during the latter part of August and September a fair fall's catch may be hoped for, and unless a fair fall's catch is forthcoming three-fourths of the fishermen will be placed in hard circumstances, as apparently they will have to secure their winter's supplies entirely from what fish is taken on squid bait.

The lobster fishery will not amount to 1000 cases. Cod-liver oil holders should refuse anything less than \$1.00 per gallon for their holdings. Cod oil has fallen \$20 per ton.

Fish buyers are offering \$6.50 for new fish delivered at St. John's, talqual cure; outports \$6. No one should sell for less than those prices. Labrador soft off the Labrador shore will be worth at least \$4.50 per qtl., as Judge Emerson's decision re current price of Labrador fish makes the current price what a majority of buyers wish to fix it.

There must be no more selling of fish on the Labrador for current price. Each fisherman must insist on having the price in plain figures placed on his receipt. The lowest figure this season must be \$4.50 per qtl., for there will be a very great demand for Labrador soft fish. Labrador soft fish is worth just as much or more off the Labrador shore as it is at St. John's.

The expenses in handling it at St. John's far exceed those incurred in shipping it on the Labrador. If the Graballs succeeded in robbing a 40 cents off Labrador soft fish shipped off the coast last year, they won't do so again.

The man who sells at current price this season, or any season in the future, will be held to be a black traitor to his class and should be shunned by every honest fisherman.

The current price is the prevail-

ing price, says Judge Emerson; and the prevailing price is the price the buyers fix it at a combine meeting held at the Board of Trade Rooms.

Therefore, combinations in trade to fix the price of fish, at least, is legal and is not a breach of the laws dealing with restraint in trade.

Mark well Judge Emerson's decision, fishermen.

Your only trust in future must be in yourselves, and not in the buyer who says he will give as much as another, or give the highest price, or the current price, or the prevailing price.

You must sell no fish unless the price is marked in plain figures on your receipts.

Shun the words "current price" as you would the devil, or a German, while it is held by the Courts to mean just what the majority of buyers wish to fix it. "I will give you as much for your fish as anyone" will not in future hold water.

Thanks to the F.P.U.'s action in this current price case; the fishermen will now demand a square deal in respect to what fish they sell on the Labrador.

No judgment could go further in encouraging strikes for prices on the Labrador than that just delivered by Judge Emerson. It plainly means demand your price in plain figures in future and don't trust to the honesty or fairness of buyers who take fish at the highest price paid or the current price and then get together after the fish is in Europe to fix the value—and that value must be what they are willing to give voluntarily.

Every fisherman knows fish buyers are no body of saints and usually buy fish to grab all possible as profits. Note it well, boys. The current price is the price fixed by a majority of the buyers at St. John's, after they have your fish in their possession, and can give you just what they please for it.

And this is justice! This is law! This is what the Courts have to mete out to producers—to fishermen in the twentieth century!

Thank God for having shown this monstrous outrage up through Coaker's exertions. The decks are cleared now and every man must be a man when dealing with buyers, who could be guilty of such robbery as practiced last year in buying Labrador fish off the coast.

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Dementia Politica

EVIDENTLY the scribe from "around the corner" who fills so much of the Adelaide sheet with twaddle needs professional attention, and it should be rendered immediately. He has propounded some very extraordinary theories of late; but the coterie of which he is the literary agent must have been dissatisfied with his lucubrations; and they must have ordered another brand of goods, as the last "red herring" were not popular pabulum for the Rubes who compose its largest clientele. Hence

"Straight they changed their minds, Flew off, and into strange vagaries fell."

The "Home Rule in Newfoundland" screed is one of the most lamentable exhibitions of dementia politica we have seen since a former city editor abandoned the profession for a more lucrative job. We have read this article of shreds and patches; but we must confess that we have been unable to sound the depths of its profundity?

The concluding paragraphs seem to indicate mentality similar to that of the "unspeakable Turk," and suggests that the scribe "around the corner" must have fallen over the Koran, or that he has been delving into the philosophic realms of ancient days, and discovered the cardinal doctrines of Manichaeism!

We really would feel grateful

to some educated person for enlightenment as to the precise meaning of his allusion to the dual principle of Good and Evil! We give it up.

We wonder what brand of hallucinosis is now besetting the erratic upper story of the scribe!

What dark deeds and diabolical is he striving to visualize? What nefarious plot is being hatched by the gentry on the Government benches? Are not some of the known backers of the Adelaide Street flimsy sheet members of this combination?

Yet they have not let him into the inner recesses and "made him wise" as to what is being hatched. Fie! Fie! Gentlemen, please let down the barriers which keep this learned scribe beyond the pale. You really should be more considerate; has he not been the fanfaron of your little clique, and blazoned forth your virtues right loudly for many weeks?

You certainly are a wretched crew; and the disgruntled scribe is right when he tells you: "A select number of gentlemen who have hitherto passed in this community for men of uprightness? No judgment could go further in encouraging strikes for prices on the Labrador than that just delivered by Judge Emerson. It plainly means demand your price in plain figures in future and don't trust to the honesty or fairness of buyers who take fish at the highest price paid or the current price and then get together after the fish is in Europe to fix the value—and that value must be what they are willing to give voluntarily."

Now we have never written such a dreadful indictment of the gentry as this. Honestly, we feel sorry for them; but they deserve this, richly. Why do they treat this man "around the corner" with such obloquy?

Salt

THE Nascopie arrived on Monday night with salt. Up to hour of going to press not one hogshhead of salt has gone North from the Nascopie. One of the biggest pieces of bungling we have seen for some time, is that in connection with the disposal of the Nascopie's salt.

The "Can't Lose" was refused salt by Job Bros. yesterday, consequently a delay of probably 48 hours was entailed thereby, for had the "Can't Lose" been accommodated the fishermen in Fogo district would have a supply tomorrow morning, but owing to the bungling in delivering the salt, a supply of salt will not reach Fogo district until Saturday which cannot be used until Monday.

Every place in Fogo district has been without salt since Tuesday. Hundreds of quintals of fish have been awaiting salt since Tuesday. This bungling will cost the Colony \$20,000 in loss of fish.

Job's second salt steamer arrived this morning with 20,000 lbs. A steamer to Messrs. Baine Johnston's is due to-night and one to Morey & Co. on Saturday. These arrivals will be sufficient to meet all requirements, and had there been no bungling in connection with disposing of the Nascopie's cargo the salt shortage would not have had any ill effect.

THE WORLD'S PRESS

The British Memorandum

New York Herald:—Efforts to make it appear that American shippers, more particularly shippers of cotton, have been seriously hampered by delays on the part of British prize courts are met in the British memorandum by array of testimony that will be greatly accepted as pretty convincing. The principal representatives of American cotton interests are quoted as testifying to the satisfactory nature of the present arrangements for the handling of cotton cases, and also that such cases have been dealt "with the utmost promptitude." So far more than \$2,000,000 has been paid for cotton seized, and incidental attention is called to the fact that this is more than the cargo brought in the British market.

THE LOGGERS BILL DEBATED IN THE UPPER HOUSE

Mr. Gibbs Sees Several Objectionable Features Introduced as Amendments by Select Committee

Tuesday, May 25th.

On motion of Hon. Mr. Gibbs the House went into Committee on this Bill, Hon. Mr. Milley in the chair.

HON. MR. GIBBS—I beg to point out to the House that to my mind there is a defect in the 1st section of the Bill reported by the Select Committee. The 1st section reads that in the Bill—"the employer shall be held to mean the individual of workmen of a concern." Now it is possible and is of frequent occurrence that the man who hires the workmen may have nothing whatever to do with paying him. He may be employed for the purpose of hiring a certain number of workmen under an agreement, and when he performs the work for which he was engaged his employment ceases. There is evidently some mistake, and I think that the Select Committee should reconsider this section, because hundreds of cases may arise where a man may hire, but not have anything to do with the paying of the men. We are not legislating for today, but for the future, and many cases may arise where the man who engages the workman has nothing to do with the compensation he is to receive. Consequently this Bill would be inoperative so far as the employment of loggers are concerned, were such contingencies as that would happen. I take it that it is not the intention of the Select Committee that difficulties of that kind should arise in future with regard to any action of theirs in the drafting of the bill. In the next section, I do not think the definition of the word "logger" is correct. The Bill referred by the Select Committee defines logger as a man engaged in the "physical work of cutting, hauling, driving, etc., of logs." There is no such thing as physical work, there is physical force, as for instance the army or navy of a country represents its physical force. Man does not work, he labors. When speaking of rights, you would not say the right of work; a horse may work, but it cannot labor. If an elaborate definition be necessary, and it is desirable to have the word "physical" retained in it, then the Committee should insert "men engaged in the physical exercise for the sake of gain or reward of cutting, hauling, driving etc., of logs." I cannot accept the amendments made by the Select Committee to the Bill.

HON. MR. HARVEY—I cannot quite follow the hon. gentleman as to his argument upon the 1st section. Can he suggest any other word, for to have a clear definition is most essential.

HON. MR. McGRATH—It might be as well if Hon. Mr. Harvey, the convenor of the Select Committee, would give us an explanation as to why they have changed the Bill, so that we may have a clear understanding as to where we are.

HON. MR. HARVEY—The reason why the first clause was inserted, was because there was no definition of the word "employer" and the definition of the word "logger" was altogether too vague in the opinion of the Select Committee. The reason why the word "physical" was introduced was to differentiate the actual work of cutting logs from work incidental to the working of pulp and paper, for instance the clerical staff. Personally I will not make much point of this but as the original Act defined loggers it appears to us that it might conceivably be held to apply to clerks, people in lumber companies offices and others not engaged in the actual work of cutting logs, so that the Committee thought that this amendment should be clearly confined to the physical work necessitated by the handling of logs. In going through the Act I shall suggest another slight alteration to the committee because it is doubtful whether the section as it stands covers the work of cutting pit props. The Select Committee interviewed Messrs. Harris and Horwood and also considered the protest put in by the two companies, the Anglo-Nfld. Development Co. and the Albert Reed Co., and the principal alterations—except minor ones which do not affect the Bill but do away with ambiguities and unnecessarily harsh obligations which are now put in a less harsh way—the main alterations are the intended elimination of the so-called logger's agent. The Government has got to appoint an Inspector whose duty it is to visit the camps, etc., and see that the Act is carried out. Every man in the camp has free access to him, and the Minister of Agriculture and Mines, and why we should put on an outside representative of the loggers, who is only "the fifth wheel to a

coach," and a personage who may make a great deal of unfair trouble to these companies, we could not see, or any good from his presence or the least necessity for it, and he main alteration of the bill is as regards the so-called agent of the loggers. In any case here would be great difficulty in getting an agent of the loggers. The Bill does not provide for his selection. It would be impossible to get an agent properly selected by the men to begin with and these companies nearly all replace their men three times in a season. Mr. Harris has shown us that. Now how can you get a representative of the loggers themselves under these circumstances? The Government appointee himself is really the representative of the loggers, so after discussion the Committee were of opinion that a second inspector was superfluous and in fact no reason for appointing him has appeared. There are some minor alterations. I may say, and particularly to the hon. gentleman in charge of the Bill, that there has been no intention to change the principle of the Bill.

HON. MR. GIBBS—With regard to the explanation of the hon. gentleman I think with all due deference to the Committee they should not have conducted their investigations to one side only. They have heard the owner of the mill, or the employer of the men, but have not heard the representative of the loggers in order that they might learn from him why a representative of the men should be appointed; and I have no doubt that if they had heard the reasons given for independent representation their demands would have been conceded on that point. The reason alleged for the elimination of the logger's representative is that the men have access to the Minister of Agriculture and Mines. My experience is that workmen will put up with wrongs and injustice for fear of losing their employment. I have known this to happen from actual knowledge of the men who give of their toll and sweat in the work of cutting logs, and have no person of their choice that they can make a confidant of. Rather than complain to the employer they will endure it, and it is for this reason that the loggers ask that they be given the right to nominate a representative. Independent representation of that character has been productive of good results in other parts of the world. In the United States and in Britain where persons have taken it upon themselves to go into shops, mines and factories to see the actual conditions that exist, the result of that inspection has been to have laws placed on the Statute Book remedying abuses and causing necessary reforms in connection with factory and other industrial life. There should be no reason why loggers should not have a representative of their own going about amongst them for a similar purpose. The hon. member refers to the fact that there is no organization or union of the loggers and advances that as an argument against the power being given of appointing a delegate or representative. It is strange how inconsistent a person can be at times. When we were discussing the Labrador Fishery Bill I argued strongly against the Labrador Fish Exporters being given the right to nominate a member of the Board upon the ground that they were not an organized body and were unknown to the law, but my contention proved of no avail. At the present juncture it suits the exigencies of the occasion to perform mental gymnastics. But in this case there is a society. They are represented by the Fishermen's Protective Union, and a large number of them are members of that organization. For this reason I would urge that the loggers be given the right to nominate one of their number.

HON. MR. HARVEY—The hon. gentleman rather scores the committee because they only examined the representatives of the Companies. These gentlemen requested to be examined. How we could get at the loggers I do not know. But I would point out that the census administered in this House is equally applicable to the Committee that sat in the other House. That Committee examined the same witnesses we examined and practical-

ly no others. As regards the F.P.U. I do not know why we should assume that they represent these particular loggers because they say so. I do not know where they will be by and bye, there may be several Unions. I do not know to-day whether twenty or fifty or seventy-five per cent. of the loggers are members of the Fishermen's Protective Union. But whether they are or are not I do not think the appointment of an Inspector over the head of the Government Inspector or side by side with him is necessary, and it is certain to make trouble.

HON. MR. GIBBS—With regard to the remark of the hon. gentleman that the Committee pursued the same course as the Lower House, I quite agree it did, but the hon. member forgets the fact that the select committee of the Lower House was composed of men who represented the loggers because he must know the section of the Lower House from which this bill emanated. Consequently as the representatives of the loggers they knew what was wanted. This bill, I take it, is a bill to protect the logger and if you give the employer the right under the bill to put himself outside the provisions of it by taking advantage of the lack of knowledge on the part of an outport man the good intentions of the framers will be frustrated. I do not think we should be a party to anything like that. The members of the Committee, I feel assured, never had any such intention in view; and I say this with all sincerity, but with all due deference to them, the effect of the amendment is to place an employer of labor with hundreds, possibly thousands under him, in a position to take advantage of the workman by contracting himself out of the provisions of the bill. Now I think that would be a most unjustifiable amendment to make to that section and I want here to record my sincere protest against such being done.

HON. MR. HARVEY—The reason this clause is put in is, that where a company makes a special agreement for a special man and possibly trains him on the strength of his agreement for special work, that he should not be able to break his agreement because of this Act. But as far as I am concerned I do not press it. It is not perhaps very vital.

HON. MR. GIBBS—I beg to point out to the Committee that it would be most unfair to give the employers of labor the right to issue their own paper in payment of their employees' wages. Let us work this out to its logical conclusion. Suppose that one hundred loggers make application for payment of wages that they are owed by their employers, and are given orders upon John Smith, or some other person payable to bearer or order; the orders may possibly represent thousands of dollars. The men who receive them, upon arrival at their homes must of necessity make use of them. They go to the store of Mr. A. or Mr. B. to make purchase of food or clothing and there present their orders for payment. The owner of the store will not, unless he is paid a commission, in addition to the profit on the goods sold, take the orders in payment and give cash for whatever balance there may be remaining. Thus we see, that the transaction in this case means a loss to the holder of the order. The persons taking the orders must use them in the purchase of stock to replace that which was sold. The orders, therefore, become a sort of circulating medium in the way of trade, as if they were cash. There is no absolute guarantee behind them that they will be honoured upon presentation like a bank note. The person issuing the orders may be unable to pay one hundred cents, in the dollar upon the demand, but nevertheless with provision being made for security against the issue of the orders, we are asked by the Select Committee to give a right under the law to any person or company employing loggers, to pay the wages that may be due them by orders which may be worthless and which in any event will mean loss to the logger. A more vicious principle to insert in a Bill I can not conceive. Why should the man engaged in the manufacture of pulp or lumber be given a right, while others engaged in another form of industrial work are denied it. The history of issuing orders in payment of wages has resulted in loss to the workmen. An instance of this kind occurred in the Pilley's Island Company. That company paid a number of their workmen wages with orders and what happened. Before the paper could be redeemed the Company went into liqui-

date and the men were not paid. We do not want a repetition of that; if we do, pass this Bill in its present form. Then the right to pay by cheque in a Bank is also provided for. This I object to. It may appear alright to hon. members, who are not conversant with outport trade and business with regard to the issue of cheques. But if they would place themselves in the position of the logger who has a cheque for one hundred dollars, and who upon arrival home goes to the store of John Jones to buy goods, or to cash the cheque, what happens? Mr. Jones very often will charge a premium for giving cash for the cheques, or if the logger purchase goods, he wants to receive one half the amount in cash and he will, in many instances pay more for his possession at the time he went to the store of Mr. Jones. There has been a law upon the Statute Book for the past sixteen or seventeen years, I think it was passed in 1898, under which persons issuing paper of the kind which this bill purpose giving a right to issue, were liable to a fine of four hundred dollars. There must have been some necessity for legislation of this kind otherwise the Government at that time would not have passed this law. This House should not thus impliedly repeal this law and give power to individuals or companies to pay the wages of workmen in orders drawn upon a third person. There is no justification for the passing of this section. To do so would mean serious dislocation of trade and business, because we may have tens of thousands of dollars of worthless paper in the hands of workmen and business men.

HON. MR. BISHOP—There seems to be a disposition to regard this bill as operating only against three large companies. This bill is general and applies to all companies engaged in the lumbering industry. It would be easy for the big companies to provide the means, but by no means so easy for the majority. How those are going to pay cash I don't know. On the contrary I know the cash will not be to their aid. The workmen will have neither the negotiable order nor the cash. If we are legislating for the benefit of the loggers it must be borne in mind that all these men are not engaged by the three large companies.

HON. MR. McGRATH—Would that be met by issuing cheques on bankers? On principle I dislike the idea. While nobody wants to hamper the men engaged in the logging industry, yet I certainly don't think we ought to open the door to anything that will make it difficult for a logger to get the worth of his labor.

HON. MR. BISHOP—The majority of them will have taken up supplies and will not have a large amount coming to them when the spring arrives. I think it would be well to cut out "negotiable paper."

HON. MR. HARVEY—May I explain the meaning of this section? First of all I recognize the weight of Mr. Gibbs' criticism. The reason why this was done was that employers are liable at a moment's notice to pay enormous claims. A man comes in and demands cash. Now these companies don't keep the cash there. Not that they would want to pay anything but cash, but the idea is to give the companies reasonable chances to get cash. In winter it is possible that the railway may get blocked up and there would be no means of getting cash in. I don't know of any case where one order in the logging industry was ever dishonored. That of course is no argument for justifying them and I perfectly agree that the words "negotiable orders" ought to come out of that section. It is a question whether it is better to omit the word cheque or give more time to the employer to get cash. But to make it binding that they shall get cash at a moment's notice would be a great hardship. I think I may say that the Committee will be glad to do anything in regard to that matter the hon. gentleman in charge of the bill may wish. It is going to be very awkward. The representatives of the companies say it will be next to impossible.

HON. MR. GIBBS—If the companies are prevented from obtaining cash because of storms there could be no successful prosecution against the company, that is the act of God. No action could lie for a failure to pay cash due to the act of God.

HON. MR. McGRATH—Supposing 100 men conspired to come to the company and demand their money?

HON. MR. HARVEY—I would like to point out to the hon. gentleman that the statement that the court should allow time is erroneous. It is surely taken for granted in the original bill that the money shall be on hand.

HON. MR. BISHOP—I think that we should hesitate before we demand that employers shall be bound to have cash at their places of business. We have never heard of any dishonoured cheques. I do remember that some companies' cheques were held up, but not so far as the workmen were concerned. The logger received

(Continued on page 5.)