

## The Debate on the Newfoundland Products Contract.

Important Speeches by Mr. Kent, K.C., Leader of the Opposition and Mr. Morine, K.C.

WEDNESDAY, April 28, 1915.

Mr. Kent in opening the debate on the contract between the Newfoundland Products Co. and the Government said that the Resolutions now before the House contained matters that are of the very gravest importance to the country, and on this account desired the most careful consideration of the Committee. He would remind the members that they were there as trustees of the people of Newfoundland to guard and protect their interests. He urged upon the Government the necessity of laying aside all party feelings that may exist, while considering these Resolutions which are fraught with much consequence to the future of the Colony. In approaching these Resolutions the first consideration should be who the members of the Corporation are, what they seek, and what they already possess. He regretted that the Committee had not more information on the matter covering the Resolutions beyond the analysis of the contract given by the Premier in introducing the same. The House had been informed that no independent survey of the properties mentioned in the contract had been made, and as far as could be seen no special effort had been made to ascertain what the Resolutions and Contract really mean. The Government should have full information and independent of those interested in the Corporation. The reports should be ample and descriptive in detail every concession asked for in the contract. As the Agreement now stands there is

### NO OBLIGATION

on the part of the Corporation to carry out any substantial construction work in Newfoundland, mentioned therein. The name of Mr. Wilson had been mentioned in introducing the Resolutions and he had been described as an experienced man, and one experienced in the promoting of companies connected therewith, but, as far as the papers before the House go to show, he appears to have no interests in the Corporation seeking franchises from this country. According to the memorandum of the Association already tabled, the promoters of the Company consist of Directors of the Reid Newfoundland Company, a company whose interests in this Colony are already too large, and whose powers have

**NO PARALLEL IN THE WORLD** to-day. The Corporation is given rights and powers that are not advantageous to the people of Newfoundland. The signatures to the Memorandum of Association are H. D. Reid, R. G. Reid and M. W. Furlong, Directors of the Reid Newfoundland Company, and are witnessed by A. H. Pimms, another Director of the same Company. The Directors of the Nfld. Products Co. are given as Mr. W. D. Reid, President of the Reid Nfld. Co. Mr. H. D. Reid, Vice-President of the Reid Nfld. Co. Mr. R. G. Reid, Director of the Reid Nfld. Co. Mr. M. W. Furlong, Director of the Reid Nfld. Co.

This naturally gives the impression that the present Corporation is a **SUBSIDIARY COMPANY TO THE REID NFD. CO.** "Is it right, then," said Mr. Kent, "to extend the rights, influences, interests and powers of a Company that is already so powerful in this country?" This Company already has grants for some 4,000,000 acres of our best land together with control of the Railway system of the country, and control of the greater part of our coastal service, and now we are asked to give them control of all the valuable waters of Newfoundland and Labrador, while the Colony gets nothing commensurate with the interests which it is expected to give away. One condition of the present Agreement should be that the charter should be under control of the Legislature, instead of being framed in accordance with the will of the Company entirely, as in this instance. Besides the rights which are directly defined in the Agreement, the Corporation has the power to purchase or acquire other powers and

### ENGAGE IN EVERY POSSIBLE FORM OF ENTERPRISE.

They may, if they so desire, carry on such business as tinmining, chemists, farmers, advertising agents, builders, contractors, etc. It must be un-

derstood that the term business and operations of the Company has a very wide meaning, though unfortunately the meaning is nowhere defined in the Contract. The whole Agreement goes to show that the Government was inactive in the consideration of the interests of the Colony, the Corporation was extremely vigilant as to their interests as will be seen by studying the various clauses of the Agreement. Mr. Kent then went on to analyse some of the said clauses and strongly criticized the all too liberal concessions set forth in the Agreement. By reference to the map of Newfoundland it will be seen that

### THE HUMBER IS THE MOST VALUABLE RIVER

we have. He dealt with the rights of the Company to water powers on the Humber River and Junction Brook, and their power to dam streams and lakes within the drainage area of the Humber, and showed that in this matter one of the most valuable assets of the Colony was being given away, for which there was nothing whatever in return. In no part of the Agreement was there any definition of the terms of the Contract, and the meaning of the whole Contract is ambiguous. The Contract should have set forth in clear cut paragraphs, carefully defining every detail, but instead the House is faced with an Agreement that is either carelessly drawn up, or purposely meant to perplex those who try to get the true meaning of it.

With regard to the matter of the expenditure of \$5,000,000 in Newfoundland in five years there is no undertaking that it shall be spent on construction work. He then dealt with the clauses referring to the

### EXEMPTION OF THE COMPANY'S PROPERTIES FROM TAXATION

for all time, which made their powers unlimited. The exemption of stock, real estate, debentures, stock, mortgages and other securities of the Company from taxation, was absolutely unfair to the business men of the country with whom they might enter into competition in the fishery, business or anything else they liked.

As regards its exemption from Municipal taxation other companies, other business men and labouring classes would be called upon to pay for the upkeep of any municipalities, where the Company was doing business. But not this Company. They could do business in St. John's and be free from city taxation, whereas the Company which would be reaping a harvest of profits from the said industry would contribute nothing. This was altogether unfair. In the clause relating to private properties the interests of the owners of the same had apparently been considered with second respect. With regard to the clause dealing with the beginning of construction work upon the undertaking, and the expenditure of \$5,000,000 Mr. Kent said that the

### DRIVING OF A SINGLE STAKE

could be called a beginning, and that money spent in the acquiring of property would be money spent, in the business and operations of the Company and need not be spent on construction work. When the various clauses of the Agreement were thoroughly probed there appeared to be nothing definite set forth, whatever. The question of labour is another important consideration, and for which no provision is made. It is to be supposed that the Company will secure labor at the cheapest possible rate, and foreigners of all descriptions will then enter into competition with the people of the country, which will give no guarantee that the amount of money spent in labor will be of any material benefit to Newfoundland. In conclusion he urged the House to consider seriously the various clauses of the Contract, and to remember well that they are considering them as trustees of the people of this Colony, whose best interests they should have uppermost in their minds, instead of being carried away by the magnitude of the figures that have been placed before the House with regard to the Contract.

For a good silver polish take of whiteness, 2 ounces; cream of tartar, 1 ounce; alum, 1 ounce; water enough to make a cream or paste. Put up in jelly or cold cream jars.

**MINARD'S LINIMENT CURE FOR RHEUMATISM.**

### Mr. Morine's Criticisms

Mr. Morine said that he approached the discussion with a feeling akin to despair to set forth adequately a matter which was fraught with such tremendous possibilities and dangers. He thought it was most unfortunate that the Agreement had been drafted by the Counsel for the Company, without being subjected to criticism by an equally competent legal counsel on behalf of the Government. He was particularly struck with the tone adopted by the Premier in introducing the Resolutions, a tone which he thought unjustifiable, as the future prospects of the Colony in the undertaking had been greatly exaggerated. "It must be remembered," said Mr. Morine, "that all promoters are optimistic, and since there has been no criticism as to the accuracy of the large figures submitted, we do not really know what benefit, if any, is likely to accrue to the people of Newfoundland, and to what extent their interests are

### INVOLVED OR JEOPARDIZED.

The Resolutions which we are called upon to consider give to the Newfoundland Products Corporation the right to carry on any line of business for any length of time, and deal with an agreement that binds the Government hand and foot to that Company, as there is no clause limiting the business of the Company or the duration of time to the concessions sought. The exemption from Municipal and other taxes for all time was a gross piece of injustice to the people of Newfoundland. With the exemption of the Company from municipal taxation other businesses and other people would have to contribute to the upkeep of the municipalities, while a Company with such tremendous interests as have been already utilised would be allowed

### TO GO SCOT FREE.

The Resolutions need many alterations, one of the principal of which should be the defining of a limit of time for freedom from taxation. It is quite evident that the Premier did not understand the full meaning of the Contract when introducing it, or he would not have permitted such misleading features to come before the House. The whole matter abounds in glaring inaccuracies. In the introduction of the Resolutions Mr. Wilson had been exploited as to his inventions and business capabilities, but his name is not mentioned anywhere in the Memorandum or Articles of Corporation and there is absolutely nothing to show that he has any interest whatever in the Company. "We are in reality dealing with a shadow," said Mr. Morine, "a Corporation that has no capital subscribed, no shares issued except in nominal amounts, and no definite obligations to perform." and Newfoundland is asked to give enormous concessions and privileges which may eventually make the Colony the

**LAUGHING STOCK OF THE WORLD** since no benefits commensurate with such concessions are guaranteed to Newfoundland. In relation to the several clauses dealt with by Mr. Kent he concurred in all that the Leader of the Opposition had said. The immense franchises asked for will prove most troublesome and may only result in the passing of all these privileges into the hands of kite fliers whose projects may never lead to development. A particular feature of the Agreement was the implicit trust the Government had evidently placed in the Corporation, though from the nature of the concessions it was quite evident that they do not trust the Government. He then went on to deal with the water powers and drainage areas outlined in the Agreement. To his mind the Agreement had been

**EITHER CLEVERLY OR STUPIDLY** drawn up, as from the tone of the various clauses, the true meaning was withheld. If this was meant it showed tremendous cleverness, and if not meant it showed tremendous stupidity. The Agreement was in reality three contracts rolled into one which could have been more easily dealt with under three separate heads:—(1) The Humbermouth; (2) The Hamilton River; and (3) The Gander and Exploits Region. As the present Agreement stands it is altogether unfair to tie up the valuable waters of the country without a consideration of any kind, not even a postage stamp. Referring again to the matters of exemption from local taxation, Mr. Morine said that the Legislature had

### NO RIGHT WHATEVER

to load posterity with the burden of taxation, and permit the Company to go scot free. He urged upon the members of the House who professed more patriotism than he, because of being born in the country not to mortgage their country. Every man should contribute taxes and it is only recently in this House we were called upon to deal with a Bill providing for the levying of same on the estates of deceased persons. From the general tenor of the Agreement, it appears that imagination

### MUST HAVE RUN RIOT

and this is particularly true with regard to the question of labor. The House is told that the proposed industries will provide labor for about 5,000 men, which figures of course come from a promoter. There are not 5,000 idlers in Newfoundland and the whole question resolves itself into the taking of men from the fishery at which Newfoundlanders are specialists, and inducing them to enter a field of competition with all sorts of unskilled laborers, at any rate of wages which the Company may see fit to fix upon them. He regarded the Contract as the most dangerous Agreement he had ever seen and fraught with the possibilities of immense evil to Newfoundland.

### At the House.

WEDNESDAY, April 28,

Petitions were presented by Mr. Morine from the residents of Salvage on the subject of roads, and from St. Chads on the matter of elective road boards.

Mr. Targett called the attention of the Colonial Secretary to the delay in tabling an answer to the question asked by him on April 13th. Mr. Targett was informed that the answer is being prepared.

Mr. Abbott called the attention of the Minister of Finance to a question asked by him on April 13th, and to the Minister of Marine and Fisheries to question asked on April 22nd. Both are being prepared.

The Premier tabled information asked for by Mr. Morine with reference to the Nfld. Products Co.

The Colonial Secretary tabled the evidence in connection with the Lunatic Asylum Commission. The House then went into a Committee of the Whole on the Resolutions in relation to an agreement between the Government and the Newfoundland Products Corporation, Ltd.

Mr. Kent opened the discussion on the Contract of the Nfld. Products Company. Mr. Morine followed him. At 6:30 the Committee rose until 8 p.m.

### AFTER RECESS.

Resuming at 8 o'clock, Mr. Morine suggested that the debate on the Resolutions be adjourned, as the various speakers were not ready. The Premier was in favor of a postponement and fixed Friday.

The House then went into Committee on the Seal Fishery Bill. The Bill had been in the hands of a Select Committee, comprising the Premier, Mr. Piccott, Mr. Coaker, Mr. Winsor, Mr. Moulton, Mr. Young and Mr. Jennings.

Mr. Piccott, Chairman of the Select Committee, read to the House the Bill, which was the outcome of last year's terrible disaster and this year's strikes; provides that men shall not be left on the ice after sunset; a medical officer on each ship; the right of property arising from the killing of seals; a certificated master or mate; compensation for partial and total disablement; ships' whistles be kept blowing in thick weather; search parties re missing men; bonuses for cooks at the end of the voyage; no hood seals to be killed between March 19th, 1914 and April 15th, 1915; wooden ships not to have on board more than 15 rifles; steel ships not to kill any seals after April 15th; a Board of Examiners (3 persons) to examine those who want to prosecute the sealfishery as masters, second hands or master watches; no man is to go to the ice without the approval of the captain and also with the landing of men by ships before April 10th.

The Premier, Mr. Kent, Mr. Higgins, Mr. Coaker and Mr. Bennett spoke on the Bill. The Committee rose and the Bill will go into Committee again to-day.

The Logging Bill and Bill dealing with the General Hospital were deferred. A Bill to amend the St. John's Municipal Act was read a first time.

After notices of question were given the House adjourned till this afternoon.

### "The Third Degree."

This world-renowned photo-play will be shown at the extremely popular "Casino" to-night. The picture consists of five intensely interesting reels, not one of which must be missed in order to derive the full benefit of the story. This celebrated Drama has been played in every civilized country on the Globe (Germany not included). Of heart-grIPPING interest is the witnessing of the terrible ordeal known to the American police (and always practiced by them in order to secure a confession from suspects—whether guilty or innocent) as the "Third Degree" by which "meat" the prisoner is cruelly tortured by being kept awake until the desired result is obtained. Of a different nature but equally as interesting is the inspiring love story with a beautiful ending entitled "The Lily of the Valley." This subject consists of three reels depicting the struggle of Capital vs. Labour.

**MINARD'S LINIMENT RELIEVES RHEUMATISM**

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