

Twenty Thousand Freemen Take Up Challenge

THE MAIL AND ADVOCATE, ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND, MARCH 2, 1915-4.

Toilers Final Fight For Liberty

130 Voters at Island Cove, and 70 at Cupids Charge Kean With Criminal Negligence and Demand His Arrest. 300 Similar Petitions to the Crown Now Being Signed

Seven Merchants Worth \$10,500,000

The Critic is at Work Now Over the Coaker-Kean Episode—Any Person Who Has Followed up the Whole Incident Must Admit Only Alternative Was the One Which Spaniard's Bay Convention Agreed Upon, and that Alternative is, "The Removal,—the Forcible Removal if Necessary—of one Man Against Possible Loss of Life in Future"

FROM EVERY POINT IN NFLD. AND FROM EVERY VILLAGE AND HAMLET COMES A WAVE OF INDIGNATION

People Ask Each Other, "Shall This Thing Be?"—Shall One Man Determine Against the Power of Right and of Justice?—Men Have Passed From Slavery Into the Life Beyond and They Have Not Complained, But Now, When the Lives of Their Dear Ones Have Gone Into the Darkness of Death, They Cry Out—

"WE HAVE SUFFERED ENOUGH"—ENOUGH—OH, LET US LIVE AT LEAST—YOU WHO ARE RICH!

The critic is at work just now in deep consideration over the whole Coaker-Kean episode, and every feature of the case is being dealt with without favoritism or without fear.

First of all, the question of the waning honor of Bowring both at home and abroad, is criticised, and people who would even wish to give the old firm the benefit of doubt are impressed with the glaring error of position in which that firm stands. There is not even one mitigating point that might be brought forward to the honor of the Bowring house, or to excuse the conduct of John Munn—and his boy-helper, Eric Bowring.

Glancing at the several resolutions arrived at by the F.P.U. during their recent meeting, one is particularly impressed by the unanimity of opinion and expression and the general voice which declares against Bowring in this matter.

Any person who has followed up the whole incident must admit that the only alternative was the one which the Convention at Spaniard's Bay agreed upon, and that alternative is, "the removal,—the forcible removal if necessary—of one man against the possible loss of life in the future."

This is a just decision, and resolution, on the part of a body of men who understand what that horrible tragedy of 1914 meant to the hundreds of poor homes over broad Newfoundland.

If this happening—this awful sacrificing of 78 souls—had occurred in any other country, Capt. Kean would today stand indicted in a court of justice for manslaughter. In St. John's he is free to still carry out his designs, and just because he belongs to a certain clique, and can hobnob with the Bowrings and other Water Street powers.

What does Capt. Kean care about the fatherless orphans in Newfoundland? What does he care about the broken hearts, or the sad weepings of poor mothers and sisters? Think you it concerns him much that 78 brave lives driven mad with cold and hunger and suffering, lay down upon that fatal ocean surface, and died?

The Spaniard's Bay Convention made resolutions—noble resolutions—but all the resolutions that all the Councils of the World could proclaim cannot call back those poor wrecked lives, or give peace again to the broken homes of Terra Nova.

How, in the face of the Mighty God, can Capt. Kean brave this matter out?

Has the man a heart, a conscience, or a soul? Is he a thing of stone that he cannot see the position in which he stands to-day? Does the urbanity of Munn or Bowring sufficiently cater to his misgivings that he forgets he enticed the "Newfoundland's" crew from their ships at last year's seal-fishing and what happened after?

Does he not fear the falling upon him of the curse of the widows and of the orphans, whose sires have passed for evermore? And does he not stand appalled when the horror of the whole proceeding occurs to him? And where are those despairing homes, from whence do those sad prayers and tears come?

From every point in Newfoundland,—from every little village and hamlet, from Bay de Verde, from Catalina, from Lamaline, and Point aux Gaul, from Trinity, from Bonavista, from Bay Roberts, from Twillingate and New Town, from Shoe Cove and Conception Harbor, from Fogo, from Change Islands, from the Far East and from the Far West, from the homes of the pioneer settlers, from every neighbourhood which ever gives its sons to the battle of the sea. From these comes the cry of sorrow, and the great ones hear not, neither do they care.

A mighty wave of indignation, has, however, burst over the land, and all other things are minor, and have been lost in the immensity of this horrible outrage against the constitution of humanity.

People ask each other, "Shall this thing be?" Shall one man determine against the power of Right and of Justice? Shall Kean who has been the cause of the loss of 78 lives and the maiming of a dozen others for life, still continue on his course against the lawful decrees of a public that has judged him and found him GUILTY?

All over the Island men, women, and children, are crying out against the Kean outrage. There is a general feeling of wrath and of anger abroad, the indignation of our people has reached that point that a movement to forceful justice on the part of one individual may bring forward the arms of thousands and cause such horror and dismay as this Country has never seen before. Should this hour come and the angry—and justly angry—passions of the people be no longer appeased, the arrogance and haughty pride of Bowring or of Munn will not then avail.

'Tis such men as J. S. Munn and his masters, that brought forth the shouts from an angry army of toilers. 'Tis such have caused the hand of man to be raised against avarice and cunning.

Men have died of hunger, and have sickened of despair, they have grown old and grey in the service of ingratitude, and suppression. Men have passed from the slavery into the life beyond—and they have not complained, BUT NOW, WHEN THE LIVES OF THEIR DEAR ONES HAVE GONE OUT INTO THE DARKNESS OF DEATH, THEY CRY OUT—"We have suffered enough—ENOUGH—OH, LET US LIVE AT LEAST—YOU WHO ARE RICH, do not make our burden more heavy—ENOUGH!"

Ah, 'tis a sad cry reader, and one which comes from many a stricken home and heart to-day. Disguise it how we will, palliate it as we like—the awful truth still remains—"Life has been sacrificed."

The man who goes to death in his King and Country's battles and cause, forfeits dear, dear life for the stained flag and banner of his Motherland. The genius who gives his life to the science of inventive pursuit—claims honor and renown. The sailor who in the faithful discharge of duty goes down into his watery grave—dies nobly—but here, HERE IS LIFE SACRIFICED TO CRIMINAL AND NEFARIOUS NEGLIGENCE, "NEGLIGENCE" IN THE MOST PRONOUNCED, SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WORD.

This is the battle that Coaker is fighting, this is the human question which the F.P.U. has interested itself in. The Bluff of Munn or of Bowring or of Kean, or of a hundred of their kin cannot hush up this matter. It is too serious, too horrible, and too great a subject to compromise with. It is not only a HOME matter, it is not only a question which concerns US and Newfoundland, IT IS A WORLD WIDE SUBJECT for the world has offered its tangible sympathy, as it shall throw upon the miserable man Kean, its universal execration, when the story of his death blundering goes forth, as go forth it must.

Some of our critics assert that what happened one hundred years ago is not applicable to the present case. Our reply is it proves that the present day taskmasters are comprised of the same stuff as their forebears. But we don't want to go back one hundred years to locate the worst deeds of the fishermen's taskmasters.

What about the famous Banking agreement that the merchants endeavoured to force through the Legislature which provided for a paltry day's allowance of food for our Banking fishermen. We will review that famous agreement in a day or two.

What about the Rock in the Box business which robbed fishermen of seven pounds on each weighing of fish.

What about the rock in the box discovery on Harvey's only two years ago, where nine pounds too much was taken on a weighing, and which matter was reported to Minister

of Justice Morison by Inspector General Sullivan and pig-goon holed by that gentleman?

What about the doctoring of sour molasses which was so common two years ago?

What about one of the Bank Crash firms that paid a few cents on the dollar and when one of the partners died a year or two afterwards left \$80,000 each to two sons who have hardly seen daylight since and who have blown the whole of their fortunes in. Where did that money come from?

What about the firm that purchased 40,000 barrels of flour in July at \$5 and sold the same in September, October and November at \$7.

What about the same firm which purchased 45,000 in December at \$6.50 and are demanding \$9 for that flour today.

What about the 20,000 barrels bought by Bowrings before the war at \$5 to \$5.20 and which they sold during the past Fall at from \$6.80 to \$7.

What about the 15,000 barrels of flour bought by Bowrings since December 1st at from \$6 to \$6.50, for which they demand to-day from \$8.50 to \$8.75.

What about the Salt Combine and the big hauls which were exposed in 1913 by Coaker importing a load and forcing them to sell at a reduction of 35 cents per hoghead.

What about the big grabs made by the Clothing Company clique as revealed by the Carter case before the Court here, where it was shown they made over 30 per cent. one year and in addition to their dividends made \$100,000 which they expended upon a palace here that is now proving a white elephant.

Where in Heaven's name did Baird's million dollars in clear cash come from? Where did James Ryan get his million of dry cash? Where did Pitts get \$800,000? Where did Bowrings get its five million dollars? Where did Bishop get his \$250,000? Where did Dan Ryan get \$500,000 dry cash? Where did Harveys get \$2,000,000?

Will the Graball critics answer those questions?

The merchants of former days made their hundreds while the Graballs of later days made their thousands. Those of former days were exposed by Bishop Mullock, Archbishop Howley, Rev. T. Tocque, Judge Prowse, and others we will yet bring to the front; but poor Coaker is the only man who has courage enough in those days of get-rich-quick to expose the grabbing propensities of the fishermen's present day taskmasters which are one thousand times worse than those exposed by our late talented clergy and historians.

Munn has about recognized now what he is up against. He now realizes what a Coaker Agitation means. He now knows what it is to defy a people. He is surrounded by a few sycophants who soap him and use him, but he is about convinced now that it's a long road that has no turn, and had he known he would stir up such a nest of hornets by backing Kean, he would not have refused to grant the reasonable proposals of those who are the mainstay of the Country.

When he realizes that his Liverpool principals will read all we are saying about this Kean business and the Country's opinion of the action of the local directors and when the three hundred petitions come in expressing the indignation of the electorate against him and the firm that allowed Kean to bull dose them, and demanding Kean's arrest on a charge of criminal negligence, then he will wish he had never been born.

We have asked a great many questions above of the Graballs, but we may as well have asked of the winds of heaven or addressed our remarks to Pharaoh's Mummy for what answer will be made.

We do not need their answer or would we believe it if delivered. The answer is plain enough, and every fisherman is able to give a pretty satisfactory reply to most of them. For instance if you ask a fisherman whence comes all the wealth that the merchant princes flaunt in his face, think you he would have to seek long for a reply.

He would likely tell you that he and his father and his father's father had been fishing all their lives and that they have pulled a lot of finny wealth from the stormy deep. Then he would point to his own condition and ask you to take your answer from the sight before you. He has produced the wealth, but all he has is a rude shelter and a bit to eat, and when a slack season comes not even this latter.

When reminded of a poor season's fishing, he may be able to tell of the Nunnybag Government and of sour meal and molasses.

This is the toilers share.—(To be continued)

President Coaker At Port De Grave

140 Men Erecting New Union Store

After the Spaniard's Bay Convention closed in the small hours of Thursday morning last, President Coaker, accompanied by C. Bryant and W. White, proceeded to Port de Grave by carriage, arriving there at 3 a.m.

Refreshment was partaken of at friend Mufgford's—the Local Council Chairman—and at 6 a.m. the President—who had taken no rest for the night—was on the alert attending to arrangements about fitting up the new Union premises purchased a few weeks ago from friend Hampton.

It was decided to take down one of the buildings standing on the property and erect a large two-story flat-roof building to be used as a shop, provision store and fish store. One hundred and forty men are engaged in taking down the old store and they will erect the new store, of which the foundation was laid to-day; lumber having been previously secured from Bay Roberts. The men will work in squads daily until the store is completed and the labor will be given free.

This shows what a hold the F.P.U. has upon the people, for never before were the fishermen more intent on co-operating in buying and selling on their own account. The example should prove an inspiration to settlements not yet embraced in the F.P.U.

The Port de Grave fishermen are a hard working lot of men, and are all independent. There is no destitution existing in their settlement. They are mostly shore fishermen and catch their part of fish in the Bay every year. They will possess a splendid business premises by the first of May and in future they will all buy and sell at their own store.

The President had no time to spare while here for being intent on catching the morning train for St. John's, he left for Clarke's Beach at 7.45 a.m. and managed to catch the train.

We hope to see him here again in a few weeks to inspect our new store. May God bless his work and provide him with good health is the sincere prayer of Port de Grave F.P.U.

Port de Grave, February 27, 1915.