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## IMPORTANT FISHERY PROBLEMS GET PRACTICAL CONSIDERATION FROM MEMBERS OF UNION PARTY

Mr. Coaker (continued)—

I think Mr. Dee has been wrongly informed in this connection. I have been in the business for about thirty years, catching our own herring, making the packages, and putting up the herring in these packages, and I think I am pretty well acquainted with the herring fishery in the District of Twillingate. I have packed one barrel according to the Scotch method, but there is no difficulty in doing that if you understand it, and if you are going to get a better price. Of course the packages have to be made larger, but that is not very difficult.

What we want is information regarding the markets, and that we can get a better price for a better pack, and we are ready to meet that de-

mand at any time. I should like to see the herring fishery included in the Resolutions now before the Committee.

### Question to Ask

Mr. Targett—Mr. Chairman, I would like to make a remark or two in relation to this matter and I do so merely to obtain some information. As the Minister of Marine and Fisheries is absent I will probably have to wait till he comes back.

The question I want to ask is what is a fishery warden? I have heard of fishery wardens as being in different places. I would like to know what is the duty of a fishery warden. Perhaps the Prime Minister can answer me.

Rt. Hon. Prime Minister—The duty of fishery wardens in this country is

to see that the fishery rules are carried out and to prosecute in every case a violation of these rules.

Mr. Coaker—What they usually do is go over their territory once a year and then draw their wages.

Mr. Targett—I would now like to ask another question. Is a fishery warden supposed to go all round a district, and is he supposed to visit places where lobsters are packed.

### What He Is Supposed To Do

Rt. Hon. Prime Minister—Every warden has his district defined and he is supposed to supervise that district and see that the rules are carried out in his district.

Each one has a certain section of the country.

Mr. Targett—I would now like to ask if these fishery wardens receive a salary and who pays them?

Rt. Hon. Prime Minister—In every case they receive a salary and in every case it is paid by the Government of the Colony.

Mr. Targett—Is there a fishery warden in Trinity District?

Rt. Hon. Prime Minister—I cannot say for certain, but I imagine there is. I will have a list of the fishery

wardens prepared to-morrow for the hon. member's information.

### Scarce Article

Mr. Targett—The reason I ask these questions is that I have been packing lobsters for about twenty years, and I have not seen any fishery warden around to ask me any questions. I mean I have not seen one come to my place.

I sometimes met a man on the road or on somebody's wharf and he asked me for information as to the lobsters I had got, how many pots I had out, and so on, and certainly I tried my best to give what information I could.

### Had Heard This

But I was not aware that he was getting a salary from the Government. If I had I should not have given him any satisfaction until he had regularly come to my place and inspected it and got his information on the spot. I should then have given him every satisfaction.

Now down around Trinity Bay we do not know much about the laws, but I understand you are not allowed to keep any seedy lobsters. Now, that law is of very little use, because where you find one man throwing away these lobsters you find a hundred keeping them. Every year it is getting more difficult to observe this law.

I believe that this law is a good one and always put back these lobsters myself; but there are lots of factories that do not throw away theirs. There is no one to see that the law is enforced and you can do as you like about it. I believe that it is better to throw them away, you will get better results in the long run; but another man may not see it this way and will not throw them away. I think that the law should be more strictly enforced.

### Time To Act

The lobster fishery is decreasing every year, and I think something should be done at once to try and preserve this industry, because it is a great industry.

Some hon. member made a remark that it was better than the seal fishery. If that is the case I think we should endeavor this year to make some amendments to the laws that have been made and see if we cannot get something better done.

I believe that many of these men are unwilling to throw away these lobsters because they get nothing for them, and I think that the fishery commission should do something in this matter. These men should be paid for these lobsters which they throw away. I do not wish to delay the time of the House, but I think that we should do something to protect the lobster fishery.

### Combines Bill

Monday, Feb. 23.

Mr. Kent—Mr. Chairman, just one word in connection with this Bill. The intention is that such a commission should enquire into the existence of a combine; it has for its object the ascertainment of facts regarding the condition in relation to the price of goods to the consumer and to the seller. That I take is the object of the Bill.

I do not think any difference of opinion can exist as to the desirability of getting at the bottom of combines which exist for the purpose of excluding competition. This will have to be regulated by legislation. But this act is not going to accomplish that object. It is not sufficiently vigorous.

This is a matter which I think ought to be fairly and squarely enquired into. Now, it is quite evident that a commission such as is contemplated under this Act, appointed by the Governor-in-Council merely for the purpose of making an enquiry, cannot go beyond the enquiry stage. The Act provides no remedy.

### What About Wire-Pulling

Then, again, it is quite possible that people who are charged with a contravention of this Act may have sufficient political pull either to prevent an enquiry or to prevent the publication of the report.

I think that in this Act precaution ought to be taken against any such possibilities as that. In the event of the Commission of Enquiry finding there are sufficient grounds to believe that a combine exists, the Committee ought to be above even the suspicion of political complexion or the possibility of the person charged having sufficient influence to annul the effect of the enquiry.

If the Commission or tribunal, whatever it may be, is appointed, and they work automatically upon a complaint being made and substantiated with evidence to show the bona fides of the complaint, the enquiry ought to go on, and if a Combine is found to exist, some means of publication of the fact ought to be provided for, unless it is remedied within a reasonable time.

### Useless As At Present

The mere enquiry, without any means of publication, and without any means of forcing a remedy, is absolutely useless. A Commission may be appointed and the report may be pigeon-holed and never heard of again. I think that if this Act is

going to accomplish any good it ought to be more vigorous than it is at the present time.

The first section merely defines what a Combine is. The second provides that a Commission may enquire on oath into the existence or non-existence of a combine, and the next provides that witnesses must attend. That is the whole Act. There is nothing as to what will be done after an enquiry is held and it is found that a combine exists.

We have heard here statements in relation to the coal business, which allege that arrangements exist between the coal dealers. I do not know whether it is a fact or not, but that is the statement.

### Serious Matter

Rumor also has it that money is paid by certain firms to people who entered into competition with them to keep out of the business. Things of that kind are said to exist in the country, and if it is true, it is a serious matter.

If the people are paying not only a fair profit for articles, but also the amount necessary to pay the price to bar competition, then it is a combine which should come under this Act, and for which some remedy ought to be provided.

These are the kinds of combines which have been legislated against in Canada and the United States. They have, of course, been larger and affected a greater number of people, and if they exist here, they ought to be enquired into and some means of dealing with them provided.

### Object Is Good

As to the object of the Act, I think it is a very good one. It is one, I think, on which there is no difference of opinion between the parties in this House. In the Manifesto which Sir Robert Bond issued to the country before the last election, there was a

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laure promising to effect legislation in connection with combines affecting trade.

My object in talking now in reference to this Bill, is to point out that it is inefficient, and is capable of abuse. I don't say it will be abused, but it is capable of being abused, and here is the place and now is the time to remove any possibilities of its being abused for political purposes.

### Asked An Explanation

Mr. Coaker—Mr. Chairman, with regard to this Bill, I would like to ask the hon. introducer what he means by the words "Combine means any contract, agreement, arrangement, or combination which has or is designed to have the effect of increasing or fixing the price or rental of any article of trade or commerce."

Do these words include raising the price of fish? Suppose the buyer is offered \$5.00 for fish and the fishermen say, "We will not take \$5.00. We want \$6.00," and they hold on until \$6.00 is paid, will you get after them?

Rt. Hon. Prime Minister—I should not suppose that would come under the Act.

Mr. Coaker—It raises the price of fish.

### Legitimate Combinations

Rt. Hon. Prime Minister—Every one has a right to legitimately combine as regard the sale of their products.

Mr. Coaker—Well, what is the use of this Bill at all if people have the right to legitimately combine? The merchants will say that they are combining legitimately.

Rt. Hon. Prime Minister—This bill is for the purpose of enquiring as to whether the prices charged for various articles are legitimate.

Mr. Coaker—Then you consider that if the fishermen hold out for \$6.00, that would be legitimate.

Rt. Hon. Prime Minister—Certain-

ly. The man who owns the property has a right to set the price. He can put what price he likes on it.

Mr. Coaker—Well, supposing a man has gasoline for sale and he is offered 30 cents, and he says he won't sell for less than forty?

Rt. Hon. Prime Minister—That could not possibly come under this Act.

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