

MR. MORINE INTRODUCES HIS LABRADOR FISHERIES BILL.—(Continued from page 2)

the other hand it is quite apparent that what might be called the interest of the buyer is represented by the President of the Newfoundland Board of Trade and the interest of the seller would in the main fairly be said to be represented by the President of the Fishermen's Protective Union. It may be at first very properly objected to that the President of the Fishermen's Union does not in any way represent all the fishermen, and I admit that neither does the President of the Board of Trade represent all the buyers. But what I want to point out is and I hope it will be recognized without partisanship, that the President of the Fishermen's Union represents, if not all the fishermen, at least the interest that is common to the fishermen, that is the interest which he does represent is one in common with all the other fishermen, as being opposed or antagonistic to the interest represented by the President of the Board of Trade on the other side, and the Fishermen's Union appears to be the only constituted fishermen's body that deals with trade and commerce to any extent whatever. It was any other body of that kind I should have adopted it instead of this Fishermen's Protective Union in order to get clear of any charges of that kind. But it seems to me that the President of the Union is the only one that can be said to represent the interest of the fishermen, as opposed to the interest of the fish merchants as represented by the President of the Board of Trade. Then having provided a Board there is some machinery afterwards to provide that there shall be no failure to make the appointments. In section three it is provided that if the appointments or any of them shall not be made on or before the said date (July 1st) the Supreme Court or a Judge thereof shall make such appointment or appointments within ten days after application by any of the persons authorized to make such appointments. Then the appointments having been made the Minister of Marine and Fisheries is notified and the names are published in the Royal Gazette. The Board is then given one month to fix a fair and reasonable price; and it is further provided that if they fail to do that the Supreme Court or a Judge, thereof may do it; and it provides also that for the purpose of fixing that price the Court may summon witnesses and may appoint counsel. It is provided that the counsel representing the Board of Trade and the Fishermen's Union shall not be paid, and that the witnesses shall not be paid, because we are endeavouring to make this as inexpensive as possible, and all the witnesses can be got here. The only case in which anybody is paid is if the Supreme Court appoints counsel of its own; and in this case they are paid out of the Consolidated Fund of the Colony, but as that is not likely to occur there should be no expense involved in this Bill.

Now the next thing I wish members to notice is that having got a Tribunal ready to make a fair price, and having got that price made I do not attempt to impose it on anybody. Section 10 provides that:

"In the following events the prices fixed as aforesaid may be recovered, in any action at law for codfish sold on the Labrador Coast in the calendar year during which they were fixed, that is to say:—

(a) If the buyer and seller do not themselves agree upon and name the precise price, or

(b) If they agree to pay the "current price."

Or any phrase to that effect. That leaves anybody perfectly free to make any bargain he likes when buying or selling fish. If one says, "I will give so much for fish," and the other says, "I will take it," that settles the price. But if they do not name the price, or if they agree for the "current price," or by any words of similar meaning, then the price fixed by this Board shall apply. Now much better is it to have the price fixed by this Board than by a committee of merchants meeting down in a room in the Board of Trade by themselves and with no representative of the fishermen there, and the fishermen knowing nothing about it at all.

Then sub-section (c) provides that the price fixed by the Board shall apply if the buyer and seller "agree as to the price in words which shall be held to be of like meaning as the words 'current price' or which are of an indefinite meaning." My object in this is to prevent the flogging of fishermen, which goes on by using such words as "the highest price," "as much as is being paid on the coast," etc. All that indefinite language will be swept away, and what the fishermen will get, unless he specifically agrees on a price himself, will be what the Board says is a fair and reasonable price. Now, you will see if you study it, that I have avoided any interference with the liberty of parties or their freedom to contract for them-

selves. I have simply substituted a Board which is representative for a Committee which is unrepresentative, and I have given this Board power to get all the facts together and fix a reasonable price, instead of allowing the committee of merchants to come together and making up what is the lowest price they can get the fishermen to accept. I can quite see that this Bill may be evaded; that if the buyer and seller have to agree upon a price, the buyer will name a low price. My first answer to that is that you can do that to-day. We are in no worse position under the Bill; and my second is that if it is found inoperative, then we can at the next session of the Legislature deal with the matter again. We know, however, that a combination of buyers has existed this year, and this combination we are now trying to fight in another place.

Now, when you remember, Mr. Speaker, that a very large quantity of fish is shipped from this coast, you will see that this is a very important matter. We find, for instance, that in 1912 there were 195,000 quintals of fish shipped from Labrador: in 1913, 112,000, and in 1914, 91,000—going all the way in value from \$360,000 in 1914 to \$682,000 in 1912. The inference, therefore, is very clear. The thing ought to be dealt with immediately and a remedy provided; and this Bill is an honest and impartial endeavour to find a way out of the difficulty, in the interest, I believe, of the trade of the country: of the merchants on the one hand and of the fishermen on the other, because after all in the long run they go hand in hand and unless something of this sort can be done, as I said before, I see the day is approaching when somebody will have to interfere in the interest of the fishermen and ship the whole of the catch and give him the net proceeds and cut the middleman out altogether.

MR. COAKER.—Mr. Speaker, I rise for the purpose of supporting the bill presented by Mr. Morine. I must congratulate the Premier, who, on this occasion, has seen eye to eye with us, and while congratulating him on this I must also regret his inability to do this more often; for if he took his information on fishery matters from this side of the House, I am confident he would make less mistakes. I am glad we are going to pass this Bill, as it appears we shall, from this House unanimously. I may say that this Bill has been brought in because of certain difficulties with regard to the fishery conducted on the coast of Labrador, and to remedy the causes of the great losses that the people of Conception Bay sustain in connection with these fisheries. They are compelled to get down to the Labrador coast as best they can. Sometimes they get down there by steamer, sometimes by vessel; a few supplies are given them and they catch fish if fish come along. There is great difficulty in getting away if there is no fish, owing to the fact that there is a great scarcity of vessels. The price that they have to take is the price that the men who come down there in vessels have to offer. When he sees that the buyer is in difficulties and that he has the chance of making the price, then naturally the fisherman does all in his power to increase the price as much as he can. In 1913 the price fixed as the "current price" was \$4.30. It was fixed here in St. John's as a minimum price. Later when the true value was discovered they were forced to pay \$4.70, or 50 cents more than was given on the Labrador, simply because the fishermen were acting in the dark in agreeing to \$4.30. No representative of the people had been asked to the meeting. The business men got together in some room and fixed the price. No one can blame the fishermen as acting unreasonably when they are unwilling to repose their confidence in these men. Were they fully acquainted with the true particulars of things as they actually stood; the cost of freight, insurance etc., I am sure that these men would not be unreasonable. Can they not be treated with some confidence? But try and mislead them and they at once get suspicious. It is only in view of the way that they have been treated in the past that they are suspicious. They demand fair play, and this is their right. Let them know the freight and the insurance, let them know the fact as they are, let them see how things are being arranged in St. John's, and they will be to be most reasonable. These things have been discussed fully at our councils in Conception Bay attended by men from all parts during the winter. These men have awakened to their rights and they say that the day is now come, there must be a change. Last year they were led to believe that they would get \$4.00 on the coast, whereas in reality they only received \$3.60 which naturally caused a tremendous wave of indignation to sweep over the districts of Conception Bay. It is for the purpose of removing these difficulties that we

now ask that this bill should become law. If something is not done in the direction aimed at by this bill we will find that less men will prosecute the fishery on the Labrador coast. In 1912, 195,000 quintals, in 1913, 125,000 and 1914, 91,000 qtls. were shipped from Labrador, which shows a marked falling off from a quarter of a century ago, when the firm of Munns alone shipped about 190,000 qtls., a greater amount than the whole catch on the Labrador in 1912. Then men are so disgusted that they will not go to the fishery under existing conditions. We must endeavor to encourage them to prosecute this industry by providing them with motor boats, gill nets, facilities for trawling, and for obtaining bait and they must not be permitted to go to the Labrador solely depending on traps for a voyage. With the proper facilities within their reach there is no reason why a half million could not be caught instead of 90,000 sets. If the government had spent only one million dollars in assisting the fishermen with motor boats and bait, the returns would be trebled in five years. It is owing to the fact that no encouragement was given that we find to-day the young men refusing to go to the Labrador. I hope the government will take the matter into consideration and provide the men of Conception Bay with those facilities in order that they may be enabled to catch a half million qtls. on the Labrador instead of about one-fifth of that catch. The fishermen are well aware of the value of the fish they catch and to have a representative of their interest in fixing the price in the interest of both parties will be found to considerably facilitate matters on both sides. This matter must receive immediate attention otherwise strikes are liable to occur. In the past, personally I have done all I could to minimize the effect of this bad system, and I hope this measure will set things right. I do not intend to delay this House with any further remarks at present. When we get into Committee we can discuss this matter as fully as we desire, and I hope the Legislature will see fit to adopt this measure.

MR. KENT.—Mr. Speaker, I have listened to the remarks that have been made in regard to this Bill with a great deal of interest and profit. It appears to me that this Bill provides an excellent remedy for a condition

of affairs that requires immediate attention. Now, I do not suppose there is any country in the world that is so dependent upon a single industry as Newfoundland. Our fishery stands out predominant over every other feature of our economic conditions. We have depended upon it ever since Newfoundland was discovered, and we will be depending upon it for many years to come. When the matter is considered from this point of view one is surprised at the little amount of attention it has received at the hands of the Legislature for its promotion and advancement. It is surprising that these conditions which have existed on the Labrador in the pursuit of this the most important of our economic resources have been allowed to remain for such a long time in the state that they have. Of course what happens is this. The voyage having been of necessity dispensed of down there at the price given, the fishermen are forced to accept the highest price they can get, and they are not always contented. The remedy proposed in this measure is one which I think is honestly intended in the interest of all concerned. The price will be determined by representatives of all interests. It is of course quite possible that under the Act as it now stands means will be found to evade the objects which Mr. Morine has pointed out this bill is framed to remedy. The principle of this bill is that a reasonable price but as a standard fixed by an impartial umpire, whatever the price may be. Consequently the great step made by this bill will be in the direction of enabling the fishermen to approach the purchasers with intelligent information for the purpose of bargaining. He knows that there will be an arbitrator present representing his interest, and that in the case of no Board being appointed the Supreme Court has the necessary powers under this Act of "supplying the position. This act does not interfere with freedom of contract. In the case of special contracts the figure named therein is the figure at which the fish is sold. It merely aims at affecting those cases in which fish is sold at "the current price" or some other vague or undetermined figure. No doubt this Act will require amendments and additions from year to year as conditions arise. It is my belief that it is a splendid effort to harmonize the relative positions of

the purchaser and the seller of fish.

MR. GRIMES.—Mr. Speaker, representing as I do a constituency largely engaged in the Labrador Fishery, it gives me great pleasure on this occasion to rise and support the introduction of the bill by Mr. Morine. While as yet this bill is more in the nature of an experiment, yet it is immediately apparent that it will do much to remedy the conditions which have prevailed in the operation of the Labrador fishery, in the future. It seems extraordinary that these conditions, which were so detrimental to the interests of the fishermen involved in these undertakings, should so long have existed in that state of imperfection which to-day has resulted in reducing the value of this industry.

The operation of this Act when in operation ought to establish a confidence between Purchaser and Buyer, or that can never exist until something of this sort is done. In the past it has always been this distrust of the Merchants which has eventually, as seen, fostered the growth of conditions totally to the detriment of this industry from an economic point of view.

Right down from the earliest times they have read and heard of the tyranny of the merchants and up to the present nothing of a tangible nature has been done to alter the conditions. In 1894 the same thing prevailed. The same causes were in existence that are in existence to-day. The merchants at that time did not fix the price of fish or of supplies at all. They did not give the fisherman a chance of knowing what the price of fish was or what goods were going to cost. I have here a history by Judge Prowse in which he relates that the Government of the day instituted a very drastic remedy to meet these conditions (Hon. member here read the passage). The bill introduced here this afternoon while not containing so drastic a remedy as was then introduced, contains the same principle and aims at fixing the price of fish so that the people may get confidence as to the prices which they obtain. At the present time there is considerable dissatisfaction prevailing on the part of the fishermen, particularly in Brigus district. The consequence has been that they have taken advantage of every opportunity to take up any other occupation in the place of fishing. The

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Mightiest Guns In the World For United States

American Weapon Excels Any Owned by European Powers Says Secretary of War Daniels

Washington May 1.—Secretary Daniels has just made public a letter he has written to President Garfield of Williams College, detailing the work in the navy during the last two years. Mr. Daniels wrote in reply to Mr. Garfield's request for material to meet the statement of Representative Gardner of Massachusetts that the United States is unprepared for military emergencies. One of Mr. Daniels' most important statements is: "As to guns." The Bureau of Ordnance has developed a 14-inch gun that will shoot farther, shoot straighter and hit harder than any gun now in use or known to be designed by a foreign country.

"There are now in active service," writes Secretary Daniels, "fully commissioned, 225 vessels of all character, which is 36 more than were fully commissioned when I became secretary. There are also 101 vessels of various types, in reserve and in ordinary and uncommissioned, capable of rendering service in war. We have under construction and authorized 77 vessels (nine dreadnoughts, 23 destroyers, 38 submarines and seven auxiliaries).

"All the vessels enumerated, those in active service and those in reserve, are supplied with munitions of war.

"The personnel of the navy is at present composed of 4,355 line, staff and warrant officers, and 53,171 enlisted men."

A FRIENDLY TIP FOR MR. CASHIN

Ottawa, April 29.—The pressure brought upon A. Dewitt Foster, M.P. for Kings to do the right thing and resign his seat in the commons has borne fruit. Yesterday Mr. Foster handed in his resignation to the speaker of the commons. The justice department is now looking over the evidence in the horse purchase scandal to see where the prosecutions should start.

His Simple Faith

H. M. S. Carron, England, April 10, 1915.

A little while ago the following letter was received by Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Welsh of Islington, from their son John, who is one of our Naval Reservists:

Dear Father and Mother—I have great pleasure in answering your kind and welcome letter. I was glad to hear that you both are enjoying good health. I am quite uplifted when I hear the good news from home. It is when we are apart that we realize what our little homes meant to us.

I must say I am quite happy. I leave myself entirely in our Lord's hands. He is the Good Shepherd. He never forsakes us. He fills my heart with peace and joy. It is now we realize Him when we are in war and so many miles across the sea. He is a good pilot. He keeps us from all danger.

Dearest Father and Mother I want you to pray that the war will soon be over and bring us all home safe again. We are getting fine weather here now, there are lots of men enlisting in the Army. I am sending my love to you all and remember me to all the friends. No more at present, as my time is short.

I remain
Your loving son,
JOHN T. WELSH.

Among the nobility of Great Britain, 45 in every thousand marriages are of first cousins.

Uncle Sam gave away last year 120,000,000 board feet of lumber to settlers and miners living in or near the national forests.