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ST. JOHN'S, N.F.L.D., JUNE 20, 1914.

### OUR POINT OF VIEW.

#### CONFEDERATION

THE TELEGRAM yesterday announced that it would welcome contributions upon the subject of Confederation, pro and con, but that all letters dealing with personalities would be thrown into the waste paper basket.

The Telegram was not so eager in seeking contributions in reference to the slaughter of 78 Sons of Toil on the icefloes or the finding of watery graves by 173 on the Southern Cross. It could have done some good and aided in demanding a square deal for the TOLLERS of the Deep had it come out in open daylight upon this matter.

It preferred the ways of silence and refused contributions upon the subject, but it is not so silent regarding the matter of Confederation.

Can it possibly be that there is a greater likelihood of compensation from the Confederation issue than there was from fighting the TOLLERS' cause in the Sealing Disaster?

A discussion upon the merits or demerits of Confederation would be futile at present. Let politicians talk and their heelsers twaddle, that won't bring Confederation any nearer.

Why disturb the Country with a discussion upon a subject that none can intelligently discuss?

A Confederation discussion will be in order and vigorously entertained when the terms of Confederation are before the people. There is no possible chance of Confederation being carried except by the votes of the electorate.

The P.P.U. is strong enough to handle any attempt on the part of any Government or Party who will attempt to pass a Confederation law without the consent of the electorate.

What the Country requires now is a change of Government in order to permit a new party of public men to fully examine the financial condition of the Colony and find out whether a strict policy of economy and retrenchment cannot restore the Colony's financial standing.

If Sir Edward Morris thinks he can hold on to power in defiance of the present feeling of the electorate, or if he thinks the composition of his

Government will be much longer tolerated by the people, he is free to take any action he chooses in the matter of ascertaining what terms of Confederation the Canadian Government will offer, but he will find that if he sends a delegation to Canada, it will not consist of one member of the Opposition Party.

If the terms of Confederation were highly beneficial to the Colony and the financial condition of the Colony was shown to be absolutely hopeless, then many an intelligent man would be open to consider the question upon its merits.

If Confederation does come it will be caused by the reckless extravagance, waste, railway building and blundering of Sir Edward Morris, and upon his head must rest the responsibility and the curse of unborn generations.

The present financial condition of the Colony is verging upon bankruptcy, and only Sir Edward Morris is to blame for such a serious condition of affairs.

In the matter of Confederation, so far as Mr. Coaker's attitude is concerned, he will consider only the Country, and unless it is clearly shown that the terms offered are likely to cause Newfoundland to blossom as a Rose, he will not be a party to rounding off the Dominion of Canada.

We therefore consider that little good can come to the Colony by a premature discussion of this issue, as no one can discuss it as a business proposition or with any definite idea of what its consequences may be until the terms are placed before the electorate.

The fishermen are all busily engaged, and thousands are away from their homes, and would know little or nothing of the contents of the discussion.

We promise all concerned that our first duty will be to protect the Country's interests, and nothing underhanding will be tolerated by us or by Mr. Coaker, and if at any time it becomes necessary to take up a free and open discussion of the matter we will promptly announce it.

Mr. Coaker will be leaving for a five weeks' tour of the North about the 10th of July and if nothing transpires before that date the public may calmly await his return, as regards anxiety about any serious move being taken to hasten action concerning Confederation.

The Government is powerless to do anything except dispatch a delegation to Canada to ascertain terms, to such a move the F.P.U. or Opposition will not be a party, but should such action be taken it will not commit the Colony, for we assure our friends that the F.P.U. or the Liberal Party, will never consent to be parties to the passage of a Confederation Act unless it is the outcome of the expressed wish of a majority of the electorate. Consequently no immediate alarm need be entertained for the Morris Party is powerless to do anything but play with the matter.

The F.P.U. holds the Key to Confederation and the Key will not be turned unless a square deal and abundant prosperity will result from the change.

#### STATE-AIDED INSURANCE

OF more than ordinary interest to the general public of this Country is a letter from the Rev. Frank Smart, of Heart's Content, which appeared in The Daily News this morning.

In brief, Mr. Smart objects to the arrangement whereby the Marine Disasters Fund is established on a permanent basis, arguing that the true solution for cases of this kind is the institution of a scheme of State-aided Insurance, whereby all dependents would benefit when their bread-winners are removed by death.

There is too much of the appearance of discrimination about the present arrangement, argues Mr. Smart, a view of the matter in which we are very much disposed to concur. The Editor of The News however, evidently looks at the matter from an altogether different standpoint.

It is difficult to see, however, just how any reasonable man can take issue against Mr. Smart's position.

Year by year we lose scores of our tollers through drowning accidents or otherwise. Sometimes a single man is swept overboard from the deck of a schooner or is lost when his fishing boat swamps. Our tollers die from injuries received or from diseases contracted while in the pursuit of their avocations. But, in the cases of these ordinary and non-spectacular losses, life nothing is done.

Often almost a whole schooner's crew is wiped out, but after the usual excited interest in the unfortunate occurrence dies away, nothing out of the ordinary is undertaken in connection with the case.

Take any of the Bays around our coasts and there evidence is to be found of all the men in various families wiped out through disaster at sea and yet nothing has been done for the dependents except to hand them out the widow's dole through the Department of Charities.

On the other hand the loss of our

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men at the icefields,—terrible, sudden, spectacular,—arouses the sentiments of the Country and of the outside world and relief on a big scale is organized.

This is all quite right and proper. It is our duty to see that the helpless do not suffer. It is a matter of the greatest pleasure to us all to note the splendid response that has been made to appeals for aid for the dependents of those who lost their lives in the "Newfoundland" disaster and by the disappearance of the "Southern Cross."

But our contention is that henceforth we must so order matters that never again will Newfoundland be made the subject of world-wide charity. And, what is also of the greatest importance, we must see to it that our tollers of the sea can embark on their perilous work fully confident that whether they lose their lives alone or in company with scores of their fellows, their loved ones at home are fully insured against want.

Living side by side with those who will benefit thru the present Permanent Marine Disasters Fund are probably some benefit by similar disasters, though on a smaller scale, and who simply receive ordinary Government

relief grants. They do not receive enough to live on while their fellow-sufferers are well-provided for through the fund.

This is by no means a satisfactory state of affairs. It is not fair to the great army of widows and orphans who are numbered amongst our population. It is bound to give rise to a great deal of bitter, but well-founded resentment against what looks like discrimination.

The only satisfactory remedy lies in the establishment of State Insurance. Such an arrangement would place all on the same footing. It is an undertaking within the limits of practical politicians and it is a policy to which the Union Party is definitely pledged. This, however, is emphatically not a question of party politics. It is a matter that deeply concerns all parties and classes of our population and he will be a benefactor indeed who undertakes to effect a practical solution of the problem.

Mr. Smart deserves credit for making the whole question a public issue once again. It will well repay our readers to peruse his letter, which we publish on this page.

the Colony needs at this juncture somebody with breadth of vision, or several somebodies with a comprehensive vision, who will save us from the mistake of a Permanent Marine Disaster Fund. Such a fund, useful as it would be, will not go far enough; it might prove an excellent offspring of sentiment; a few widows and orphans could be benefitted without the periodic appeal to the charitable public, but what of the greater, much greater, number of widows, and orphans, who are compelled to "drag along year" after year on a \$20 annual dole from the Public Charities Commissioner?

Those of us who go in and out among them know of their pathetic struggles, their miserable hand-to-mouth existence, their drab and broken lives.

Typical Instances  
Let me give a typical instance. I give no fancied illustration, no offspring of a lively imagination, but an actual case, and typical in the highest degree. "A" has a wife, two or three children, and a widowed mother; life has gone well with him, the store is well supplied, the wardrobe is fairly replenished, the current voyage has been a success and the fish disposed of at highest market prices.

Having strained away everything for the winter he ships in a "fish-carrier" for a trip across, and on the return voyage disaster overtakes the vessel. "A" with his fellows is lost at sea. The Permanent Disaster Fund comes to the assistance of widow and orphans, who are in no immediate need, and make an annual or semi-annual grant in aid.

The Other Side  
"B," the brother of "A" has a wife and children, with a widowed mother-in-law. Tuberculosis has claimed "B" for a victim, and for nearly a year he lingers on, unable to work,

his 'fishing-room' get out of repair, his boat deteriorates, the store like 'Mother Hubbard's cupboard' is bare, the wardrobe scanty.

At length "B" dies peacefully on his bed, he makes a 'beautiful end,' kindly neighbors crowd to his funeral, the widow and children go back to the empty desolate home, they are practically destitute.

#### Charities Dole

The Public Charities Commissioner doles out \$5.00 per quarter, \$5.00 if the 'pardon' pulls hard enough and long enough, to keep a whole family. There is no sentiment here, and so the distressed widow and helpless orphans of "B" who died upon his bed, must drag out an existence, while the widow of "A" becomes a wealthy widow, drawing from a Permanent Marine Disaster Fund \$15 each for her self and her three children, each half year, a total sum of \$120 a year, as against the \$20 doled out as a whole year's grant to keep the widow of "B" and her orphans.

#### Must Be Accomplished

What is need to-day in Newfoundland is something greater and more effective than the offspring of sentiment and the god-child of Charity, and that is a wide-embracing scheme of Compulsory State-aided insurance, so that the wife and family of the clerk behind the counter, the operative in factory or mine, the worker in the forest or on the railway, the school master at his desk, or the fisherman who dies peacefully on his bed, may have some means of subsistence when the bread-winner has been removed by the Hand of Death. In what ever way the Dread Messenger comes.

#### Should be Avoided

Do let us as a people avoid making permanent what has hitherto been only occasional, viz., seeing one or two widows in a settlement with their orphaned children, fairly well off, because the husband and father happened to be drowned in an 'Erna' and the widows and orphans of brothers and cousins, who happened to die on their beds, compelled to drag out a struggling existence, ill-nourished and worse clothed.

A Permanent Marine Disaster Fund the offspring of sentiment, and the god-child of Charity, may be a good thing, a Compulsory State-aided scheme of National Insurance will be infinitely better in every way.

—FRANK SMART.  
Heart's Content, June 16th.

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