

Address of Minister of Marine And Fisheries to The Ex- porters Meeting on Thursday.

Gentlemen.—This meeting has been called because in the Act Respecting the Exportation of Salt Codfish it is provided that such a conference shall be held. The Act says:—

"A Meeting of all exporters of Codfish shall be convened by the Minister of Marine and Fisheries during the first week in September in each year to consider and discuss with the Codfish Exportation Board all matters relating to the exportation of codfish for the ensuing season. Such meeting shall be held at St. John's and two weeks' notice thereof shall be given."

This is our authority for convening this meeting, and it has been called in order that we may discuss with the Fish Exporters what it is best to do in connection with the rules and regulations controlling the exportation of codfish for this season. You will remember that when the Government came into power in November last they passed Rules and Regulations dealing with the export of codfish. Those who are interested in the export of codfish have various opinions regarding these rules and regulations. Many claim that they are most beneficial; others contend that they are injurious. Since those regulations became effective in November last, two bye-elections have taken place in Newfoundland, and on each occasion the fishery rules have been the sole issue of the election. Even here in St. John's where we would not expect the body of the people to be very much interested in the exportation of codfish, as far as rules and regulations are concerned, the bye-election fought in January was contested solely on this one issue, and the result was that the Government won. In Bay de Verde the election issue was simply and solely the Fishery Regulations as inaugurated

by the Government. The result of that election was a sweeping majority in favour of the Government—a majority such as the District never before piled up in favour of any party. The Government therefore take it that on those two occasions those opposed to the Fishery Regulations placed them on trial and on each occasion the Government's position was sustained. We therefore consider them as part of our policy, and we are agreed that there must be no looking back. The position is that we have placed our hand to the plough and we will not waver until this struggle as to whether these regulations which we have introduced are good or bad shall have had time to be fully tested. The Government consider that this year at least we should enforce the regulations according to the policy inaugurated last November, in so far as possible and this season will prove whether they are valuable or valueless. If, after giving them a fair trial, it can be shown that they are injurious or not beneficial, we shall only be able to say that we have tried and have failed, and therefore we will forego any further attempt to control the fixing of prices of fish for the foreign markets. That is the position. Our policy has been laid down and from it there will be no departure, but I do hope that in our discussions and criticisms here you will speak fully and freely and impartially, and will be able to guide us in the right direction. If there is any weakness in any of the regulations we shall be very glad to consider any alterations proposed. Our aim is to make them as reasonable and as fair as possible. We do not want to make them too drastic. On the contrary we hope to be able to frame regulations that we hope will be satisfactory, and this

time next year after having had a fair trial, will have proved whether we have succeeded or failed in our efforts to place our Export business on a sound business basis. One thing I hope will result from the Conference and that is that the Commission will be able to set to work immediately to frame regulations which can be placed on the Statute Book, so that the uncertainty and unrest in the foreign market may be ended. I do not know if you realize that every discussion you raise and every meeting you hold at which adverse criticisms are made of the regulations weakens our position abroad, because eight or ten messages are sent over the water, some truthfully and others the reverse, and the result is that the markets are so disturbed that people do not know whether to buy or hold off. Every buyer abroad is afraid to purchase or make any arrangement for purchase, because they do not know where they are, or where prices will be, and what loss may be caused thereby. There has been no indecision on the part of the Fisheries Department or the Government, because we have not at any time done otherwise than taken the position that the regulations must be enforced, and the whole trouble has been caused mainly by people who do not sit down to think seriously of the consequences which their actions may involve. The matter is too serious a one to make a political football of, and I am afraid that in some respects that is what has unfortunately been done with the regulations. We should realize the responsibility of the weal or woe of Newfoundland for the next twelve months. If we are forced to accept low prices for our fish, we know the consequences which will result to the people of the country. If we are unable to give \$10 per quintal to the fishermen, you do not have to guess as to what will happen. It remains for you and I and all those interested in the welfare of the country to see that the very best possible price is paid for our catch. We should realize that the foreign markets consider that these regulations depend entirely on one man—Coaker; they think that he is the only inmate man in the country, and that all the rest of the population are sane. They contend that this inmate man has set up artificial regulations, and that if they can remove

them, all control will cease and they will go on doing business as they have done hitherto. They are justified in that belief because from all appearances all they can learn is that the regulations were the work of Coaker, backed by the Government. If you were on the other side receiving continual messages to the effect that the regulations were all the work of one man, that they were unpopular, and would not last long, you would not take any steps to do business until you heard the outcome of this conference. Now, what are the conditions? I saw it stated very recently that we have lost three months' consumption in the Portuguese market. How can any one construe what has happened this spring as meaning that we have lost three months' consumption in the foreign markets? There has been absolutely no restraint work while on the export of fish abroad. I do not care who says to the contrary. Fish was late in being made on the West Coast. There were only one or two cargoes during the whole season that have been kept back—one belonging to Penneys and the other to Moultons. Other exporters, as soon as they had their arrangements made, obtained permission, loaded their vessels. No one was refused. They were of course told that they would not be allowed to clear their fish unless they had made an outright sale at so much per quintal. Apparently all except Moultons and Penneys had sales made. To-day there are three or four vessel loads of new fish due at Oporto. Two loads of old fish are due at Oporto to-day and ten cargoes of new fish are now en route to that port. This old fish has been disposed of at the market has been fairly cleaned out. Last year when we sent new fish over we got for it on an average about 80— and had to take 40 for the old. The new fish destroyed the chances of the sale of the old, and as a result we had old fish on the Portuguese market up until October and November. We will have very little old fish now to contend with. No consumption has been lost; it is just as great now per week as it was at this season last year. Compare the consumption last year with this and you will find we sold just as much the past three months as we did the same months last year. There is no fish ready for Spain, nor was there any this time last year. There is none for Italy now; nor was there any last year at this time. We have not lost any consumption.

Let me take you back to some facts in connection with the Portuguese market. Some exporters on the West Coast forget there is a past in connection with Portugal. They only look at Portugal from the time of the beginning of the War when everything was in their hands. We exported 620,000 quintals to Portugal last year against 560,000 the year before, an increase of 60,000 more for this year over last. When I was in Portugal I was surprised to find that Portugal had consumed large amounts of other fish besides ours in days gone by, and if we come to look up the record of even recent ones—we find a time when we had a very small footing in that market. In 1915 we exported only 150,000 quintals. In 1916 the amount went up, because the War was on, and controlled the market to the extent of 311,000. In 1914 we sent 153,000, about the same as in 1915; and in 1916 we sent 201,000. In 1917 we only exported 258,000, in 1918 206,000, in 1913 203,000, 1914 153,000, 1915 151,000. What happened during the War period? Let us see: In 1916 we sent 201,000, in 1917 265,000, in 1918 451,000 and in 1919 559,000. Last year it went up to 620,000. Is there any man who expects that Portugal is going to continue to consume our fish in the same manner as the competition of Norwegian and Icelandic fish, especially that of Norway? But we must not be alarmed because we find that Norway sells a little fish there. We should get cold feet and think the bottom has dropped out of the market because Norway may send 100,000 or 150,000 qtls. into Portugal this year. In 1917 265,000 qtls. were sold at least 300,000 quintals annually in Portugal. In Spain last year we shipped 378,000 against 278,000 qtls. the year before, or 100,000 qtls. last year more than the previous season; and yet we are alarmed because there are old stocks in Spain and we say that the consumption is not as great, but who stops to think that there was 108,000 qtls. more gone to Spain this year from Newfoundland than last.

Take Italy. We shipped 133,000 qtls. against 236,000 the year before. We could only find 133,000 to send there although we had made a sale to the Consorzio in January of 150,000 qtls. that was not available; and of what was sent there one-third should not have been sent to Italy at all. But we came down to 133,000 qtls. against what? In 1911 we only shipped 132,000 there, in 1912 212,000, in 1913 297,000, in 1914 we came down to 170,000, in 1915 142,000 and in 1916 173,000. In 1917 we had a good year and every one was making lots of money, because we sent 261,000 qtls. in 1918 189,000 and in 1919 212,000. Our export now drops to 133,000, simply because we had trouble with

Italy, and when they did buy in January we did not have sufficient stocks available because the Italian fish had gone into Spain. Referring again to Spain. Last year we shipped there 378,000 qtls. the year before 270,000. In 1918 we sent 385,000, 1917 319,000, 1916 288,000, 1915 211,000, 1914 200,000 and in 1913 174,000. There have been ups and downs in all these years.

Now we come to Brazil. We exported last year 290,000 drums against 310,000 the year before. In 1910 we sent 335,000, 1911 368,000, 1912 423,000, 1913 417,000, 1914 462,000, 1915 362,000, 1916 379,000 and 1917 272,000. Where can we find 290,000 drums this year for Brazil. There is not 100,000 qtls. of Brazil fish in the whole country to-day.

Here are the figures for Greece: We exported last year 107,000 qtls., which is about the same figure as for the year before. If we deduct from the records for the year previous the amount sent to Roumania.

Our total exports last year were 1,788,000 qtls., against 1,881,000 for the year previous, an increase of 106,000. What have we for this season's voyage that will in any way compare with the previous year's exportations of 1,788,000? Here is an estimate I have made of our fishery for the present year:—

ESTIMATE SHORE CATCH, 1920.

Burgo District 50,000
Fortune District 60,000

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MAISON & MAISON, 164 University St., Montreal.
and 936 F. W. N. St., Washington D. C., U. S. A.

Burin District 70,000
Placentia 30,000
Ferryland 20,000
St. John's and Outports 20,000
Conception Bay 20,000
Trinity 20,000
Bonaville 15,000
Fogo 30,000
Twillingate 25,000
St. Barbe 40,000

Estimated catch Sept.-Oct. 400,000
LABRADOR 700,000

Straits catch 25,000
Labrador shoremen 100,000
Labrador floaters 190,000

Old shipped and to be shipped 1,015,000
1,165,000

How much more fish will be taken between this and November? I estimate 300,000, and that quantity will equal last year's catch for September and October. Thus 700,000 will be the total catch for the present season—that is so far as the shore catch goes. As regards the Labrador catch last year, I do not know if you made an estimate, but mine is 568,000 for Straits, shoremen and floaters. Last year we had 739 schooners cleared for the Labrador from Newfoundland. This year we have 548, a reduction of 191 vessels. Last year the average was about 350 qtls. per vessel, and if our floaters get as much this year as last there will be 66,000 qtls. less because of the shortage in schooners. My estimate of the Labrador catch this year is as follows:—

Straits 25,000 qtls.
Shoremen 100,000
Schooners 190,000

a total of 315,000 qtls. against 258,000 last year. That will bring our total catch for this year up to 1,015,000 qtls. We have, in addition, old fish exported in July and August, and some more to go which will swell the total to 1,165,000 qtls. for 1920. Now why should we worry? Some one next March, April and May will be making \$5 a drum on Brazilian fish for there will be a very short supply. If Portugal takes 300,000 qtls. less this year than last, that is only half. If Italy takes only 33,000 and Brazil 100,000 less than last year, we will not have a quintal of fish to sell over in June next. What I am stating are absolute facts, so far as my knowledge goes, in relation to the catch of fish this season. If any of you gentlemen wanted to purchase 50,000 qtls. fish and you asked me to go North and lay my hands on it at \$11 or \$12 a qtl. I would not know where to put my hands on places that could load a dozen schooners. If, in the discussions we are about to have, anyone can quote figures contradictory to mine, I shall be glad to have them.

(To be Continued)

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September Specials & School Clothing, etc.

All Items Listed Here at Reduced Prices.



Children's Dresses.

"School Maid" Children's and Misses' Check Gingham and Chambray Dresses; big assortment of styles and designs; assorted sizes, 6 to 14 years. Reg. \$3.00 each. Sale Price, each \$2.75

School Hosiery for School Children.

One and one rib, first quality Black Cotton yarns, with the special twist that makes this Hosiery stand up under extra hard wear; sizes 5 to 10½. Sale Price, per pair 48c.

School Bags.

Good quality Check Waterproof Bags, size 10 x 14, with lunch pocket and shoulder straps. Regular 70c. ea. Special Price, each 65c.

Ladies' Aprons.

A line of Ladies' Cotton 'House' Aprons, made of striped percale; heavy weight, full size. Reg. price 75c. Special Price, each 69c.

Children's Boots.

A lot of Children's Boots on sale to clear; sizes to fit from 3 to 7 years. These come in buttoned or laced; some all leather, others with cloth tops. Regular price \$2.30 per pair. Sale Price, per pair \$1.78

Men's Underwear.

A line of Men's Knit Underwear suitable for present wear. These have slight imperfections, otherwise would sell at \$3.50 a pair. Special Price, per garment \$2.25

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Get a pair of Cotton Blankets for the cooler September evenings; good quality fleece; size 54 x 74; Blue or Pink border. Special Price, per pr. \$3.50



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MUTT AND JEFF.

MUTT TOOK THIS JUST THE WAY THE LITTLE FELLOW MEANT IT.

By Bud Fisher.

