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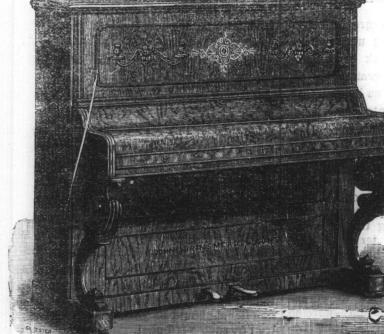
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# The Evening Telegram.

ST. JOHN'S, MARCH 8, 1888.

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Letters relating to advertisements, job work and other business affairs, to be directed to Wm. J. HERDER, All communications intended for publication or containing intelligence, must be addressed to ALEX. A. PARSONS, Editor.

Mr. Bond asks for a Repeal of the Act, or that Compensation be given

to those whose sole Means of Support are about to be taken away by On Monday evening Mr. Bond addressed the House as follows: - This bait question is one that affects a large section of the colony, and it calls for a full and impartial discussion. I feel convinced that if the question is viewed in a broad, liberal spirit, the amendment I have submitted will receive the support of all hongentlemen. Last session I presented a number of petitions to this House, numerously and respectably signed, which were expressive of the strong feeling adverse to the bait bill passed by the Legislature last year. I may now say that by the last mail from the Westward I received a number of petitions, bearing the signatures of over a thousand fishermen, and praying for an amendment of that Act owing to the ruling of his honor, the Speaker. I have been unable to lay these before the House. I am informed that by next mail shall receive petitions from the districts of Burin, Burgeo, and Placentia and St. Mary's upon the same subject, and I am aware, too. that a monster petition with the same object is now in the hands of the hon. the Colonial Secretary, for presentation to the Upper House. It has been asserted in the "Mercury." the official organ of the Government and of this House, that the Bait Act is a popular measure, and that the only objections to it proceed from a "few wretched bait catchers" in Fortune Bay. No stronger refutation could be given to this assertion than the petitions I now hold in my hand containing the signatures of clergy men, merchants and well-to-do planters. The people of Fortune Bay, sir, have never appeared before this House as applicants for pauper relief. They do not now come before you in such a character. Last year, when every other district in the island received thousands of dollars in pauper relief, mine never sought to have any participation in it, nor did it receive one cent. But at the close of that year For tune Bay had \$3,000 to the credit of its account. I repeat, sir, that the people of Fortune Bay do not now approach this Legislature as paupers; they simply ask that there shall be no interference with their legitimate rights. stated a day or two ago when speaking on this subject that this Bait Act interferes in the first place with large vested interests on the South and West Coasts; that over 1,600 fishermen have been engaged for years in the trade of bait fishes. In Fortune Bay alone there are 5,300 individuals solely dependent for their livelihood upon this business, and they have invested in boats and implements of their trade \$84,500. But my district is not the only district which is interested in this matter. There are hundreds in Placentia and St. Mary's, in Burin and in Burgeo and LaPoile who have invested their all in the business of supplying bait to foreigners. I also pointed out that this Act tends to create monopolies of the most odious and terrible character, that not only will the whole bait traffic, but the herring and bank fisheries of this country fall into the hands of monopolists. I pointed out that by the granting of licenses for the sale of bait to its friends, the Government will inflict upon this colony one of the worst and most grievous wrongs which it has ever suffered under. This will be the effect of the first section of the Act. The second section, I submit, is an arbitrary departure from common law, calculated to work the most dire injustice to the individual It provides that, because a squid or a caplin is

found upon the property of a man, he may be

dragged miles from his home to appear before

a Stipendiary Magistrate, with the burden laid

upon him of there proving his innocence of the

in a Coercion Act, but is totally indefensible in force of my contention. If, as hon. members

a bill of this nature. This section alone ought to condemn the Act in the eyes of all liberal and right-thinking men. The evils that are likely to accrue from the enforcement of this section are most apparent. It will have the effect of setting man against man, and neighbour against neighbour. If a man cherishes enmity against his neighbour, he can cause him to be brought before a Magistrate, and in case he cannot prove that the squid or caplia which was found upon his property was not there in violation of this Bait Act, he can procure the imposition of a fine upon him, the confiscation of his property and the imprisonment of his body. It may not have been the intention of the Legislature that such a result should be rendered possible; but it does not therefore follow that such is not the law. This Act is now the law of the land, and it is competent for any man to put its machinery in operation. Let us look for a moment at the arguments which are brought forward by the advocates of this Act. It is alleged, in the first place, that the Act tends to the preservation of our bait fishes. This, sir, I most emphatically deny. The fact that the measure contains no provision for regulating the season during which bait may be caught, nor the quantity which may be taken and sold by those holding licenses, most clearly proves that the Act is not intended for the purpose alleged by its promoters, namely, "the preservation of our bait fishes." The holders of the Government licenses may take the bait at any time, and may, if they please, employ a thousand men to work for them in catching it for the purpose of "sale and exportation." In the second place it is contended that if the Act is enforced it will succeed in driving the French fishermen from the banks. Is this result likely to happen? I have knowledge that all the caplin which the French require is caught at Miquelon and Langley, and that for the last three or four years all the squid they have used has been caught on the banks. We can only inconvenience the French, and the only way we can inconvenience them is by preventing them from obtaining a supply of herring bait from Fortune Bay. But herring bait, sir, can be taken in purse nets outside the three mile limit. It can be procured at Bay of Islands all through the winter months, and in Bay St. George after the 18th or 20th of April. These, sir, are facts, not suppositions. Further, I have been informed by the hon. Colonial Secretary that it is not the intention of the Government to enforce the act against British subjects or to interfere with the winter herring fishery. If the Nova Scotians and Canadians are permitted to purchase herring caught in our waters and afterwards frozen, an avenue is opened up to the French to obtain all the bait they require. It is asserted that the French have already received hait from this source, and that Nova Scotia vessels have stocked St. Pierre with frozen herring. That assertion was denied by the hon. mover of the address, Mr. LeMessurier. I know whereof I speak. On the 17th of February several cargoes of herring were sold at St. Pierre by Nova Scotian vessels. Again, the hon. member for Burin, Mr. Peters, directed attention to the Coast Fisheries Act and alleged that the enforcement of its provisions will prevent the French from obtaining bait. That act limits the amount of herring which shall be taken on any trip to the Banks to sixty barrels. But these vessels can make any number of trips, and further, sir, that act refers only to vessels owned in this colony. The hon. Attorney General will not deny this. Failing in the substantiation of these two claims which have been urged in favour of the act, its supporters fall back upon the flimsy excuse that the Canadians will not enter upon such a degrading enterprise as the bait traffic. Sir. no labor is in itself degrading. All honest toil is stamped with the Divine impress of nobility. I can assure hon. gentlemen that the Nova Scotians will turn their attention to what has been to us most lucrative industry. The petitions which I have received, praying for an amendment of this Act, contain the signatures of merchants, clergymen, and well-to-do planters, who have no personal or selfish interest in the continuation of this traffic. Amongst others, I notice the names of H. T. Holman, Esq., the agent of Messrs. Newman & Co., of Harbor Briton; of Burke Brothers, of St. Jacques, and of Messrs. Cluetts, of Belloram, firms which all do large general business in these several localities. The house of Newman & Co., for instance, is as largely, if not more largely engaged in the bank fishery than any mercantile firm in St. John's. I submit that charge of violating the provisions of the Act. the presence of these influential names ap-Such a provision might be justifiable if inserted | pended to these petitions add very much to the