

Cabbage, Apples, &c.

Due Thursday Ex s.s. Stephano:
100 Crates CABBAGE.
50 Bags SMALL ONIONS.
40 Barrels LARGE RED APPLES.
20 Bunches BANANAS.

George Neal
Phone 264

HAVING enjoyed the confidence of our outport customers for many years, we beg to remind them that we are "doing business as usual" at the old stand. Remember Maunders' clothes stand for durability and style combined with good fit.



John Maunders
Tailor and Clothier
281 & 283 Duckworth Street

SMART NECKWEAR FOR MEN

On your way down town drop in and look over our splendid stock of Men's Ties. We have them in the leading shapes, in the newest fabrics and designs.

Before the GREAT FIRE that destroyed MacGregor's Stock, Mr. MacGregor had contracted for goods to be delivered during March and April, and we have purchased from him all his new goods to arrive.

Today we received a shipment of Silk Scarfs, each one stamped

"Macgregor's, St. John's"

These are certainly distinctive, hand some, refined and entirely correct—the wide-end slip-easy band of a rich quality.

You owe it to yourself to see them and buy a variety. MacGregor's regular 95c. Scarf. **OUR SALE PRICE 75c. EACH.**

Come in today and see our general stock of Neckwear, we can surely please you in varieties, styles, qualities and prices.

Anderson's, Water Street, St. John's

"Island Brand" Boneless Codfish

Absolutely pure, cleansed by the waters of Wind-sor Lake.

Study economy and buy our brand packed in 2, 5, 10, and 30 lb. wooden boxes.

Try our Shredded and Tinned Codfish made ready in a moment.

Packed only by
John Clouston,
Phone 406, St. John's, N.F.

Proceedings at the House of Assembly

MR. MORINE INTRODUCES HIS LABRADOR FISHERIES BILL

DEALING WITH THE MATTER OF BUYING AND SELLING FISH ON THAT COAST

A Most Vital Matter, as it Concerns the Life and Death of a Great National Industry

THURSDAY, April 15th (Cont.)

Second reading of the Bill entitled, "An Act relating to the Sale of Cod-fish on the Labrador."

MR. MORINE.—Mr. Speaker, in moving the second reading of the Bill relating to the sale of codfish on Labrador, I would say that this is an honest attempt to meet very great difficulties, which have been in existence for many years. I am afraid that even if it becomes law it will not cure all the difficulties, but at least it will be an honest effort in that direction.

My aim in drawing up this bill was to avoid interference with freedom of contract while at the same time producing a measure, which would give a reasonable prospect of fairness to both sides. The present practice of the sale of codfish on Labrador without the price being fixed between seller and buyer except by some vague and indefinite perhaps in some cases calculatedly indefinite, phrase such as "the current price" is one which easily lends itself to abuses.

This bill deals only with fish sold and shipped on the Labrador. It chiefly affects the interests of the fishers and the Conception Bay men who go up there and reside in summer. In this trade the custom has almost universally been not to fix the price at the time of the sale, but to give receipts for the fish in which the terms are variously set down. On investigation I have found the price set down in the following way: "The current price," "whatever price is paid on the coast of Labrador," "at general current price," "current price," "the current dealing price," sometimes at "whatever price is paid by supplying merchants," "current coast price," "\$4.00 and current price," "3.00 and the rise." On other occasions I have found that a man promises to pay as much as another man, whom he names, or "as much as other supplying merchants pay," or "as much as highest buyer," or "as much as anyone else." I have not come across any case in which the exact price is named. There is no freedom of contract on the Labrador. The merchant plays with loaded dice because the current price is fixed by the buyers themselves, who meet at the Board of Trade late in the year when they have received enough information to know what is safe for them to pay. They naturally aim to pay as little as they can, and whatever they agree upon is the law for all parties. This has been the assumption up to the present time by all parties. This year the greater number of the merchants paid \$3.50 per quintal for ship fish which was shipped at least two months before the price was fixed. When the fish is at the market they can make a safe calculation. I say that that is playing with loaded dice. Now, I am not attempting to censure the conduct of those who were buying; but it is the logical result of the system in force. The seller has nothing to do with fixing the price he is to get. If the buyers agree amongst themselves and maintain their agreement, they can fix their price according to their own free will. There is only one chance of getting more, this when some of the merchants break the agreement, when they begin to compete in an undeclared way amongst themselves or make surreptitious bargains. It is only then that the fisherman has any chance of obtaining anything more than these gentlemen are willing to pay. Last year there was an agreement made by a number of merchants who ship from the Labrador to pay \$3.60. This agreement was arrived at early in November. There was no representative of the seller present at that meeting, nor was there any publication of the information on which the price was based. They used loaded dice. There is something to be thankful for; that these merchants have not squeezed the life out of these fishermen altogether. I have a letter here written in September

from one of the most respected supplying merchants to a seller, it is not without. With the permission of the House I will read it.

Sept. 8, 1914.

"From a letter received from Mr. Earle by the S.S. Sagana, we understand that ——— has been up and offered you an additional freight of 20 cents on all your fish if you will ship it to him. We can only say that if Mr. ——— actually did make you this offer he has committed a great breach of faith with the rest of the Labrador exporters. Mr. ——— in talking the outlook over with us not ten days ago strongly advocated, along with us and others, to give you fishermen simply a receipt for your fish with the distinct promise of paying you the highest price possible as soon as ever we were in a position to know the market value of Labrador Cod.

"Now, sir, we would not go back on our word for Mr. ——— or indeed for all the fish down there; but if you will write us and tell us what ——— actually offered, we will give you the same figure; and you probably know us long enough to know that our promise we regard every time as sacred.

"The actual current price of fish has not been settled, and we have no means, nor has anyone else, to tell you any figure. We would strongly advise you not to allow any price to be mentioned on your receipt, as by so doing you may discover later you are a heavy loser. The French fishermen are occupied to-day with war, and this will make the French fishery almost nothing; and this is bound to help prices when peace is restored.

"We hope you will not give this catch of yours to anyone else, and you can rest assured that we will treat you fairly when the time for settling up comes."

"Then he goes on to give his reasons why he thinks the price should go up. Then, again, sir, I am in possession of a letter from the same gentleman to another person, written in November, and this other person the writer thought was a purchaser of fish. He mistook the name and discussed prices in a way he would not have done if he had known the man was a seller of fish and not a purchaser. He goes on to say:

"In confirmation of our reply to you this morning by wire that \$3.60 is all we are giving as the current price of fish shipping to us at Labrador; we may say we are doing this in conjunction with all the St. John's merchants, viz: Winter, Ryan, Munn, Templeman, and McRae and Duff in our own day. This seems to have been mutually agreed upon by all of the above, and we believe all are holding firm at this figure.

"As you doubtless are aware, however, Messrs. Baine, Johnston & Co.'s agent, Mr. Croucher, has settled with his men at \$4 and this is what is causing all the trouble. We are relying on our craters, however, that this was done merely for a purpose, viz: to get this steamer away quickly and are not forgetting to tell them that when she did get away he then dropped to \$3.60 which we believe is correct.

"Current price has been defined legally we believe as, 'the price paid by the majority of representative men in the trade.' (I may say Mr. Speaker, that I have not been able to find any such legal definition, although there are commercial definitions.)—and accordingly if the rest of us hold firm the fishermen have no legal case against any of us for \$4.00, as Baine Johnston & Co. are only one firm, and there is nothing to prevent any individual firm from paying \$10.00 per quintal if he feels inclined to do so.

"We may say in two cases only we have paid \$4.00, but the receipts which were issued early in the season in these instances, were worded 'as high as any supplying merchant on the coast,' and in these instances we feel we were both legally and

morally bound to do the same as Baine, Johnston & Co.

"All down this way are determined to hold at \$3.60 and we trust you will do the same.

"We are,

Yours truly,"

This is a plain acknowledgement of a combination to keep the price at a certain figure and a plain invitation to the man to stick with them to keep it at the same price, and that in the face of the fact, as I believe will be admitted by everybody, that in the face of the fact, as I believe in November the markets warranted much higher prices than these.

I find that the Hon. John Harvey in speaking in the Legislative Council at the opening of the session said:

"We begin the year 1915 with unprecedented prices for our staple products. These values in my opinion are more or less artificial and temporary. They are based upon values ruling in only one of our markets. No other market warranted a price at all approaching the figures at which fish has ruled here for the last three or four months," showing that the price in this market during the past three or four months and at the end of last year were considerably higher than in the early part of the season, and much higher than had been paid for these fish by these people under this combination. I believe I am correct in saying that if the same fish could have been brought to St. John's and sold in the open market, and in open competition, the price would have been a dollar more than these people had been getting it for. But it is not possible to bring it here, and therefore these fishermen had to take any arrangement that was offered to them, and put up with these prices. Now here is the position of affairs. The men who catch this fish on the Labrador have no means to ship it, they cannot bring it away, and very possibly could not conveniently make it if they did bring it home. It must be sent in vessels which come to the Labrador, and therefore the buyer can make his own terms. There is no freedom of contract about that. We have had an urgent request, an earnest request, an invitation in the Speech from the Throne at the beginning of the session that anybody who could should engage in the fishery. Is it conceivable that any sane man who can keep out of it will engage in the fisheries when they are bound hard and fast to the merchant who takes their fish, and must submit to his terms, good if he happens to be generous, but very bad if he happens not to be very generous. It appears to me that a continuance of this fishery cannot be expected unless we can in some way provide for a fairer system. I look forward, sir, to the day when either through the Department of Fisheries or some other means to be devised, this Labrador catch will be shipped away to market for the benefit of the people who catch it, and the middleman will be entirely cut out, and the fish will only bear the expense of marketing, and the net proceeds will go back to the fishermen. I believe that will yet come to replace the unsatisfactory methods which obtain at the present moment. Now, I have tried in a very humble way to grapple with this, and the underlying principle of my bill is that where the parties are willing there shall be a tribunal having the character of an arbitrary board. I have provided in section 2 that the Board shall be constituted by the appointment by the President of the Board of Trade of one member; the President of the Fishermen's Union shall appoint another, these two shall choose a third and these three shall constitute the Board. Now, it is quite evident that to fix a price we cannot have a series of arbitrations because that would be too expensive for the fishermen who are interested, and would not result in equality. On

(continued on page 3.)

New Millinery

OUR SPRING STOCK

—of—

Ladies' Hats

Just to hand

In the latest and up-to-date London Fashions. HATS TRIMMED AT SHORTEST NOTICE

—Also—

Dress Goods

Of very finest material and choicest patterns to select from.

Our price are right as they were bought before the advance.

Nicholle, Inkpen & Chafe
Limited.

Agents for Ungars Laundry & Dye Works, Halifax, N.S.

THE BEST IS CHEAPER IN THE END



Job's Stores Limited.
DISTRIBUTORS

FOR SALE

Schr. "GREENWOOD," 71 tons

Built at Shelbourne, N.S.

Sails and Rigging in good condition.

Well found, in Anchors, Chains, etc.

Apply to

S. & G. BENNETT, Burin.

or

ROBERT TEMPLETON

333 Water Street.

Write For Our Low Prices

—of—

Ham Butt Pork

Fat Back Pork

Boneless Beef

Special Family Beef

Granulated Sugar

Raisins & Currants

—and—

All Lines of General Provisions.

HEARN & COMPANY

St. John's, Newfoundland.