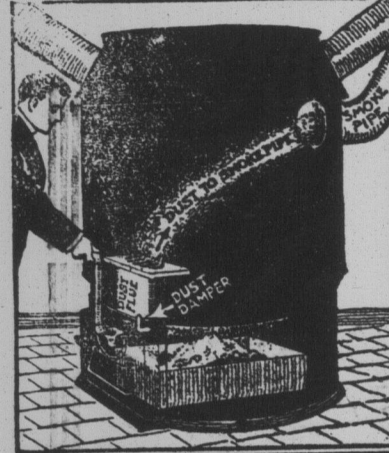


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"Sunshine" Furnace



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A Draft of furnace dome, with no other assistance, is powerless to overcome the dust nuisance in smoking time. Only surplus draft rises of itself above the fire. Great bulk descends into ash-pit, and unless legitimate outlet is furnished, dust will escape through ash-door slots and into operator's face.

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The Weirmens Union and the Fight for Fishermen's Rights

Desperate Efforts of a Foreign Combine to Control Charlotte County's Magnificent Fisheries.

Packers now Paying \$39.00 per Hoghead for Western Fish in a Vain Endeavor to Disrupt the Union.

TAKEN FROM LAST ISSUE

The struggle between the Weirmens Union and the combine of foreign packers still goes on. The outlook is decidedly favorable for the ultimate success of the Union in obtaining its demands. In fact it may be said that at no time during the eighteen months of its existence, have conditions pointed to more certain victory, than now in the second season of its struggle for fair play and a living price for its members and for all others along the Charlotte County Shore who are engaged in the same occupation.

Perhaps here we cannot do better than give a brief sketch of conditions which existed at the time of the organization of the weir-fishing forces, and which were themselves responsible for that organization. The occupation is admittedly, from a financial point of view, an extremely speculative one. The initial cost of preparation is heavy. Then the fisherman runs the risk of not catching fish. If he does make a catch, he may not find a sale. If he found a sale the price was often inadequate. Still under all these adverse conditions, taking one year with another, with the open market, the industry while not lucrative still those engaged therein. The open market was however essential, for then the competition among the packing buyers was productive of a higher price in times of scarcity that tended to compensate for the lower price obtainable in times when fish were plenty. Thus competition among the buyers and among the sellers prevented great hardship. Then a move to radically change and which did not benefit the packers. The formation of a combine with intent to eliminate all competition among the buyers, to set certain arbitrary prices payable in times of scarcity, to get the best obtainable rates in times of plenty, and thus to reduce the cost of fish to a miserable fraction of what might be considered a fair price. Finding this new plan to work much to the satisfaction of their greed and arrogance, these foreign corporations decided upon still further reductions, which had they been allowed to go into effect would have practically deprived themselves of their source of supply inasmuch as it would have rendered weir-fishing so unprofitable as to drive the workers from their means of livelihood, was productive of no great amount of pleasure in the minds of the fishermen and the union idea, previously advanced in a tentative

years since the inception of the sardine industry over the prices a control which in the end they had made absolute, would with any grace begin immediately to pay the higher price which the Union set upon their product. That the higher price was reasonable, that it red if at all upon the side of moderation, influenced them not at all. They saw their control slipping away, and announced their intention of never yielding the "outrageous" demands of "ignorant fishermen." It would render their business unprofitable; they could not pay such a price, they said. But the fishermen knew that the cost of herring was the smallest item in the packing cost. They knew that oil had increased in price and that the packers had not threatened to hold up the oil producers and sellers. They knew that the packers were increasing the price of their output, an increase of now about 100 per cent more, and were thus increasing their power to pay the weirmen's reasonable price. They knew that if some years ago the packers could be found tumbling over one another in their desire to contract weirs at \$12 per hhd, they could surely pay \$5 without the formality of a contract. They knew that if the combine could pay \$5.75 they could pay \$8. So for a time the combine refused to buy and the fishermen to sell.

In the meantime the Union was perfecting its organization and building up its membership, the combine doing its best to disrupt the Union. In the end a sliding scale was set by the Union and worked fairly satisfactorily for the balance of the season, and the combine was thus obliged to acknowledge and treat with the Union and to accept the Union's price.

In the meantime the Union had for the further protection of its members set a standard tub for measurement of the fish. For previously each boatman had carried his own tub and some of these were so deep that it is related that a papoose fell into one and broke its neck. Daily the too deep tubs worked injustice to the weirmen and were productive of wrangling and disputing at the weirs. But the adoption of a standard has done away with this source of injustice and disagreement. At the end of last season the Union controlled every view in Charlotte County and had been successful to an extent which is given to few organizations to boast of. And the members feel that in no small measure they are indebted for this success to the Canadian packers who throughout the season joined in giving consistent support to their fellow-countymen.

With and before the beginning of a new season, the combine renewed its war upon the Union. As one of the hirings of the combine declared "The Union must be crushed and crushed this year. Then there will be no further trouble." No trouble for whom? Presumably the packers—the monopolistic combine. Again they would have their former power over the fishermen. Nor can it be doubted that such an aggregation would with the knowledge of opposition crushed, be still more tyrannous and overbearing in their dealings. There would be "no trouble"—except that which would overweigh the poor fisherman—the trouble of building weirs, and supplying nets and boats and the thousand incidents to the occupation of the combine. They began by contracting all the weirs whom they could seduce from the Union. And here we might call the attention of those who have contracted with the Foreign Corporation to what we have herein before said concerning the treatment hitherto accorded those with whom the combine made its contracts. Ask those who in previous years have contracted and they will supply the details which space does not here allow. You will find, if you do not in your hearts already know that honesty never was the guiding principle of the foreign oppressive aggregation. No doubt present contractors hope for better treatment than has before been accorded. If it is given, the Union is to be thanked for it. Treatment may be fair now because they cannot afford to antagonize anyone who is now outside the Union. They need such new and will, perhaps, be even generous, until "the Union is crushed." Then there will be no further trouble. The contractor will have done his part. He will have cut the ground from under the feet of those who were helping him and themselves equally against foreign oppression. That done—the contractor and the Union man will pay in the semi-starvation, the cost of the "fair" treatment accorded in the "troubled days while the Union lived." But let us see how well the emissaries of the Packing Trust succeeded in their efforts to wrest from Union control the weirs of Charlotte County. They have announced as the result of their efforts the contracting of one hundred weirs. Good 18; Fair 21;

Non-productive 22; Not built 16; Not known 23. 100 in all.

Thus it will be seen that the productive weirs which the blood-sucking syndicate has contracted number 39. Contrast this with the 183 productive weirs which the Union controls and we see that at the most the syndicate can be sure of only about 17 per cent of the supply. And very few of these weirs can compete with the Union weirs inasmuch as their season is over while that of the Union weirs is just beginning. The syndicate here has surely no cause for self-gratulation upon the effectiveness of its efforts in this direction. This is especially manifest when we consider that while they may control the output of these weirs they have not the sympathy of the owners. For while a short-sighted self interest may have induced these owners to bargain away their prospective output, their best wishes are with the Union which they have left. But there is a still further element of doubt in the real value to the syndicate of the weirs which they have contracted. For these contracts contain provision which vitally amounts to an agreement by the weir-owners that he will not dispose of his catch to a Canadian fisherman or a Canadian packer. Now these weir privileges are the property of the Canadian government—that is, of the Canadian people. They are leased because the government considers that it is in the best interests of Canada and her people that they should be leased. In order that as much benefit as possible may accrue to the Canadian people, the holding of these privileges is restricted to Canadians. If then these holders refuse to give to Canadian packers or Canadian fishermen even a chance to bid for the product of these Canadian fisheries but on the other hand sell it without reserve to foreigners who manufacture in a foreign country, employ no considerable amount of Canadian labor, and are in competition with Canadian packers, employing Canadian help; if they alienate from Canadian fishermen the use of Canadian bait; if they, by being ailing a foreign combine to break down a Canadian self-defensive organization and thereby reduce the sale value of Canadian products, can it be said that Canadian Government property is being used to the manifest injury of Canadians? Such being the case should the Government allow such disposition to be made of its products? The Union thinks not and will use all its power to prevent in future such a signing away of Canadian rights.

Having thus failed to get control of the source of supply available before the formation of the Union the Packing Combine has been endeavoring as it threatened before to do, to obtain a supply of fish from western waters. Here it may be of interest to many to know that a recent importation of Western fish cost one of the American packers at the rate of \$39 per hhd. for packing fish. And even at this figure this supply is so small as to be negligible. The supply must come from Charlotte County waters and the Union controls 83 per cent of that supply.

The old source of supply having thus proved unavailable except at Union terms, and new ones not being great enough to form a factor of any importance in the situation the combine commenced an effort to put out of business its outside competitors to whom the Union Weirs were disposing of their catch—thus in a round-about way to prevent the Union from selling. To do this they tried to cut off one competitor's supply of cans. It cost the combine in round numbers \$200,000 to keep the can manufacturing companies so busy that they could not devote any time to the forementioned competitors wants. The competitor turned to and made his own cans while the syndicate has every inch of available space filled with cans which it can't use at all unless it uses them this summer, and which it can't fill unless it buys Union herring. And if they do not use the cans, the firms composing the syndicate stand to lose the best part of \$200,000. This is as pretty a case of self-over-reaching as ever men were the victims of and proves that the reliable heads of the Big Foreign Combine cannot see any farther into a pine board than can anybody else.

At present their emissaries are engaged in circulating falsehoods with a view of creating dissatisfaction within the Union by being to the effect that they have asked several times for a conference with the executive of the Union and that their request was each time refused. Just a falsehood nothing less. Then again these hired agents of dissatisfaction, have been stating that the packers would pay the Union price if they were not afraid that they would be held up for greener prices later on in the season. They know that the Union's price has been fixed for the season. Any story coming from the syndicate or its sympathizers or hirings can be taken with the proverbial grain of salt. The depth of syndicate truth and sincerity was proved before the Union existed.

In the meantime the combine is not as yet buying Union fish. But they soon must begin. Their ill plant, their empty cans, dissatisfaction with their officers, discontent among their shareholders, resentment from their employees, outside pressure—all these

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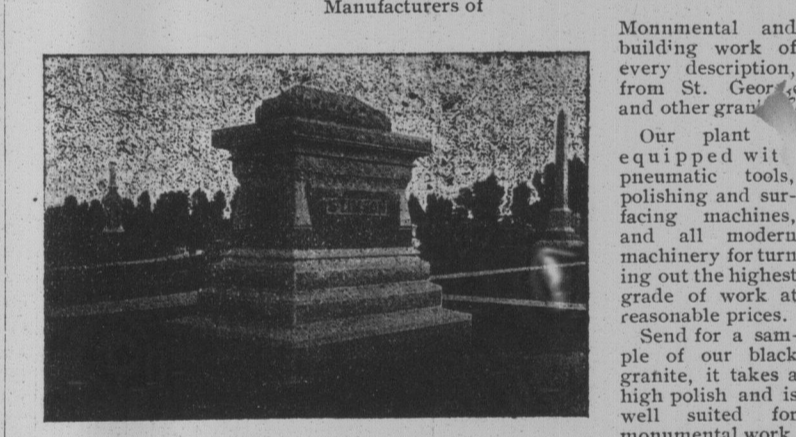
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must soon have the effect of breaking the deadlock.

It may come in a week or a month. Meantime the members of the Union must stand firm.

They have not shown any indication of weakness. In fact their determination to win has latterly been becoming more marked. They can remember conditions of two and three years ago, and before that. They want no return to those conditions. They know that they can when necessary let their herring go, that it is better to handle one hundred hhd. at \$6 per hhd. than 600 hhd. at \$1 per head. It is easy to foresee the treatment that would be accorded the

members of an organization which the combine wishes so to break. They know that the combine must pack and can easily afford to. They know that a brief stand is all that is necessary to decide for years to come whether or not they shall be beaten down to satisfy the greed of the arrogant if not particularly brilliant packers of the combine. It is risky but little to accomplish much and will result in years of greater prosperity for themselves and their neighbors. They will no longer be subjects to contemptuous treatment but will be in a position of such independence as will enable them to demand their rights.