

Twenty Thousand Freemen Take Up Challenge

THE MAL' AND ADVOCATE, ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND, MARCH 3, 1915-4.

Toilers Final Fight For Liberty

Six Hundred and Fifty Voters at Island Cove, Cupids, Port-de-Grave, Bay-de-Verde and Clarke's Beach Charge Kean With Criminal Negligence

Abram Kean Is Guilty and Must Be Arrested

BOWRING DEFYING THE LAWS OF JUSTICE AND HUMANITY

Kean's Barbarous Inhumanity Cause Women and Children to Mourn—Who But Judge Johnson Will Say Kean is Innocent, Did No Wrong and Worthy of Being Trusted—Abram Kean Responsible in the Eyes of Heaven

FOR THE LOSS OF THE 78 MEN HE SENT FROM SHIP TO DIE DEATH OF AGONY

On Whose Shoulders but Kean's Does the Crime of This Calamity Rest—Judge Horwood and Judge Emerson Finds Him Guilty of Criminal Negligence, For Their Finding of "Grave Error of Judgment" Means That and More

Glancing at the several opinions on the "F.P.U.-Bowring question," and which opinions have found their way to the Press over the various "non-de-plumes" of as many correspondents, one is struck very forcibly by the fact that not one of those letters voice the sentiment that Mr. Coaker and the F.P.U. are working for any other purpose, or cause, than the protection and guardianship, and safety of the fishermen.

We have seen and read such letters as "Fair Play" would write for instance, wherein it is spoken, "that Bowring has the right to do (if it will be permitted) what he likes with his own employees."

Another epistle signed "Justice" gives out that "Coaker seeks riot and revolution." A third who calls himself "Humanity" asks "the advisability of a mutual settlement between the contending parties," whilst another correspondent—perhaps one who calls himself "Native"—is decidedly of the opinion "that if the Bowring house closed down, the Country would go to ruin, and the Oldest Colony would pass away."

Amongst all those persons, who have given their different views upon the matter, and have taken a hand in the controversy, not one however has come out and declared "Coaker you are wrong in this issue, Capt. Kean was perfectly justified in sending those 78 men from his ship, and in doing so he was neither showing negligence, or acting against the laws of Justice and Humanity."

NOT ONE HAS COME FORWARD TO SAY THIS.

Not one individual of the thousands who have read and heard and understand this question, has come forward and declared the Bowring Bros. free of dishonourable conduct in this whole matter, not one has been found to say, or to write, of Capt. Kean "that he acted according to the dictates of common sense humanity at last year's sealing voyage."

"Not ONE has come forward. Why? Because the public know—and know it too well—that it is on account of the barbarous inhumanity, and the uncivilized action of Capt. Kean in driving poor human flesh out into that visible storm—that 78 lives were sacrificed and that women and children mourn.

"THIS" is why nobody has dared to come out into the Public Press and declare Capt. Kean innocent of wrongdoing—and THIS is why thousands of Newfoundlanders to-day are crying "SHAME," HORRID SHAME," upon the commander of the steamer Stephano at last year's seal-fishery—whether they join issues with Coaker and the F.P.U. or not."

And who is it—what honest, manly, feeling heart is it, that covering over all this sad story of negligence, of loss, of precious life destroyed, of homes in mourning, of little children crying for their dead sires, of women in the agony of despairing sadness, of bread-winners gone forever, of poor maimed, broken down humanity, of the story of those hours of death's agony on the broad ice flow, of the inhumanity, the barbarity and the savageness of it all—what manly, feeling, heart is it who will dare say—"Capt. Kean is innocent, he did NO wrong—he is worthy of ALL trust?" none but Judge Johnson—the father of the minority Sealing Commission Report.

Not ONE has come forward to say this.

There is not one honest writer in our whole commun-

ity, whether he signs himself "Fair Play" or "Humanity" or "Justice" can exonerate or justify Capt. Kean in this matter. The stigma of negligence, and of humanity, is upon him; all the waters in the vast oceans cannot wash it away, nor all the guardianship or favouritism or support of all the powerful friends and correspondents on the earth can recall the just anathema that has gone out upon him from every home and hearth in Newfoundland.

He has been judged, and fairly judged by the whole people; he stands to-day accused, and guilty and anathematized. The power and influence of the Bowring house does not hide his criminal action in sending men out on that awful afternoon to die.

Despite the favouritism of Mr. Munn, or the "hearty hand shake" and "well done" of powerful friends, Captain Kean is guilty. This fact is predominant, nothing that can happen can alter it; Capt. Abram Kean is responsible in the eyes of the community for the loss of the lives of those men whom he sent away from his ship.

This horrible certainty requires no debating, there is no analysis to be gone through to define his guilt or his innocence, Captain Kean is responsible in the eyes of the Country for the loss of the lives of those men whom he sent away from his ship to die the death of agony.

Nearly every man, woman and child in this city witnessed that frightful sight, when the poor frozen bodies of men were brought to the Seamen's Institute. Every one of us was appalled, horror-stricken, and almost smitten as if the hand of death itself were ready to lay itself upon us, when we looked upon that never to be forgotten scene, and thought within ourselves of the martyrdom of those poor fellows, who crazed, and mad, and driven to the extremities of death's despair, called upon God to release them from their frightful agonies. We saw the poor mother, who bent with the toil of years, and broken with the usages of merciless arrogance and pride creep into that building of death, and there—look upon her sons—wrecks of her own brave boys sleeping forever in the silence of death—lost to her, lost to the smiles and the touch of her mothers' love, sleeping in death.

All this we saw, and our very overcharged hearts burst out into the sympathy of kinship—our tears that we were not ashamed of—broke from us, and we hope they went up to the Bar of Justice, and with the sufferings that the dead had passed through, asked of the Good God, that mercy and peace which man had refused.

And who was responsible for all this?

Reader, as a just and honest man ask yourself that terse question. Through whose fault was it—or through whose incapacity was it, that this awful death picture had to be presented?

Who, honest reader—who was the cause of that terrible loss of life? Speak up the truth, the straightforward, honest assertion—WHO IS THE MAN ON WHOSE SHOULDERS THE ERROR OF THIS CALAMITY RESTS?

Who ordered those once living bodies to move on, to get away—to leave the only refuge that they knew, against the quickly falling shadows of loss? Who is that man?

That man's name is on the page of the history of the world's disasters, and his name is KEAN.

Thus he stands to-day accused, and guilty, a miserable man, a wretched unhappy man, if he has a heart to dictate to his better feelings.

He stands out, alone, in the vast community, for there is almost the anathema of guilt upon him, and brave men, and true men will call him "Coward." This is the commander then, that Bowring Bros. would again allow to master their ship, this is the man whom Bowring Bros. would once more intrust men's lives to.

Despite the strong condemnation of his conduct by the Sealing Commission and of the thousands signing the petition demanding his arrest and trial Bowring Bros. in determined opposition of the people will seek to have this man take command of a steamer this season.

Are the public going to stand for this? Is public opinion of no account? Is the possibility of another sacrifice of life to be courted, because Bowring Bros. and Capt. Kean must carry their point? Is there no Justice in this Country, or no Law—or no controlling voice, to declare that life must be protected? If there is—let it be heard—NOW.

We have not been favoured as The News, Telegram and Herald by the Dummy Minister of Justice with a glance at the Finding of the Sealing Commission, but The Telegram, News and Herald assert, that Commissioners Horwood and Emerson found Kean guilty of a grave error of

judgment while Commissioner Johnson holds Kean blameless and lauds him as a hero.

What a pity the home firm of Bowrings did not accept the resignation of Munn when he threatened to tear up the square over the home firm's decision to withdraw Kean. Had they known there was such a man in Newfoundland as Commissioner Johnson, so far-seeing, so experienced in sealing matters, and such an admirer of Abram Kean, they might have considered whether it would not be to their interest to accept Munn's resignation and appoint Commissioner Johnson as a local director, for if a crisis should arise at any time over a sealing captain. Such a small matter would be easily fixed by Commissioner Johnson taking command and sailing to see the breeding ice for the first time, and goodness knows, he may secure a good trip, in view of the wonderful interest he has taken in this Kean matter and all he has learnt about sealing as a Commissioner would now fill a book.

When we are favoured to peruse the Report of the Commission, we will be in a better position to judge as to what foundation Commissioner Johnson had to justify his findings of blameless Kean, while Commissioners Horwood and Emerson were quite positive Kean committed a grave error of judgment.

Seeing the Commission had no intention of deciding in order to please Coaker the Country will now be convinced that the fishermen's demands re Kean were fully justified and as his grave error of judgment led to the loss of 78 men and the crippling for life of 11 more—and in view of the further demand of the fishermen made through the Spaniard's Bay Convention and more recently backed by petitions from Conception Bay signed already by over 1000 voters—the Government have no other option but to arrest Kean on the charge of criminal negligence and make Kean's trial the full investigation into this Country's killing disaster.

Bowring's have lost all sense of honour and will apparently defy public opinion and the findings of the Sealing Commission and send a man as captain of the Florizel which the findings of Judge Horwood and Judge Emerson held guilty of a grave error of judgment in connection with last Spring's disaster—whether the Public or Commission like or dislike it.

Bowrings lost their heads and are no longer to be considered sane in this matter. The public will have to deal with them and Kean without gloves if circumstances compel it.

Sir Edward Morris must now move and arrest this dangerous man and prevent Bowrings from allowing him to risk the lives of 300 men the coming Spring. He is an unsafe man to command a sealing crew. He enticed the Newfoundland's crew from their ship last Spring and 78 were found dead on icefloes. His judgment was gravely at fault.

Kean has had his conduct investigated by men who were not in love with Coaker or in any way likely to be biased against Kean. Their finding is that of impartial men and if Kean has one spark of manliness left in him he will bow to the mandate of the Commission and withdraw from the position that has aroused the Country from end to end and caused an uproar such as was never before experienced in the Colony.

Already petitions signed by over 1000 men have been received asking for Kean's arrest—such a proceeding was never before heard of in this Country.

What man or government is strong enough to defy a people in such a crisis as this?

What government can defy the demand of the people expressed in plain language above their signatures demanding Justice on behalf of 78 heroes left dead on the icefloes through the grave error judgment of one man—and that man backed by two brainless lads—intent, if permitted, to risk again 300 men to the icefields under the command of the same man?

Does the Premier want to find 2000 men at his home next week demanding that he do his duty as the chief of the King's advisers? Does he wish to see 2000 men marching to Government House demanding action at the hands of the Governor?

There can be no excuse now for delay in arresting Kean and holding him for trial. The House won't meet until April 7th, so says The Herald. If that is so, there will be more trouble next week over that decision, but Morris will have to move re Kean's arrest very soon or he will have this city as hot as fire with indignation.

(To be continued from day to day)

CORRESPONDENCE

Munn Scorns Finding of Commission

Brainless Sealawyers Claim Verdict "Grave Error of Judgment"—Don't Imply Offence or Crime or Guilt

Advisable Make Munn Chief Justice of Grabballs

Munn Says Commission Finding re Kean Leaves Him Innocent Until He is Proven Guilty

Pres. Coaker Flatly Contradicts Munn's Statement

The following correspondence passed between Bowrings firm and Pres. Coaker yesterday in reference to the findings of the Sealing Commission. We withhold comment for a day or two.

We publish for public information. They can glean a thing or two from the contents of those letters.

From President Coaker to Bowrings:

Mr. J. S. Munn, City.

Sir—
During our conversation re Captain Kean's withdrawal you assured me that if the Commission decided that Kean was in any way to blame that your firm would withdraw him. As the Commission has reported having found him guilty of an Error of Judgment, may I ask if your firm will now withdraw him?

Your truly,
W. F. COAKER,
President F. P. U.

From Bowrings to Pres. Coaker:

W. F. Coaker, Esq.,
President Fishermen's Protective Union.

Dear Sir,

We have to acknowledge receipt of your letter of even date in relation to the finding of the Commission which has been inquiring into the sealing disasters of last year. First we would like to say we made no such statement as you claim. What we did say was that Captain Kean was innocent until proven guilty, and no proof in the smallest degree has been established or even suggested by the Commissioners. We have not seen the findings of the Commission, but we understand that two of the Commissioners hold that Captain Kean committed an error of judgement, and the other Commissioners hold him entirely blameless. It is so the findings of the Commission cannot be said to be holding that Captain Kean committed any offence or crime, and consequently there can be no question of guilt.

Yours very truly,
BOWRING BROS. LTD.
Per J. S. Munn.

To J. S. Munn from Pres. Coaker:

March 2nd,
Messrs. Bowring Brothers, Ltd.,
Water Street.

Gentlemen,

Yours of even date received. I repeat that you stated in my presence and over the telephone that if the Commission found anything against Captain Kean that you would withdraw him as Captain of a sealing ship. There was no mention of the phrase "innocent until proven guilty." That you would now like to pretend that you did not make the statement to which I refer is but in line with your other conduct in this Kean matter.

Yours truly,
W. F. COAKER,
Pres. F.P.U.

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