

## Correspondence Respecting Destitution

Exchanged Between the Government and the President of the F.P.U.—In Which it is Seen That the Prime Minister and the Colonial Secretary Excel in the Art of Equivocation and Red Tapeism

At Coley's Point Convention, January 13th, President Coaker was empowered to bring the matter of destitution in Conception Bay to the notice of the Government. This was done. The following correspondence having passed between the Government and President Coaker in reference to the matter:—

February 5th, 1915.

Rt. Hon. Sir E. P. Morris, K.C., Prime Minister.

Dear Sir,—At a Convention held at Coley's Point on the 13th of January, representing delegates from Harbour Main, Carbonear, Harbour Grace and Port de Grave Districts, resolutions were unanimously passed requesting me to approach the Government with a view to having measures taken to relieve the destitution in Conception Bay.

To-day I have received a letter from Mr. Abbott of Bonavista in which he states that 40 families there are without food and that some relief must be given by the Government. Will you permit me to enquire whether any steps have been taken by the Government to relieve these cases throughout the Island, or whether the Government intends to do so, and when?

I am convinced that action will have to be taken and the clergyman consulted regarding the relief of the needy, or those suffering from hunger will take the law into their own hands and take food wherever it is procurable.

Trusting to hear from you shortly in reference to this matter, I remain,

Yours truly,

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

6th February, 1915.

W. F. Coaker, Esq., M.H.A.,

President of the Fishermen's Protective Union.

Dear Sir,—I have to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of yesterday's date in relation to alleged destitution at Conception Bay and Bonavista.

I have referred this matter to the Department of the Colonial Secretary with instructions to have the matter immediately investigated into, and it is being done to-day.

Yours faithfully,

E. P. MORRIS.

February 22nd, 1915.

Hon. John R. Bennett, Colonial Secretary.

Dear Sir,—The Prime Minister writes me under date February 6th intimating that he had referred my letter re destitution at Bonavista and Conception Bay to you, with instructions to investigate.

Will you be good enough to inform me what has been done in the matter, as I have been advised that no effort has yet been made to meet the requirements of this matter or to provide employment on public work of any sort.

Yours truly,

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

February 22nd, 1915.

W. F. Coaker, Esq., M.H.A., City.

I am in receipt of your letter of the 22nd instant referring to your previous communication to the Prime Minister respecting destitution at Bonavista and in Conception Bay. Immediately upon receipt of the said letter from Sir Edward Morris I forwarded it to the Commissioner of Public Charities asking him to take up the question with his Relieving Officers at Bonavista and in Conception Bay.

The instruction was given by the Government to Mr. O'Dwyer that his officials were to deal at once with every case of bona fide destitution which came under their notice, and that the responsibility in respect of such work would be left entirely with them. The Relieving Officers have been instructed to make personal enquiries into every case and to ascertain the facts regarding the same. From the reports which have been received up to this time, it is found that the cases of destitution have been exaggerated. Later on in the spring others will, no doubt, be added to the list of those who are in need, but, up to the present, the cases are not more in number than can be dealt with by the regular Relieving Officers. It is found that this method of dealing with able-bodied relief is not only more economical but is also more exact, thus enabling the Government to guard against imposition.

The District Grants being exhausted, no allocations can be made for public works, nor is the demand for relief at the present time sufficient to justify an anticipation of the Grants for next year.

The Government are watching this matter very closely. Definite instructions have been given to the Relieving Officers through the Poor Commissioner, and the whole responsibility in respect of the needy people is placed upon them. If they find such responsibility more than they can

carry, they have been instructed to report the same to the Government, giving details of the persons in need, with all the attendant facts and circumstances, so that the Government may be in a position to take such necessary action as is called for by the conditions. In every case, however, the Relieving Officer is directed, where there is urgent need, to afford immediate relief.

Yours truly,

J. R. BENNETT, Colonial Secretary.

At Spaniard's Bay on Wednesday it was stated by delegates that the Relieving Officers at several places had started to give out fortnightly allowances of one half pound of flour per day for each member of a family. One family of seven received an allowance of half gallon molasses and half pound of tea for fourteen days.

A large number of needy persons will not accept the paupers dole and are starving. They demand work—work is denied, but the dole is offered. Drums and hoops can be purchased at many settlements in Conception Bay where destitution exists. The people prefer to make hoops and fish drums and sell to the Government in return for food. Surely this can be arranged. The Government have been renamed "The Nunnibag Government"—which is what former Tory Governments were often nicknamed as people had to take allowances of food away in skin bags in which the fishermen used to convey food when travelling in winter.

The people of Conception Bay don't intend to allow the Government to convert able bodied men into paupers with impunity and action will be taken throughout the Bay to compel the authorities to deal properly with this serious matter.

Mr. Bennett's letter published above was received yesterday and of course had not been considered by the F.P.U. Convention at Spaniard's Bay when the following resolution was passed on Wednesday:—

WHEREAS many Towns and Settlements in Conception Bay contain many families at present in destitute circumstances, brought about by the poor Labrador fishery, want of employment at Bell Island, the high price of provisions and Government taxation;

BE IT RESOLVED that public meetings be convened at as many settlements as necessary and that resolutions be passed providing for the appointment of Relief Committees representing the public, the duty of these Relief Committees being to bring before the Local Magistrates, the Relieving Officers, the Members for the District and the Government,

a true statement of existing conditions, with the request that action be taken by the authorities to relieve the destitute through such Committees or Boards by providing labor;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Convention of delegates from all parts of Conception Bay censure the Government for its indifference to the request made by this Council through President Coaker respecting this matter of destitution, and that it place on record its strongest condemnation of the indifference manifested by the Government regarding the relief of the destitute.

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## LETTERS OF INTEREST

From Mail and Advocate Readers.

### A New Council at Point aux Gaul

(Editor Mail and Advocate)

Dear Sir,—The Friends at Point aux Gaul, having asked for and obtained an Instrument of Authority to work a Local Council of the F.P.U. at that place, I was requested by the President to visit Point aux Gaul and establish a Council there.

Friend Thomas G. Hillier kindly conveyed me in his sleigh, and after taking tea at his home, we proceeded to the C.E.W.A. Hall. A goodly number of the Friends had already gathered there and, after an address, in which I invited the men to come and stand by the Union, an election of officers took place, resulting as follows:—

Edgar Hillier, Chairman.  
Thos. G. Hillier, Deputy-Chairman.  
Lewis Crews, Secretary.  
Henry Tulk, Treasurer.  
Thos. K. Hillier, Inner Door Guard.  
Lewis H. Hillier, Outer Door Guard.

Then followed some addresses, which were all lively and to the point. Some candidates were received and business was considered, re hire of hall, fire, light, etc.

After a vote of thanks was passed to the Chairman of the Lamaline Council and the said chairman had congratulated them upon their fine exhibition of Union spirit, the meeting closed with the National Anthem.

It was one of the liveliest Union meetings which it has been my privilege to attend.

CHARMAN LAMALINE L. C.  
Lamaline,  
Feb. 18, 1915.

### Union Parade at Musgravetown

(Editor Mail and Advocate)

Dear Sir,—On the 15th we held our parade. We assembled at the Hall, and after having transacted a little Union business, we marched across the harbour, where three hearty cheers were given for President Coaker.

### UNION DAY AT PORT ANSON

(Editor Mail and Advocate)

Dear Sir,—On January 27th we had our annual parade. The weather was all that could be desired. We left the Hall at 10 a.m. and marched to Mile's Cove where the Union friends had erected an arch and the women had strewn mats on the road. Amid volleys of musketry we gave three cheers for the friends in Mile's Cove, for President Coaker and the F.P.U.

The Friends from Jerries' Harbor and Wellman's Cove joined in the parade, one of them, Friend Short, with a cough and caplin strung to his breast. This made everything go merrily for a time. When we returned to Mile's Cove the ladies had refreshments prepared for us, after the partaking of which we started on our way back to Port Anson. There the ladies had a feast spread for us also, and after the inner man was satisfied the Chairman gave us an address on Union. We also had an address from our Past Chairman, Friend Martin, from Friend Graham, from our Secretary, Friend Rice and then Friend J. T. Morey gave us some good selections on his gramophone to the delight of all. Three cheers were given for the ladies and a collection was taken up amounting to \$41.55.

Wishing the F.P.U. and its President every success.

Port Anson,  
Feb. 12th, 1915.

### BAY OF ISLANDS HAS DONE WELL

(Editor Mail and Advocate)

Dear Sir,—Just a few lines to say that the herring fishery is over for this season. Many have done well, some have done poorly, but on the whole I feel sure that Bay of Islands has much to be thankful for. We cannot but wonder why our Marine & Fisheries Department does not do something to better our condition. The Government boat does not call within twenty miles of us and consequently we are compelled to sell our herring to Farquhar & Co. at less than they are worth. Green herring are sold at \$1.25 per brl. and frozen at \$1.50, so that we stand to lose at least 25 per cent. per brl. or three hundred dollars on each vessel load, and on forty vessel loads that means twelve hundred dollars.

Would you not think that a live Marine and Fisheries Department would rise to its duty and prevent a foreigner from coming in and buying our product for just what he may offer. We don't hear much from our Hon. Member, Mr. J. F. Downey just now. I suppose he will wake up in a couple of years time.

The Union is growing well. There were four branches planted last year and they have all taken root and are turning out to be hardy plants.

Wishing the Mail and Advocate success and strength to our worthy President.

OBSERVER.  
Curling, Feb. 12, 1915.

### Point Aux Gaul Has Caught the Flame

(Editor Mail and Advocate)

Dear Sir,—Will you allow space in your paper for a few words about our new Council. I am glad to say that on Feb. 10th Mr. Henry Haskell came here from Lamaline and opened our Council. Our men have been full of Unionism for a long time and previous to the opening of the Council here they used to walk three miles, after working all day, to attend the Union meeting at Lamaline.

Point Aux Gaul,  
Feb. 12th, 1915.

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Well, the blaze spread so among the men that they began to talk about forming a Council among themselves, and their efforts in this direction have been crowned with success. I hope they will be having a parade next year, and I would be glad if the President would visit us on this occasion. I would like to have the privilege of giving him a good cup of tea and having a chat with him, so I told Daniel that I must get my bonnet freshened up for the occasion. The women here are just as full of the Union spirit as the men and when we all get talking about the Union, the place is in an uproar.

Wishing President Coaker and the F.P.U. every success.

Point au Gaul,  
Feb. 18th, 1915.

### IN THE ORDER MENTIONED

(Editor Mail and Advocate)

Dear Sir,—When I wrote to your paper saying that the President of our Union should not go to the front, I did not mean that he should not defend his country, but that there are thousands of young men in Newfoundland who should go first, and then if the older ones must go, let the last three be the Governor, the Premier, and our President.

This war is a serious business, with poverty at home and the House of Assembly not open to look into the matter; with the Sealing Disaster matter not finalized and the Premier gone away, and many other matters too numerous to mention.

I hope the next letter I write will be a brighter one.

CHARLES BARTLETT.  
Jackson's Cove, N.D.B.  
Feb. 17, 1915.

## Who's Who In the Kaiser Government

Herewith this week a second installment of "Who's Who" in the Kaiser Government?

Our first "Who's Who and Why" has been so favorably received, and enjoyed, that "Veritas" shall continue to bring out the "Who's Who" records weekly.

"Veritas" would ask information of those conversant with some of the political history of the Kaiser Morris Government, as to the various insignias and aliases most suited to its racial membership. Address information to "Veritas," care Mail and Advocate.

SQUIRES—The Kaiser Minister of Justice. The man whom Morris said he wished the Devil had. Reason unknown.

Said to have dressed up the invalid Blandford, and also to have given him a dressing down. Noted for his "warm" attachment to the district of Trinity, which was born of the "hot" reception he and "Sid" received there. (Insignia) "The Return of the Prodigal." (Motto) "Jus dis for Sid and Me."

CROSBIE—J.C. alias "The Curly" alias "Spars." of which the latter appellation is the more popular.—Christened "Spars" in his political infancy from his disgraceful connection with that Kaiser bluff.

Strictly economical—with other people's cash. (A new history of this person has been prepared in Bay de Verde district, and which will be read aloud to him at next election.) (Insignia) "The 'SPAR-tion' boy." (Motto) "Be not in sorrow or dis-spar."

HIGGINS—Willie, known at large as "Wiggles" from his tremendous powers of oscillation. Recognized by his propensity to "hand shaking."

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Altogether a delightful youth, and quite a genius in acquiring the "Kaiser Kod" teachings, in which he now has a "scholarship." (Insignia) "A flea at the Base of Parnassus."

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