

a memorial, signed by 5,000 fishermen of Nova Scotia, addressed to the Minister of Customs, setting forth:

"That during the present summer, considerable quantities of dry fish have been imported in bond from St. Pierre, into Halifax, Lunenburg and other ports in Nova Scotia, which has had a serious effect on the prices of the fish caught by our own fishermen.

"That the bounty of ten francs per quintal (a sum almost equal to the cost of production) which is paid by the Government of France on all fish sold by the fishermen of St. Pierre outside of French possessions, renders them very dangerous competitors in our own home market.

"That the French fish thus imported has not been placed in bonded warehouses as by law required, but has been handled, dried and packed in the same manner as our own fish, the only requirement being that a sufficient quantity should be entered outwards to satisfy the Customs officials that all had been exported.

"That unless prompt and decisive measures are employed to prevent a continuance of the importation of French caught fish to supply our foreign trade, most serious loss will result to those who now employ their time and capital in the prosecution of the fishing industry, including not only the fishermen themselves but also the owners and builders of the vessels employed as well as those who dry and prepare the fish for market—all of whom combined embrace a very large and important class of our population.

"That with sufficient encouragement on the part of our merchants and under the leniency of the present Customs law, there is great danger of unlimited increase in the importations of bounty protected fish in future years, the result of which, it is safe to predict, will be the ultimate destruction of the fishing industry of Nova Scotia, and the almost utter annihilation of our splendid fleet of vessels.

"The most stringent laws and regulations are in force in the Island of St. Pierre, and Canadian fishermen are granted no favors by the Customs officials of that port.

"That while the policy of the present Government is, and has always been, to afford every consistent measure of protection to the varied industries of our common country, more especially should this be the case, and in a more marked degree—when the products of our own shores are competed with in our own home-market, by similar products of other countries assisted by a bounty nearly, if not quite, equal to the actual cost of producing the same.

"Your memorialists, therefore, respectfully pray that Your Honor will be pleased to give this most important matter your serious consideration, and, if possible, cause such enactments to be made as will require that all importations of such fish be at once placed in Government warehouse under the hand of the proper official, and be exported in bond in the same state and condition, and in the same packages in which they were landed—said packages to remain unbroken, thereby exempting said article of bounty assisted fish from the operation of section 83, chapter 32 of the Revised Statutes of Canada, Vol. 1.

"Trusting that Your Honor will see the immediate necessity of discriminating against bounty assisted fish when placed in competition with the production of our own fisheries,

"We have the honor to be, Sir,

"Your most obedient servants,

"(Signed by five thousand)

"W. S. BREWER."

In order to show that this is not merely the view entertained by those who actually catch the fish, but is the view entertained largely by those interested in the export of codfish, and also those who combine the business of outfitter as well as that of exporter, I may state that I hold in my hand a letter from a leading member of one of the most prominent firms in my county exporting fish to the West Indies. The writer goes on to say:

"In reference to French fish, I have noticed of late there has been quite an airing of the question through the papers, which no doubt you have seen and the greater part of which meets my views. It is my opinion they should be subjected to the same restrictions as any other dutiable goods and not allowed to bond unless in packages for export, to be strictly made under the care of the Customs Department until exported to the place of their destination. This I should think is about the general opinion."

Our feeling is this: We desire, so far as in us lies—and this House has endorsed over and over again its desire to support the National Policy—to support a policy of protecting the industries of our own people from foreign competition. We claim that this policy is not followed out in the present arrangement in connection with the fishing industry. We claim that the bounty given by the French Government, which we cannot prevent being given, but which, by legislation, we can countervail and meet in some way, will destroy our fishermen. We believe it will eventually reduce the number of our fishermen employed in our fisheries, and that, eventually, they will be found incapable of competing with those men who are receiving 10 francs, equal to \$1.80,

Gen. LAURIE.

for every quintal of French fish they bring into this country. 70,000 of our people, who add \$18,000,000 to the wealth of the country, will thereby be driven out of their employment and forced to seek other pursuits. It is hardly necessary to say that, living where they do and as they do, that practically means that their industry would be entirely destroyed and they would have to go elsewhere to obtain a livelihood. We say that as the Newfoundland, the Italian and the United States Governments have all dealt with this question, so we ask that this Government shall deal with it in the same way. The fishermen define a very reasonable way, and what they ask to be done is simply to enact that the same regulations shall be applicable in Nova Scotia as regards these French fish as are applied in all other cases. We are told, as a justification for permitting these fish to come in and be handled in bond as they are, that it is better they should be permitted to come, that otherwise they would go down into the markets, to which we ship our fish, and would compete with us in those markets, that they would be placed in those markets at a lower price, and that such is undesirable, and it is better that our exporters should obtain them and export them as the necessities of the market demand. But, we believe, and I have every reason to believe, that our contention is a good one, that these fish, if they could have been sent down to the West Indies to have competed with our fish, would not have been brought into Halifax and out of other markets, but would have been sent direct to that foreign market; but it is because the exporters of St. Pierre cannot place them in condition on those markets, they are sent into our markets. It is believed, and it is the contention of those who bring this subject before the country, the House and the Government, that the expense of curing these fish in St. Pierre, and preparing them for market, would practically prohibit their coming into market in competition with our fish, because the fish cannot be cured, packed, and handled as cheaply, and the packers cannot obtain materials as readily, and do not possess the same facilities, as do our men. I conceive that the position we are now assuming leaves a choice between two alternatives. Shall we take the position of Holland, a country that simply handles and exports the products of other countries, or shall we assume the position of England, and be the producer and exporter of our own goods. I claim, that if the National Policy means much, it means protection to all our industries, and it is for that reason I ask that our fishermen may receive the same protection as is accorded to other producers in this country, and that they may not be placed in direct competition to those who use our market as a slaughter market, and send in goods upon which they receive a very large bounty when they can get them into our markets as they do. It is for that reason that I make this motion and press this action, as requested by our fishermen, upon the Government.

Mr. JONES (Halifax). It was quite natural that the representative of a county like Shelburne should have brought before the House a question in which he thought the people of that county were so much interested. The hon. gentleman has placed before the House, in a moderate manner, the views which he and the people he represents entertain, and with that I have no fault to find, but if the gallant gentleman had been more familiar with the details of the question he would not have fallen into some of the errors which characterise his otherwise fair and moderate statement. I am not unwilling that the fishermen of Nova Scotia should be fairly treated in every respect, but in the first place I think we have to show that they have been dealt with unfairly in the way in which the hon. gentleman has pointed out. I may remark that the fish from St. Pierre and Miquelon, as well as from Newfoundland, have been coming into the port of Halifax since, at all events, the year 1850, when I entered into business. We have always looked upon that fish as a legitimate import and as