

Twenty Thousand Freemen Take Up Challenge

THE MAIL AND ADVOCATE, ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND, MARCH 12, 1915-4.

LAST NIGHT'S GREAT DEMONSTRATION

4000 Sealers and Citizens take part in the Demonstration

Water Street and New Gower Street Lined With Citizens— Demonstration Witnessed by 15,000 People

The great Anti-Kean-Bowring-Morris Demonstration held under the auspices of the F.P.U. last night was one of the greatest the City ever witnessed. It was a spontaneous outburst of sympathy on behalf of St. John's citizens in support of the agitation carried on by the F.P.U. during the past eleven months for the withdrawal of Abram Kean as master of a sealing steamer. It was a protest against the failure of Premier Morris to arrest Kean when such action was demanded by thousands of electors and whose conduct last spring was so seriously condemned by the Sealing Commission's findings. It is St. John's reply to the outrageous failure of Justice to punish the massacre or crippling for life of 100 breadwinners.

About 400 torchlights were used. Two bands were in attendance and played some popular and patriotic marches. About 800 sealers paraded—of whom about 400 were F.P.U. men. Thousands of citizens joined the march, and a large number of Volunteers also paraded. The route was about two and a half miles. Leaving the T. A. Hall the demonstration proceeded up Gower Street, down Springdale Street, down Water Street, up Custom House Hill, along to Cochrane Street, up Cochrane Street to Military Road, thence to Queen's Road and down Church Hill to Henry Street and the Hall.

The rush for admittance to the Hall was terrific—1500 persons soon crowded the building, which is the largest in the city. Some music was played by the bands at the Hall. It was then about 9.30 and Mr. Coaker addressed the audience for half an hour. He thanked the people of St. John's for the great outburst of sympathy. He thanked the non-union sealers for their presence and support. He reviewed the actions of the Government which have caused them to become so unpopular.

Mr. Coaker informed the great audience that over 6000 names had been sent in to date demanding Kean's arrest—and 1100 names had come in yesterday. He stated that the fight to punish Kean had only now started, that it would go on until Kean was placed inside of the prison bars as punishment for the part he was guilty of in connection with last year's disaster.

He suggested that Kean might put away the \$500 awarded him by the Jury yesterday against the 400 fishermen who were the shareholders in the Union Publishing Company to defend his case when on trial for manslaughter in connection with the death of 79 men belonging to the Newfoundland's crew who were picked up dead on the ice floe last April.

He showed the design of Water Street was to crush the toilers and to enslave the workingman, and they were attempting what they tried 28 years ago when they attempted to pass the Banking Agreement into law and exact a law that compelled every fisherman who took a few dollars worth of goods from a merchant to give him all his catch of fish or failing so to do would be imprisoned as a criminal.

He spoke of the price of seals and told the men to seek the merchants to-day and demand their offer for seals. He quoted the following from a letter written him on March 8th by Mr. Job on behalf of the steamer.

St. John's, March 8th, 1915.

Mr. W. F. Coaker City.

Dear Sir,—In reply to your communication of this day's date, the manufacturers of seals will be prepared to negotiate for the purchase of the men's share of seals with

anyone who is properly accredited to them as the representatives of the crew to whom the seals under negotiation belong. If no manufacturer be willing to pay the price asked by the sealers, the owners of the steamers will agree that the men shall take possession of their share of seals. It will be competent for the men to manufacture their own share of the seals and to realize the produce on their own account. (Sgd.) W. C. JOB.

Now said Mr. Coaker, you have the right to send your officers to the buyers and state your price and if they are not willing to pay it, you can send your officers to me and I will make an agreement to buy them at \$4.50, no matter how few or many your ship gets. But that agreement must be made with me by the time you sail. This brought forth thunderous applause.

When speaking of the Government's neglect of duty, he asked how long the people would tolerate such villainous behaviour and the demoralizing conduct of men now called the Government. The audience replied, "Out they must go." Will you ever support them again said Mr. Coaker. "No, never again" was the reply. What about Kean cried a voice. Well what about him replied Mr. Coaker. "Let us take him from the Florizel" cried the sealers. No said Mr. Coaker, you must do nothing unlawful. You must not break a law. You must get Kean punished under the laws of the Country, and that day will come. Only exercise a little patience.

Had Mr. Coaker said so as you like, there would have been a riot in St. John's on Saturday morning. The feeling of the sealers present against Kean was most bitter and dozens of men, said Mr. Coaker, came to me to-day and pleaded for action to take Kean ashore from the Florizel. I have said the sealers would not interfere, said Mr. Coaker, and I must keep my word. The speech was another treat for those present and will be remembered for some time to come.

The Band played the National Anthem while the audience arose. Then the vast crowd cheered President Coaker and dispersed.

Some of the sealers did not leave with the crowd and Mr. Coaker questioned the men about food, &c., when all thought the ships were fitted according to law.

Mr. Condon was asked for a speech and responded in a masterly manner. Speaking of benefits conferred upon the sealers through Mr. Coaker's exertions, the last three years. Cheers were again given for President Coaker and one of the most important events in the history of St. John's came to a close at 11 p.m.

The Bowrings will now realize what their pigheaded conduct in opposing the Peoples' wishes re Kean means. They saw St. John's last night give visible expression to the feelings entertained concerning the firm's conduct respecting Abram Kean—such an expression of dissent was never before shown in this city against a business firm.

Kean with his swollen head and vain conceit will now realize that this condemnation of his conduct called forth one of the greatest demonstrations ever witnessed against any citizen of Newfoundland. The Governor will recognize that the people last night manifested in a visible manner their contempt of the conduct of his Prime Minister regarding his failure to respond to duty's call and respect the peoples' wishes and arrest Kean. No man in this Colony was ever the subject of contempt sufficiently much to com-

pel 6000 electors to demand his arrest in about two weeks.

In this agitation Mr. Coaker has been ably assisted by the Union members of Parliament who are in town—no others have been invited to participate. The F.P.U. has asserted its rights and utilized every constitutional means to enforce the peoples' demands re Kean, but the Government has proven to be as strong for Kean's criminal conduct respecting the loss of those 79 breadwinners as it has proven weak in filling Cabinet vacancies.

They will rule as legalized robbers delight to do—in defiance of the people, and they will hold on to the chest as long as they can in the hope of driving the ship of state on the rocks to destruction leaving nothing to their successors but a worthless wreck.

Last night's demonstration and mass meeting was a manifestation of confidence in Mr. Coaker and he must be delighted with the gratitude shown by the sealers for having compelled the buyers to pay the Union price for seals. That master stroke of Mr. Coaker's on behalf of the sealers has dumbfounded the merchants who have had the ground taken from under their feet over this price of seals matter, by the "Backwoodsman."

For once, a poor fisherman's son has brought them to their senses and given them a free dose of the medicine they have so often made the toilers to swallow. Little did they believe Mr. Coaker would triumph over them and fix the price of seals, and compel them to pay 75 cents per cwt. more than they intended paying. They can say what they like now, about \$3.75 being the lowest to be paid—the truth is they fixed \$3.50 and for patriotic purposes—for which they endure so much—they made it \$3.75 and if the sealers would not accept \$3.75 their ships were to stay in.

As soon as Mr. Coaker exposed their trick and showed that skins and seal oil had all been sold and paid for and no stocks had accumulated in New York, as was claimed, and that seal oil was at the highest price reached in twenty years they began to look around for an opening to escape and the trick of \$3.75 as the guaranteed price was only then invented.

The men are proud of Mr. Grieve and Messrs. Murray & Crawford for agreeing to manufacture seals for Mr. Coaker, and it will be some time before their very kind action will be forgotten. The fishermen should not soon forget Mr. Grieve's action. He is one of the few gentlemen doing business on Water Street, and one of the most able commercial men the Colony ever produced. It is a pleasure to meet such a man, for his knowledge of the Country's

Mr. Grieve's firm was the largest buyer of fish last fall and but for Mr. Grieve it is probable fish would have declined to \$5.50, a month before it did last fall. Mr. Grieve might have done as Crosbie and Bishop—the two Government blood suckers did—refuse to buy fish until it fell to \$5.75 but he bought large quantities at \$6, even when the two fastest Executive Councillors were offering poor fishermen but \$5.50 and \$5.75.

A number of Union men from Kelligrews and Portugal Cove came to town to take part in the demonstration and the Battery fishermen were well to the front.

To-night the last of the series of meetings will take place at the T. A. Hall, when Messrs. Morine, Kent and others will speak. President Coaker will preside.

A Denial

'News' Statement re the Sealers Demonstration False

(Editor Mail and Advocate.)

Dear Sir,—We, the undersigned sealers present at the demonstration and meeting held last night, have read The News' account published to-day and wish to state the account is false from start to finish.

There were about 800 sealers in the parade and at the meeting. No cheers were given for Morris. Nor did the sealers say they would have Morris again for Premier. They said in a united voice "We won't have him—but he must go."

The meeting was the grandest the sealers ever held here and the demonstration surpassed the other two sealers' demonstrations as regards the sympathy and attendance of St. John's citizens.

The man that sat in his office and allowed the merchants to cut the price of fat without protesting or lifting a finger in our behalf, is no longer wanted by the sealers. We know our best friend is the man who offered us \$4.50 for our seals. Please publish to-day and oblige.

Yours truly,

MOSES WATERMAN
THOMAS E. RUSSELL
SAMUEL E. RODGERS
MARTIN BARBOUR
AUGUSTUS HARDING
E. B. BROWN
HERBERT PLOUGHMAN
NOAH QUINTON
SAMUEL VINCENT
ARTHUR HOWELL
ROBERT BARBOUR
WILLIAM GREEN
EDGAR DAVIS
J. E. C. GARDNOR
DANIEL BUTLER
HAYWARD ROWE
ARTHUR BURSEY
ALEX. HOUNSEL
SOLOMON PIERCEY
MALCOLM RODGERS
JOB PICKETT
ROBERT FINNAGE
WILLIAM DUFFETT
THOMAS BARBOUR
ALFRED COLLINS
WILLIAM PATTEN
PIERCE GARDNER
AMBROSE GARDNER
EDGAR HARDING
JOHN HOUSE
JOHN CARTER
JOHN CUTLER
THOMAS HUMPHRIES
PETER STOKES
EDWARD RODGERS
HENRY RODGERS
ROBERT ROSE
HERBERT CURNIEW
And 400 others.