

## Co-operative Marketing.

### What a Bonavista Fisherman Thinks.

#### Local Competition Must be Wiped Out in Our Foreign Markets.

Editor Evening Telegram.  
Dear Sir—The enclosed correspondence may prove interesting. The letter to me is genuinely the production of a Labrador fisherman—no ordinary man, though, you'll admit, for his letter would do credit to a philosopher.

Yours truly,  
ALFRED B. MORINE.

March 24, 1922.  
**THE LETTER.**  
A. B. Morine, Esq.  
Dear Sir—I value very highly your correspondence of January 24, and have delayed answering, first because your request to write you "from time to time" simply means that, and second, because the change you advocate involves so many channels of thought that I find myself entirely incapable of travelling those channels intelligently.

The one outstanding feature of marketing our fish is, as you suggest, the need of wiping out finally and forever this competition in our markets amongst local fish exporters; but the question is can we induce those exporters to come together and agree to give up present methods of selling for the Co-operative system. Do the fish exporters (that is on an average) make more money now than they would then? Would they still be on the job of exporting as leaders of the Association, or would others fill their places? If not, could we get control enough of the fish business to enable us to act independently? Have they ever been consulted on this matter? If not, and we really mean to start this Co-operative system, how shall we begin to work? I ask these questions because I am thoroughly convinced that you are not of the visionary class, and I know you honestly mean or wish to see this method adopted and given a fair trial; though I confess I grow tense and dissatisfied to see that no other person capable of discussing this matter intelligently takes a hand to encourage you and bring out of your suggestions a workable proposition. At present, as far as I can see, a wide discussion by broadminded men is the primary need. In discussion there would be the hope of workable plans—the hope that in spite of present discouraging aspects we could in time be selling our fish in a more sane and satisfactory way. Of course, as far as I know, you may now be formulating plans to work out your suggestions. On the one hand an arrangement amongst fish exporters solely could be made without a hitch, providing you could get them to work and think on business principles, and outside of the public—that is, in the forming of the Association, but if by any chance the public becomes, or is a primary need to its formation, it never can become a workable project. I say this because the public, always inclining to indifference, have through the disastrous efforts of Coaker's Regulations become callously apathetic, and will look with mistrust on any other scheme (might I say plan) for selling fishery products.

Now I don't forget that part of the fishing public who can follow your ideas would follow you, but then there is a part which wouldn't follow because of misunderstanding—a part which wouldn't follow because of apathy, and I am sure you know that there are quite a number who follow nothing not sanctioned by Coaker; in fact who would despise through Coaker anything "coming from Morine." Those thoughts are not penned, Mr. Morine, with any hope of discouraging you; far from it, but as they are facts, it is just as well to recognize them, and recognize also, that following closely on the heels of the infamous Regulations, and face to face with Coaker and his Nationalization scheme, it would be useless to depend upon public sanction for co-operation.

As you intimate, comparatively few fishermen read your letters, and although it seems a mad thing to say, reason does not appeal to the majority of laboring men of to-day. Fanaticism with its imaginary gift frills is the Elysium of the "under-dog," pipe dreams, lullabies for grown ups, and Red rule without profit as long as it brings vengeance is the panacea for muscles and sinews. Instead of honest toil as God intended.

Coaker in your path! But, and you

in his! Coaker will stoop low when no other dog can be seen to prompt him to a quick swoop, but with intelligence as his foe he will redouble his efforts, and emphasize every sentence of his arguments in deception or otherwise. This is why I hate and fear him. You can combat logic with a better logic, but you do not know how to handle any man who kicks and founders for the purpose of raising dust to cover up the real issue.

Your ideas will be moving to action before I shall or can know to a great degree what I am really talking about, but in the meantime I thank you sincerely for the interest you have aroused in me, first by your letters to the press, and more especially, your letter to me personally. Your letter is full of interest, though I do not think I fully deserve the high compliment you pay me. However, knowing it is not flattery, I appreciate it very much. I shall think it a privilege to come and see you again when I come to St. John's.

Very truly yours,  
S.I.T.

March 6, 1922.

#### THE REPLY.

Dear Sir—I am indeed your debtor for your very able letter of the 6th inst., splendidly written, and touching with clarity upon points raised by my letters on Co-operative Marketing. It is very encouraging to receive such a proof of intelligent consideration. You have, I hope, received a copy of my address to the Rotary Club, amplifying my arguments.

You ask very pertinent questions concerning the probability of participation by present day exporters in a Co-operative system of marketing; would they voluntarily co-operate; could control of exporting be got in spite of them; if not, how can Co-operative Marketing be brought about; do they make more money by present methods than under a Co-operative system. Answers to your questions are of almost vital importance.

By present methods, individual merchants or firms probably make more in certain years, and less in others, than they would under a system of Co-operative marketing, which would have a stabilizing effect. Now, fish exporting is gambling; then, it would be safe, sound and reasonable. Upon the average, exporters would benefit by the change. Bad cure and bad marketing victimize the fishermen and the Colony as a whole, but probably the exporters, the middle-men, escape with the least harm. A system which is fundamentally sound, as our present marketing system is, cannot but be injurious in the long run to everybody concerned in it.

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It is probable that the majority of present day exporters would at the outset be inclined to oppose co-operative marketing. They have grown up with present day methods, and would probably look askance upon new proposals. Some have grown well-to-do, and some have lost their all, under existing methods, and the latter, perhaps, want to try again. But I know that some of the most enterprising exporters realize that the era of co-operation is dawning, they have given some study to it, they have tried it in some instances, and are prepared for the change, I believe that the majority are open to conviction, and are so sincerely loyal to the Colony that they will "follow the gleam" when they see it. They would shrink from "Nationalization" with its menace of political control, but co-operate in a system which left the producers in charge of exporting.

There are methods by which co-operative marketing of the Colony's fish could be brought about without the approval of present day exporters, and even against their united opposition. For instance, Coaker could have conferred it upon the Colony in 1920, when he imposed his fatal Regulations. But I should not like to have co-operative marketing attempted without the consent and cordial assistance of the body of present day exporters, for their knowledge of marketing, and all that concerns it, is invaluable, in spite of all the insolent or flippant abuse which is showered upon them from time to time. If I had control of a campaign for initiating Co-operative Marketing, I should, I am confident, be able to enlist the assistance of exporters in making it absolutely universal, and prohibiting exportation except through a Central Exchange. That central body should be composed of the best brains amongst the fishermen and exporters of the Colony. To be so supremely successful, co-operation must be complete and universal in the Colony.

Co-operative Marketing could be established by the exporters without the aid of the public, or by the public in spite of the opposition of the exporters, but neither will, in fact, be done, I feel sure, for there is too much apathy, and if the apathy were dispelled, there would be too much division of opinion, to make Co-operative marketing a fact accomplished. It can only be brought about by a campaign to arouse public opinion, and probably only as the result of its adoption as a party policy, and the success of that party at a general election. I admit the force of all that you say about the effect upon public sentiment of the disastrous failure of the Fishery Regulations, and of Coaker's influence upon his followers, and yet I would not despair of the success of a clear, courageous appeal to the people of the Colony by a party itself convinced of the wisdom of Co-operative Marketing, and aflame with zeal for it.

I am not quite hopeless that Coaker himself, and his followers, might be won to co-operation. His proposal of "Nationalization" was, perhaps, a leap in the dark. The consideration of it, and its almost universal condemnation, may have left him and them in a state of readiness to support a safer, wiser way. Coaker probably espoused the policy of the Fish Regulations honestly, because he perceived the evil of undue competition in our markets. That policy having failed, and the evil still remaining, he may have taken up "Nationalization" as another attempt at cure. The evil still remains, and he may be brainy enough to perceive that Co-operative Marketing upon the California system is the way to get things right. His methods have been atrocious, and his vaulting ambition has led him to make political use of his power, but I have never been fully persuaded that Coaker has not genuinely desired to serve his country. So long as he is the God in the Car, he may be willing to drive the car in the right direction. If he deserves the benefit of the doubt, perhaps he may yet take up the California idea, and if so, he could probably "put it over," though his power has waned, and he is not today the commanding influence he was. His newspaper has for months been preaching the principles of Co-operative Marketing, though pledged to "Nationalization," and perhaps, when the confusion of ideas is perceived, the right course may be taken. I am so convinced that the California system can be beneficially applied here, that I would help even Coaker to make it law.

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Yours truly,  
ALFRED B. MORINE.  
St. John's, March 24, 1922.

#### Bible Society Meeting.

The adjourned annual meeting of the Newfoundland Bible Society takes place on to-morrow (Sunday) after the evening services in the various churches, and will be held in the Methodist College Hall. Addresses will be delivered by Rev. E. C. Eap, Rector of St. Thomas's and Rev. C. H. Johnson, Pastor of Cochrane St. Centennial Church. Special music will be provided by Mr. F. J. King, organist of the C. of E. Cathedral. The work of the Society is deserving of support. The annual income is now considerably less than it was many years ago, although the purchasing power of many has decreased. That efforts will be made to provide the money necessary if the Society is to carry on its work, is sincerely hoped. His Excellency the Governor will preside at the meeting. The officers of the Society desire to impress the general public on the great necessity for its maintenance and extension, and hope that to-morrow evening the spacious College Hall will be filled to capacity.

#### Express Passengers.

The following first class passengers landed at Port aux Basques from the S.S. Kyle and are on the incoming express:—E. Forward, Jas. Cowdy, R. MacDonald, R. Kellogg, N. Davis, G. Noseworthy, A. K. Lumsden, Mrs. J. Scott, Miss S. MacDonald.



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