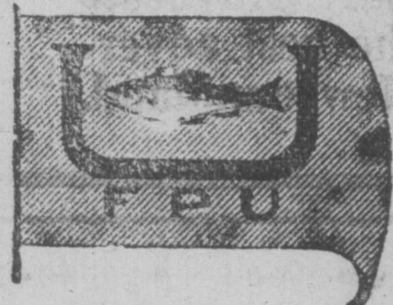


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The Mail and Advocate

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ST. JOHN'S, N.F.L.D., JAN. 2, 1915.

OUR POINT OF VIEW

Fishery Produce

1914 is gone and it will be a year long remembered. It began by the Opposition Party in the Assembly completely dominating the affairs of that Chamber and arousing a feeling favorable to the fishermen such as had never before been observable in the Legislature. It was the strongest Opposition Party the Country ever had and the people soon realized that fact.

Then came the astounding financial statement of the Minister of Finance showing the Colony had expended \$540,000 more than the revenue for year ending June 1914, and the addition of \$700,000 extra taxation, which raised the price of every article hitherto paying duty, making the duty on many articles of dry goods as much as 50 per cent.

Tobacco was raised 10 cents per lb. and liquor was again hammered for larger tariff returns. To these outrageous increases were added, in September, 27½¢ per lb. on flour, 6¢ per lb. on tea, 6¢ per gallon on kero. oil, \$4 per ton on hay, \$14 to \$15 on beef, \$1.50 to \$2 per brl. on pork, 1½¢ per lb. on sugar, which has placed a burden on the fishermen's shoulders that must speedily reduce them to pauperism and the Country's business to a state of collapse.

The opening of the war gave several large provision dealers the chance of a life time to pile up prices. Flour that was purchased at \$5 went up to \$7 here and to \$8.50 at some of the outports.

Tea, sugar, beef, pork and various articles of food advanced rapidly in prices, simply because the parties carrying stocks intended to avail of the miseries of war to fleece the people of \$250,000. That amount at least was robbed from the people by provision dealers and merchants during the existence of the first month of the war.

Then came the information that an East End firm had purchased some 40,000 brls. of flour; a West End firm 15,000 bars, and another firm not far from the locality of the banks purchased another 15,000 brls., all before the war panic broke out and that this flour was purchased at prices ranging from \$4.85 to \$5.20, which those inhuman monsters were impudent and cruel enough to ask from \$6.80 to \$7.20 per brl. for during the past fall.

Yet in spite of the appeals of this paper not a finger was raised by the Government to protect the public interests. They legally robbed from \$1.00 to \$1.50 per brl. on some 100,000 brls. of flour, which was known to the Government, and which the Government could have prevented if they desired to do so.

When the war came fish and lob-

sters became unsaleable. About 90 per cent. of canned lobsters are sold in Germany, and as the war prevented export to that country the article became unsaleable and to-day 95 per cent. of 1914 catch remains unsaleable in the Colony.

The Government could have sold this splendid article of food to the British Government for the use of the Navy and Army, for 3000 cases would be about supply enough for two weeks—but, as usual, the Government has done nothing, while Canada and the United States have secured millions of dollars worth of orders for food supplies from the British Government.

About 10 days after war broke out the exporters met and decided to buy codfish at \$4 per qtl. and a considerable quantity was purchased from nearby settlements at that figure. The Trading Co. at once started buying at \$6, and this paper started an agitation which compelled the buyers to give \$6 (taiqua) for fish here for about seven weeks, when the arrival of a large fleet of vessels with fish for sale gave the buyers a chance to cut prices for two or three weeks.

President Coaker endeavored to get the Government to do something to prevent a slump in prices as he knew the buyers would avail of the presence of a large number of vessels with fish to dispose of and cut prices which in view of the prices and shortage of supplies abroad, would not be justified.

A meeting of the Government and Opposition was called, which resulted in Mr. Coaker's proposal being turned down with contempt, and his opinions treated as worthless.

He asked the Government to do one of three things, guarantee a price, buy themselves or fix a price under which no one would be allowed to buy. Had such been done, no fisherman would have sold shore fish during the fall at less than \$6 per qtl. and Labrador soft would not have been purchased at less than \$4.

Owing to the very short catch of shore fish the Union's endeavors and the labors of this paper prevented prices from slumping much, and when the rush was over the fact soon became apparent that the supply was short and as the fish came in it was sold by President Coaker and gradually prices advanced from \$5.75 to \$7.50.

The soft Labrador supply was very considerable and in a couple of days during October some 60,000 qtls. arrived here which gave the buyers an opportunity to slump prices.

A big fight was put up and the slump did not exceed 50¢, for when outport buyers North offered \$3 the Trading Co. began to offer \$3.50 and as soon as buyers here heard of this move they sent agents out to tangle up Coaker and a fight began which gave the fishermen who held soft fish a chance to sell for \$4 and \$4.50 what they believed a few days earlier they would have to sell at \$3.

Soft fish demands grew as Greece ordered large quantities and the few last lots held by the fishermen reached the price of \$5.50 which is the highest price ever paid for Labrador soft fish.

Had Morris heeded Coaker's advice and fixed a price below which no one could buy, no poor man would have been compelled to sell at less than \$4, and there was no justification for the slump except the greed of the buyers to legally rob 50¢ of each qtl. so purchased.

This treatment showed President Coaker that the only remedy was to form an Export Co. to handle Union fish and make the fishermen their own exporters. Until such a Company is in operation slumps in price will come when ever the buyers see it can be worked. The Union will therefore have to establish a Company in order to handle its own members' fish and thus compel all to pay the full value of the article.

The great puzzle this fall is how prices were so well maintained for in 1908 when the soft Labrador catch was about the same as the catch this year the price fell to \$1.80 and cash could not be had at that price. This year the lowest price was equal to twice that offered in 1908.

Why did they get prices down to \$1.80 per qtl. in 1908 and why did they have to pay twice that amount to the cheapest soft fish purchased this year? Why—because of the influence of the F.P.U. and the grand fight put up on behalf of the fishermen by this paper.

We can confidentially assert that \$1,000,000 was secured to the fishermen on the price of fish this year that would not be theirs had there been no F.P.U., no Coaker or no Daily Mail and Advocate.

Provisions would not have sold at less than \$8 per brl. but for the Trading Co. having bought a quantity of flour after the war opened, and therefore made it impossible for any dealer to charge more than \$6.80 or \$7.

The Trading Co. sold flour at a profit of 15¢ per brl. this fall while several firms sold flour at a profit of \$1.70 per brl.

The fishermen should be prouder of their Union to-day than at any time since it was formed.

The Big New Year Day Show Repeated To-Night at THE NICKEL.

A Specially Good Entertainment at the Matinee This Afternoon for the Children, With Extra Pictures

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A Good Variety Programme for the Kiddies.

1915—WHAT ABOUT IT?

In the North the Trading Co. bought fish by the thousand quintals at \$6, while the local merchants refused to pay more than \$5, and when they squared up in October they were forced to allow \$6 per qtl. for what they expected to get for \$5, simply because to refuse to do so would mean the immediate destruction of their business.

Combines to fix prices on fish existed this year and although the Government had the power under an Act passed last February to investigate such Combines yet absolutely no notice was given our statements regarding the existence of this Combine.

The Union Party claimed last winter when the House was considering the Combines Act that it was another piece of Government bluff and the Union members stated what was correct in view of what has transpired here the past fall.

The fishermen are well pleased with what has been done for their welfare by the Union this year. They must remember that conditions, this fall were different from all other falls, as the existence of such an awful war made fish buying a pure gamble. As it has turned out the gamble went in favor of our Country for while \$6 was secured for most of the shore fish, a battle in the North Sea between the British and German fleets which was likely to happen from day to day, might have resulted in cutting the prices to just half of what was secured.

Things have gone bad but they could have gone very much worse under conditions which existed this fall.

The whole Country is now much better off than the most intelligent men expected it would be during August, September and October. Great things have come to pass in favor of Terra Nova since October, but there is not the smallest particle of credit due the Government for what has been accomplished.

Had nine ordinary school boys 15 years of age been in charge of the Government this fall they would have accomplished just as much on behalf of the people as has been accomplished by the Government of to-day in power in this Colony.

Another matter of special importance is the two bye-elections which took place in November for Twillingate and Bonavista when the Government could not gather enough pluck to place candidates in the field against the nominees of the F.P.U. although two Dummy Ministers held positions that common decency demanded they should have attempted to justify by an appeal to the electorate, as Blandford could have appealed to the constituency that five years ago returned him by a majority of 2600 and if Squires—the other Dummy Minister—possessed, an ounce of pluck, and a penny weight of respect for the constitution which governs countries possessing responsible government, he would have faced the district of Twillingate, which district ought to be as favorable to him as any in the Colony. But they could not gather the necessary pluck, and they will always be remembered as the Dummy Minis-

ters and the first assassins of the principles of constitutional government.

The bye-elections again proved that the confidence of the Northern electorate is as strong as ever for the F.P.U.

We have briefly reviewed the events of the year from a fisherman's financial and political point of view. The sealing disasters and the war, have been continually placed before our readers and need not be further referred to here.

To all our readers and Union friends we extend New Year's greetings and we wish all will be as well off at the close of 1915 as they are to-day. Cloudy days have been experienced during 1914 but bad as they were, we fear worse are in store for 1915.

The wisest amongst us are as fools when attempting to foretell what great changes will be brought about in the world, in our Empire and in our own dear old Island Home by the time we say good bye to 1915.

good. On no condition will the F.P.U. or this paper support any terms which do not provide for the acceptance or rejection of them by the vote of the people of this Colony.

We fear the financial condition of the Colony is daily growing worse and no effort is being made to bring about retrenchment or to economize in any way. The revenue for the year ending next June is expected to be \$700,000 short of the expenditure, and when the Government takes all the balance of the Reserve Fund, which was put away by the Liberals for a rainy day, there will be still a shortage of \$500,000. In the bargain, the branch railways must be completed at a cost of \$2,000,000 more than the \$8,000,000 now authorized by the Legislature, of which amount \$6,000,000 have been raised by permanent loan, while \$2,000,000 more is authorized to be raised and another \$2,000,000 must be raised before the contract is completed. In addition to this, another \$500,000 at least must be raised to pay for the Volunteer movement.

Sir Edward Morris stated in August, at the Tory Mass Meeting held in the C.L.B. Armoury, that we should be willing to exhaust the resources of the Colony to carry on this war. We fear the resources of the Colony are now well nigh exhausted and one of the men who would not cry over such a condition of things is the Right Hon. Premier. He has sown the wind and must be prepared to reap the whirlwind. His infamous policy since 1909 has sunk the Colony some \$11,000,000 in debt, although he has spent in addition about \$20,000,000 from revenue.

What is there to show for this \$30,000,000 expenditure during the last five and a half years? Is it any wonder that these financial economists, these brilliant experts in statesmanship, should now be looking to Confederation to wipe away their transgressions?

We intend to be free from any connection or understanding in reference to the matter of Confederation, and if it becomes a live issue, this paper and the Fishermen's Protective Union will use all its influence and power to protect the interest of the toiler and no interest but that of Country will be supported by us.

We have no axe to grind in this matter. We seek nothing and will have nothing apart from the general interest of the whole Colony, and if the financial condition of the Colony become so hopeless as to cause the powers that be to seek Canada for consolation, whatever the outcome, we shall oppose Confederation unless the terms submitted are such as to meet the approval of the Supreme Council of the Fishermen's Protective Union.

On no condition will we support any terms which consider the Reid Newfoundland Company as a part of the bargain. On no condition will we support any terms if we are convinced that Terra Nova can get along as an Independent Colony. On no condition will we support terms which do not place the fishing interest and the interest of the Country first.

If Confederation comes while the F.P.U. remains as strong as it is to-day, the terms will have to be very—very

entirely curtailed, owing, in the first place to the Sealing Disaster, and lately to the war. Hence the receipt of such a munificent gift in the face of setbacks has been very highly appreciated by the Society.

A few weeks ago another kind friend donated Fifty Dollars (\$50.00) towards the funds, and it is needless to say that the old benevolent institution is very sincere in its thanks to the donors of these handsome gifts.

FORGING AHEAD!

That is the position of The Mail and Advocate, as each issue sees a larger sale. What about that WANT ADVT!

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