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Mr. M. E. Condon Writes On the Question of Bait Fishes for Our Fishermen

Says the Question is a National One and
Must Be Taken Up Immediately.

(Editor Mail and Advocate)
Mr. Editor.—I again ask the use of your valuable paper on the most important subject locally in the Colony—Bait Freezers and a plentiful supply of Bait Fishes, Squid and Herring to our fishermen.

First, I have to thank the Editors of The Evening Herald, Mail and Advocate, and The Daily News, on behalf of the fishermen, merchants, artisans &c. for publishing same, but I do not agree with my learned friend, the Hon. J. Alex. Robinson, the Editor of the Daily News, in all he says in his editorial and his comments made on the said letter regarding our national issue, Bait Freezers and a plentiful supply of Bait Fishes to the fishermen of the Colony.

First he states that my letter has the merit of enthusiasm and the impress of sincerity and that I make big claims, and I am not at all bashful in estimating the value of my experience and skill. My reply is, why should I be bashful of same. Have I not given the best of my life, over 26 years, to personal study of same, and identified with our bait fishes, caplin, squid and herring, more so combined than any other individual in our Island Home in Newfoundland's greatest bait resort, Cape Broyle, and a part of the past 15 months in other sections of the country. With a good average education to the average fisherman of Newfoundland and after having had seven years commercial training at the Commission Brokers' Notary Public, and as an accountant in my native city, St. John's, I ought therefore to be master of my business. But I do not claim to know it all, as the gentleman in his capacity that he has given the best of his life to, I would not dare insulate that I know as much as he does. Neither would I gloriate any individual in this Newfoundland of ours to know as much as I do all around about our fisheries, bait fishes &c. And I go farther, there are times a person in self defence must say, and go further than he would wish to. The learned gentleman must have forgotten a valuable part of Newfoundland history, and I therefore claim fellow countrymen of this Newfoundland of ours, Great Britain's oldest Colony, and lay claim to what neither the learned gentleman or any other individual cannot or dare take from me—to be the son of the late Daniel Condon and grandson on the mother's side of the late Michael Kearney, Newfoundland's two brightest and greatest sons. As geniuses, this may be necessary for the younger generation of Newfoundlanders, that Terra Nova have not produced their equals in their capacities before, during, or since, their time, in this Newfoundland of ours.

Their works are world-renowned and will go down with the history of the Colony as brightest geniuses. Some of Michael Kearney's (master shipbuilder) works are—built the brigantine "Ida" in Charles Fox Bennett's (late merchant) ship-yard, where now stand the post office. He launched the Ida across Water Street and placed his watch on the corner of the stone building, amidst the applause of thousands, and sent her to the harbour successfully. She was christened by Mrs. Bennett, and the Ida was for three years the fastest ship of her size sailing out of London, Great Britain. She was built in 1854. He also built the "Thomas Ridley" for the Hon. John Rourke at Carboneau. He built the "gauntlet" yacht for John Johnston, of the firm of Haining & Johnston, in the forties. This vessel was enrolled under the New York Yacht Club for her sailing qualities, and was built purposely to go to seek for the Cocoa Island treasure on the Pacific Coast. Also built the "Arabella, Yacht" and other vessels for Panton & Mann and Riddleys of H. Grace. He built the Mary Hounsell in 1842 for Daniel Fowler. She was christened by the wife of the owner at St. John's, and the Governor, Sir John Harvey, sent a complimentary letter to Kearney on the construction of so fine a vessel.

He invented a patent for lacing seals. It could lace more seals in less time than three or four men. When the Exhibition of 1862 and other exhibitions were held at London and Paris, Kearney's models of boats and vessels received great praise. He invented a life-saving waiscoat. Fifteen years after he invented it, he saw a coat made after the same pattern in use in London made of Indian rubber. He successfully floated the S.S. Diamond sunk in the Narrows,

and a large full-rigged sailing ship that had her keel damaged from getting ashore and there was no dry dock here to dock her. He had her cargo discharged, took topmasts, yards, etc., down to the lower mast, and turned her bottom up in the harbour of St. John's and repaired her keel, and turned her back again. He removed the Harbour Grace light-house, and when the S.S. Great Eastern broke down in the launching in her launchways, it was Kearney's plan given to the late Charles Fox Bennett, merchant, that launched her, and Kearney's last ship was the Shamrock, which he began for the Hon. John Rourke at Carboneau, but he did not live to see her completed. For four years he represented his native district, Ferryland. He (Kearney) was the greatest shipbuilder in all Newfoundland. He could build, rig, make a vessel, and then sail her.

The late Hon. John Harris, President of the Legislative Council, is a descendant of the same family, also Michael Kearney of the Water Co., John Kearney, of H. M. Customs, Capt. Richard Kearney, a brother, who made the record passage to and from Brazil. He went down in 18 days and back in twenty days, and one of our first volunteers to return from the front to fight for Britain's cause, wounded on the battle-field was Private William Kearney, son of Capt. Richard Kearney.

Now we will come to Daniel Condon, the inventor of the pontoon cofferdam, and he that forewent the concrete, age over forty years ago. Daniel Condon floated the S.S. Flavin of the Leyland Line, stranded at Great Island for thirty days with his own inventions, pontoons, and beat Lloyd's of London representative, Capt. Chisholm, that came here to float her, and failed, and had to make way for the Newfoundland (Condon) and then had a false bottom of wood and concrete placed in her and she reached Boston, U.S.A. successfully. Rear-Admiral Kennedy of the British Navy can certify to the same. He successfully repaired the S.S. Caspian after being in contact with the rocks in the Narrows and the S.S. Manitoban after striking Bell Island, both of those Allan liners. Also successfully floated the S.S. Plover and the S.S. Hercules after being under water all the winter at Twillingate and Fogo. S.S. Lisard, S.S. European, S.S. Palmyra of the Cunard line, cofferdamed same and other ships after losing their propeller and being into collision, also Her Majesty's ship Flamingo after being in collision with an iceberg. Cofferdamed the said ship, and made permanent repairs to her and last but not least of all (as the learned Editor of the Daily News stated) that it was a long way from Newfoundland to Missouri.

About 27 years ago St. John's was not a long way from S. S. Arizona. When the S. S. Arizona of the Guion Line (the premier line of the world then) entered our narrows on a Sunday morning after being into collision with an iceberg, the S. S. Alaska of the same line being then the greyhound of the Atlantic, and in twenty days had her temporary repairs with a wooden and concrete bow, the owner, Mr. Guion and his nephew, also the late Walter Grievie, merchant, being passengers. She steamed through the Narrows bounds for Liverpool and reached there, the wonder of the world, and no dry dock here at St. John's then for any of those ships. Thousands upon thousands from all over Great Britain and France came to Liverpool to see the wonder of the world, and the meritorious work of Newfoundland's brightest son, Daniel Condon, whom the owner, Mr. Guion, wished to go across to Liverpool, and thence to New York in the S. S. Alaska and home to Terra Nova, his native land, free of all expenses. He, Mr. Guion, took the beautiful oil-painting of the S.S. Arizona from her saloon, and presented it to Daniel Condon, and the same is now in my sister's home at City Terrace (here in St. John's) and both of the above named, Daniel Condon and Michael Kearney, always did the possible, ten titles in their meritorious work named by me and fellow-country-men. What has made the Mother Country, Great Britain, the greatest maritime country in the world? Is it not her shipping and her commerce?

As Britain rules the waves, and when the ships above named entered my native city, St. John's, in distress from collision with ice-bers and others, damages, and no dry dock here to give them, either temporary or permanent repairs to send them back

with their passengers and crews to their destination and homes, the Mother Country &c. Therefore the shipping people of the said country &c., Lloyd's of London, The Guion Line, Leyland, Allan, Cunard, White Star and other lines will ever venerate his name.

The people in shipping circles &c., politicians, and all who may have their ups and downs, but to the man or men of genius that could devise a means of repairing their ships, and sending them safe home to their destinations, Liverpool, London, Glasgow and to ports in Canada and the United States. Are they not the undisputed and brightest genius, superior to all others in this Newfoundland of ours, and their meritorious work recognized by the Mother Country and the civilized world?

Daniel Condon being the son of a well-educated Waterford Irishman, and on the Mother's side of good English stock from Exeter, and from Carter and Saunders; the former, Carter, from which came the late Sir Frederick Carter, H. D. Carter of the Bank of Montreal and our esteemed Sheriff Carter, is a good mixture and all a credit to Newfoundland. The same applies to Michael Kearney, from Tipperary, an Irish descendant fused with Blackier of Exeter, England.

Now that you all know from whom I have the honour of descending, you see with the fusion of their blood, good broad-minded English Episcopalian, and good broad-minded Irish Catholic stock, it may meet with adversity, but with energy, sobriety and for a good and just cause it must win, and I now claim that on the Bait Freezing and Fishery Problem of the country I will go one better than the possible, the Daniel Condon, and Michael Kearney's ten titles, and like the — do the eleven titles, one more than the possible. The eleventh is my secret after a study of over twenty-five years, and now to come to the Bait Problem.

1. Which the learned gentleman states is a very pleasing one, there is no doubt.
2. He further states that it is only when there is a scarcity of bait that it is pressing.
3. That if it pressed continuously ordinary commercial methods would find a speedy solution. And to show our business men a good proposition, or one with reasonable prospects, and they seldom hesitate, he goes further and states:
4. That the bait business may pay well enough when bait is scarce, and the supply is difficult to get, but when it is abundant, demand would be absent, and the season's business a total loss to the Freezers. Now my reply to same and the learned gentleman: but, not learned in the fisheries of the country, or its bait fishes, trawls &c., as he never got the practical experience, only the hearsay from various fishermen of tentimes, know-nothings, and know-all.

First fellow-country men the Bait Problem, a plentiful supply of bait fishes, squid and herring to the Shore, Bank and Labrador fishermen is the problem of the day, and from a scarcity of bait for the above fishermen Newfoundland is losing annually from one to two, or more millions of dollars. Now I contend, and can prove to the learned gentleman that he is radically wrong in his statement viz: as to second—There has never been known in the history of the Colony for any year or season that there were an abundance of squid, and herring, day after day and week after week for the Labrador and Bank fishermen and West Coast Shore fishermen; and these are uncontradicted facts and, as it is well known, that the squid bait fish is the prime bait fish, after and before, the caplin school. We generally have squid rarely in July month) in August, September, October and November, and after that the squid go ashore, and that squid the premier baitfish for the season's named above, as there are none to be caught in our waters for December, January, February, March, April and May months; and the Banker and the West Coast fishermen have to use the inferior bait, salted squid, salted and frozen strangled herring.

With a plentiful supply of frozen squid and herring to the fishermen of the Shore and Labrador I will do away with the curse of our fisheries, the jigger, by which millions of quintals have been destroyed on the Shore and Labrador; but the frozen squid, the most palatable of our bait fishes, for our codfish must be imported for the fishery from Provincetown and Gloucester, Mass., U.S.A., and tens of thousands of dollars sent out of the country to pay for the said squid. Money which should and will be kept in the country, and that by the writer and others. The fishermen, both Shore and Bank, would prefer frozen squid every time to the salted squid or strangled, frozen and salted herring, and I would get a ready sale for all that I could get at good prices, and no more Provincetown squid for us. So fellow-country

(Continued on page 5.)

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