

Proceedings of the House of Assembly

RT. HON. PRIME MINISTER.—Will you give me this man's address?

MR. COAKER.—How do you expect to get that address from me? Why do you ask?

RT. HON. PRIME MINISTER.—I leave you to draw your own conclusions. I am sorry to know that any fisherman would make such a confession.

MR. COAKER.—They are not all saints any more than they are in the Executive Council or anywhere else. A fisherman would consider himself a fool if he missed the opportunity (or at least some of them would) but I think this could easily be remedied by allowing no one to catch lobsters at all. I was told that one of the Inspectors said that he would rather pay them two dollars than ten cents. Can we expect under these circumstances to have an abounding lobster fishery? Can you blame the fishermen behaving as they do under these circumstances? And how can they be prevented? I must say that throughout these Estimates the Premier has been most reasonable, but there is one more matter to which I would like to draw the attention of the Government. I notice in the Estimates passed yesterday that there are still some Postmasters in the Island receiving \$8.00 a year. Could not this be raised to fifteen dollars? There are one hundred and sixty-six Postmasters receiving \$10.00 and about nine receiving \$8.00. Fifty-two men on the Labrador receive \$110 but I suppose they only work for three months of the year. Men will have to be better paid than this if we wish them to do their duty. I suppose some of these men deserve \$100 for the work they get through. I wish all men in the public service had to work as hard as these men. The Hon. Colonial Secretary promised to give me certain information.

HON. COLONIAL SECRETARY.—I might say that I have looked into this matter and asked Mr. LeMessurier at the Post Office, but he said that owing to the absence of the Postmaster General, so many points being involved, nothing could be done until he returned; as soon as he comes back we will receive the necessary information.

MR. COAKER.—I am sorry, as I desire to get through the Estimates as quickly as possible. How can the Committee rise until we get this information? I do not want to see these things carried on from day to day. I want to see this matter finished. How about discussing it in the Additional Estimates? I hope you will not have any additions to salaries or other sums voted under the Audit Act section 33. There is about \$25,000 that had been voted in that way this year ending 1914. Money voted, to quote Dr. Lloyd, "in spite of section 33." I am desirous of making this second term of the Morris Government a model one. We do not want our four years work in the Opposition here to go for nothing. We wish the Government to get value for every cent it spends. We wish morally to uplift them. I hope in the year ending June 1915, there will not be one cent of expenditure unauthorized by the House. Can the Minister promise me that?

HON. MINISTER FINANCE AND CUSTOMS.—I will try.

MR. JENNINGS.—Mr. Chairman, I would like to say a few words in relation to lobsters. Last summer I obtained some information from a man who seemed to know a great deal concerning the habits of lobsters. He told me that in his opinion, a lobster had its own nest, and that when once it was put overboard it would go back. He knew this because he marked them from time to time. I am inclined to accept this as this was a man who was particularly observant. Perhaps this information will be of some use to the Inspectors in this matter.

MINISTER MARINE AND FISHERIES.—Mr. Chairman, I do not want to delay this House but I would like to make a few remarks about the matters now up for discussion. I have thought a great deal about this fishery problem. This is a fish country and the lobsters, salmon and cod and all the other industries form our staple industry, without which I am afraid poor old Newfoundland would almost be forgotten. I have been surprised to hear the statements that have been made by the hon. member

AT THE NICKEL

Wednesday—"The Million Dollar Mystery."

for Twillingate, Mr. Coaker, and while I express no doubt of the veracity of his remarks I must admit that I do not consider it fair to the people of Green Bay to deliver such information to this House and throw it broadcast to this Colony and countries where our newspapers circulate and let these people think our fishermen are so fraudulent and untrustworthy. The next thing we shall find the hon. gentleman saying is that the lobsters are harnessed by a patent harness so that they cannot get away at any cost. I am of opinion that the fisherman who told the President this story was merely getting a clever one off on him. I must say that I would like to know the man's name, I really would. The propagation has been taken by the Department of which I have the honour to be the head. They receive a grant of \$5,000. We all talk of the poor fishermen and what we are willing to do for them, but I do not consider that talking in the manner of the President of the F.P.U. is uplifting them in any way. He says it is human nature that they should put lobsters down and catch them again. Now, Mr. Chairman, before these fishermen receive their money they take an affidavit and if the fishermen behave as the hon. member for Twillingate said then they are perjurying themselves, and when the hon. gentleman says that Mr. Dee wanted to give two dollars for lobsters I must state that I do not believe him. I do not believe a word of that is true. Anyway this is not the sort of thing you would expect a representative of the fishermen to talk about. Instead of having five thousand to run this Department effectively, you would want three times that. If you look up the report of the United States you will find they spend an amount equal to our public debt on the lobster fish-

ery alone. Go to Nova Scotia or Canada and you will find that they spend hundreds of thousands of dollars trying to improve them. Only last summer I had a letter from the Deputy Minister of Fisheries in Canada asking me to let them know how our propagation system was progressing. He said that the Board there had arrived at the conclusion that the best thing was to try and allow the lobster its natural resources, to let them breed as nature intended them until a time arrived when this industry could again be resumed with greater profit and satisfaction. We do not wish to lose this fishery but we have to do something to get the fishermen of the country to take an interest in it, and in the work which we are doing so that the fishery may not be destroyed. In St. Barbe district the fishermen will tell you that the fishery is on the increase because of the propagation policy of the government because the people of this district are taking an interest in it, and if you go on in this way you will find that the fishermen will see its usefulness and become more interested as time goes on. I have letters here from these people this year. They heard that the Government was going to have a close season and they have written in and telegraphed to say that they do not want a close season, but they will guarantee that if you will continue the propagation they will give every assistance towards carrying it out. There is a great deal of good in the system we have inaugurated and by it you will interest the people; and if it is carried out properly it will ultimately revive an industry which was going to the wall. Bay St. George is another place. If you travel thru that Bay the fishermen will tell you that they have a very small lobster, two or three inches in length. When the report of the Fishery Commission comes down I think you will find that the propagation work that has been carried on during the past year or two has done more good than anything like it in the past. I am sure that this House and the honourable gentlemen on the other side of it, if they will only take the matter up, will be able to do a lot of work to help this policy on. I am sure that they can give us a great deal of information in regard to the fisherman's opinion about this matter, and we are only too glad to take any information that they give that will be of benefit to the fishermen, and the same applies to any other member whether he be on his side of the House or not.

Newfoundlander and I believe that this is the best country under God's Heaven, but I believe that we do not try to do enough for the benefit of the fishermen and in the interest of the industry which is the life of the country. We are talking about granting \$20,000 to the Tuberculosis Commission. That is very good. It is money very well spent. If it saves two people from death through that disease it will be money well spent, but if we brought forward a bill to expend \$150,000 for the benefit of the fishery there would be more fighting over it than is necessary. We have no information about the price of fish; about the markets, the places to which the catch goes; or anything about the fish itself, and there should be a vote in that department not of \$100,000, but of \$500,000, and then you would get a certain amount of satisfaction and it would be money well spent in the interests of the industry. It would not then be necessary for fishermen to go to Gloucester for work. If we only carried out what I believe is in the best interests of the country there would be no men going out of the country now; and when you would go to the country for an election you would be elected because they would know your worth, not because you had given them something themselves, but because you had given them something themselves, but because you had done something for the benefit of the country. They would cast their votes for the men who did the best work. Now as regards our lobster fishery. The price at present is very slow and there are only about 600 licenses given out whereas they are usually about 1200. This vote is for the purpose of sending men around the Coast to see that the lobster beds that we have around are not destroyed. We should have a vote to get men to watch the lobster and find out their movements so that we might know what we are talking about when it comes to a debate like this.

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be done to have this remedied during the war, in order to employ the fishermen and get rid of our lobsters? I suppose there are 5000 cases that might be sold in France. If the Premier would take action it would be a great thing to get clear of those lobster of last year.