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The Labrador Strike. Dr. Grenfell's Story.

STEAMER HELD UP—STRIKE-BREAKERS PREVENTED FROM LOADING STEAMER—FISHERMEN WANTED \$4 A QUINTAL—NO VIOLENCE OFFERED TO ANY PERSON—FISHERMEN READY TO GO TO PENITENTIARY IF NECESSARY TO WIN THEIR CAUSE.

INDIAN HARBOR, Sept. 27, 1912.

S. S. Strathcona. On arriving to-day at Indian Harbor, a deputation of fishermen and also the three fish buyers waited on me concerning their labor dispute. It was perfect weather, the best week by far this whole season. A large steamer waiting for fish was at anchor flying her flag for loading, but not one fish was being moved. Last year the fishermen here did the same thing—striking for a higher price for produce. They had the year before, 1910, only received in this district \$3.50 for fish, while everyone else had received \$4. They were again offered only \$3.50; they refused to ship only when the steamer was lying at anchor in their harbour at a great cost to the shipper. They won their point, obtained \$1.30 for their fish, which reacted along the shore and gave others as they claim the advantage of their boldness. Fish was very high, fortunately. After some discussion at a meeting held on the rocks the men agreed to have a meeting in the Mission room and discuss the question at once as very valuable time was being lost. It is always freezing in the mornings; the crews should all be on their way south, and the delay to the vessels reaching market was sure to tell against the value when it did. The buyers meanwhile claimed from me as a Magistrate protection, while at least they put their own fish aboard, and one or two fishermen very anxious to get away asked for the same, more especially a crew of wrecked men, and several poor Labradorians who had to get in their small open boats to their winter homes at the heads of the bays. We were ourselves very anxious to use the first and possibly the last spell of fine weather on this now nearly forsaken coast to finish another 200 miles of northern visiting among the settlers, but there seemed no alternative but to wait. So we at once sent the Strathcona with a deputation of fishermen to the islands around to gather their comrades, and also a wire was sent to the Government for advice. In due time a most orderly crowd of fishermen marched up the road and filled our large Mission room to its limit. They insisted on my being present and presiding.

FISHERMEN'S CONTENTIONS.

Their contention, which they all voted should be made public, was as follows:—
(1) In the past we have been robbed of our just dues. The salt, provisions and gear, in which coin most of our produce is paid for, has been charged to us at high prices, over which we have no control; yet we had to take it. If we insisted on cash payment enabling us to go into the cheapest market to buy than we could get no outfit for the fishery, and we were not able to outfit ourselves. Our salt here this year is charged to us at \$2.20, whereas in St. John's it is only \$1.20.

(2) One of our Judges recently decreed that the buyers, who we consider a combine, have no right to settle the price of our fish. The price ought to be settled by the price in the foreign market, and that ought to be made public. We believe that the French and Bank catch is small, and that the Norwegian catch though so very large is not well cured; ours is good fish and should fetch as much as last year. They produced one paper, called Harbour Grace Standard, quoting market price in St. John's of Labrador soft fish at \$4. They argued it is cheaper for a vessel to land here than in St. John's and the passage as short. They

knew that a large amount of fish, viz., two sealers full, was being loaded at Battle, and also other vessels at other places at \$3.50 per quintal and the rise. They argued, however, here collecting steamers and launches had to be employed to buy and collect the fish and also the owners had to maintain crews of men for the purpose of further drying the bought fish, and then to re-handle and stow it. This they claimed brought it to \$4 to the owner.

READY FOR THE PENITENTIARY.

Further, they contended the whole coast was looking to them. The spokesman said we may as well suffer one way as the other, and if our acts are illegal and we are sent to the Penitentiary, we honestly believe it is in a good cause that we are working for others as well as ourselves, and we are prepared to pay even that price. They said that if they were sure the fish was not worth \$4 that was all they wanted to know. They only wanted its proper price; but they had been fooled so often they believed they were being so now. True, the Union paper gave the price as \$3.50 to \$3.75, but previous years they had been told \$3.70 and others had got \$4, and they were not sure their paper was able to get at the facts any better than they. They were afraid to accept any modus vivendi we suggested, and we racked our brains for expedients, knowing the great expense such a method of redressing a wrong costs. They seriously considered settling on the basis of a wire to impartial parties in St. John's, but no satisfactory name could be suggested.

DISTRUSTED ARBITRATIONS.

They very nearly agreed to shipping on the basis of a price to be fixed later in St. John's by three independent arbitrators as the Government had done with the Reindeer Newfoundland Company, but the results of those arbitrations had by no means satisfied them apparently that justice would be done. Moreover, at these times there will always be some unbalance between reason and sentiment. We are not all philosophers always, anyhow, and some were not at that time. It is not to be wondered at if the labour unrest and strikes in the centres of civilization find a distant echo in these far-off shores. There can be no doubt that for a large body of labouring men dealing with a matter so vital to themselves, especially when as a rule these men, in spite of their sea calling are so exceptionally law-abiding, were now consciously breaking laws, the men were far more amenable and quiet than most strikers I have had to do with.

FISHERMEN'S RESOLUTIONS.

They disclaimed any intention whatever of doing bodily harm to any one, but the meeting closed with three resolutions:—
(1) We will agree to take not a cent less than \$4.
(2) We will not allow any man to put any fish aboard under any condition unless \$4 is agreed on.
(3) We will wire to St. John's to the papers and the buyers that we are prepared to put 10,000 quintals on board the first vessel that comes for it at that price. We will put No. 1 fish only. We will load it free of cost to the buyer, and we will put it aboard as quickly as it can possibly be done.
The captains of sixty crews of fishermen then wrote their names down

and the amount of fish which at a minimum they could afford to load, and lodged the lot and their resolutions with myself—the buyer, if any could be found, was to communicate with me at Indian Hospital. Lastly, I was to let the buyers here know of their resolutions. This, after the meeting was over, was accordingly done—it had dissolved in great enthusiasm with cheer and good humoured jokes. We all wished most earnestly we could have solved the difficulty by ourselves giving \$4. or \$40 for the matter of that.

BUYERS REFUSE TO PAY \$4.

The buyers listened most cordially to all that had passed, but simply said they were against a stone wall. First, we are losing hundreds of dollars of the small profit we can alone hope to make on the margin we now anticipate if even they do ship at \$3.50; we are under great expense already providing tonnage; we know the fish is not worth \$4, and if we pay it we shall not only add to our losses, but we shall be involving others in England and elsewhere for whom we are partially acting as agents. This we will not do. On the other hand one contended I have 10,000 quintals of my own. I have paid men wages to catch it. I took a huge risk and they took none. It doesn't matter one cent to them what price is paid for fish. They are paid anyhow the same; the fish and the steamer are all part of my venture. I claim I have a right to load my own fish. I have met the men and argued it, but they refused. I tried to load it but they seized my boats, towed them back and prevented me. They all agreed we cannot buy at \$4. We are sure no one else can; they produced telegrams that they had been receiving from day to day warning them not to give a cent over \$3.50, rather to leave the fish and send the steamer back and these from merchants, commission agents, and even from the meeting of the Board of Trade in St. John's. They asked us to detain the Strathcona to afford them protection while putting their own fish aboard and to wire for instructions to the Government. Accordingly we wired conditions and asked if we should take any action. We are still waiting.

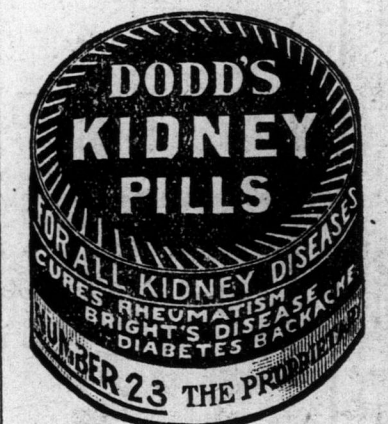
TOWING AWAY STRIKE-BREAKERS

27th. A perfect day, a day that Labrador excels in the fall. Summer visitors don't ever know Labrador. They come when the flies make life miserable, and are obliged to rush along day and night in a tireless, busy mail boat so that they never lose the idea of haste, and this year fog and rain and easterly winds every day. It is now calm, clear as a bell. The exquisite autumn tints make these almost naked hills as beautiful as a carpet flower garden. A tint of white frost sets off the coloring and lends a splendid sense of well being to the system. Signal guns have just been fired, flags have been hoisted and a swarm of boats manned by lusty men are sweeping off to the fish steamer, still bravely but vainly trying flags for a cargo. A sailing schooner has just gone alongside, and on the hill tops and up on the yard arms of smoking the smokestacks the figures of men, watching what will happen are silhouetted against the clear blue of the sky. It has all passed off quietly and a long string of boats are towing the strike-breakers in triumph behind them is now rounding the northern headland to anchor here in a place where ships come to no harm, but can be under surveillance and load no fish.

A GREAT COMPLIMENT.

It seemed to us a great compliment that in addition to the request of the buyers that we stay here, a strong deputation of the men should have just come aboard asking the same thing. We have often desecrated on the virtues of patience. But with this exquisite weather and a voyage of 200 miles to make on this coast at this time of the year, we feel far more like waiting over the difficulty of practising it. It is surely time some referee were appointed who would be acceptable to both the Board of Trade, buyers and fishermen, whose judgment would be reliable enough for him to formulate some modus vivendi each year until prices could be settled in St. John's. It could be a committee, or arbitrators, or some one accepted by all parties when the men start in the Spring of the year. The present lamentable state of things is worth serious attention anyhow.

WILFRED GRENFELL, M.D.



VETERAN ASHORE.—Capt. Fraser of the City of Sydney, our veteran commander, is ashore this trip, at Montreal on a vacation. His place on the bridge is filled by Chief Officer McDonald.

IS VERY ILL.—Miss Elsie Garland, sister of Charles Garland, of the Telegram staff, was conveyed to the General Hospital, Thursday, to be treated for a serious internal complaint; she was in a critical condition yesterday.

STEPHANO SAILS.—The S. S. Stephano, Capt. Clarke, is expected to get away at eight o'clock this evening. These passengers are booked:—G. Bulley, E. C. Stuckless, Mrs. Stuckless, A. H. Rice, Mrs. D. Rice, Mrs. J. C. Phillips, W. Tobin and fifteen second class.

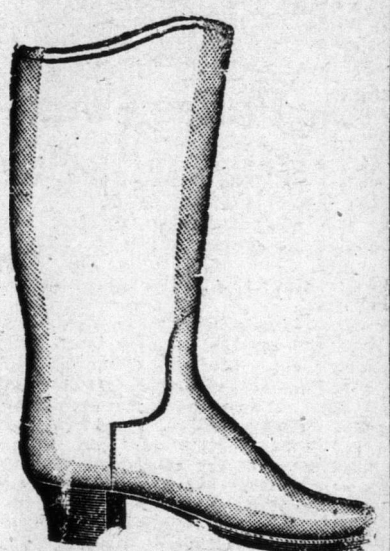
CONDUCTING A MISSION.—The maronite Priest, Rev. Fr. Soab, now here is conducting a mission for the Syrian people of the city. He celebrates masses each morning, administers Holy Communion and nightly hears confessions. He will officiate before a large congregation to-morrow.

Life saving Station!

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Smallwood's HAND-MADE Waterproof Boots.

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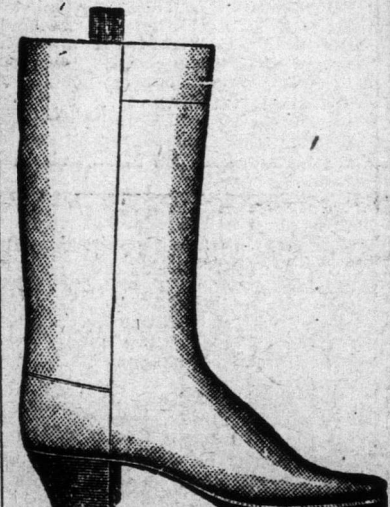


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Worth \$2.50 each in Navy, Reseda, Sax, Myrtle, Brown and White.

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LADIES! These are **Excellent Value**, and we would strongly advise you to see them without delay.

S. MILLEY.

Here and There.

Stafford's Liniment for sale by Mrs. Morris, Field St.—sep28,tf

DISCHARGING DEALS.—The deals on the Wilhelmina will all be discharged to-day. The deals are being taken on flat cars from the dock pier.

WITH THE ADVENTISTS.—Sunday evening in the Adventist Church, Elder Wm. C. Young, will preach on the question "Is the need for the second advent of Jesus greater to-day than ever before?"

Eyeglasses and Spectacles of all combinations, Artificial Eyes, all sizes and colors, Motor Goggles, Eyeshades, etc. All can be had at TRAPNELL'S, Eyesight Specialist—sep29,tf.

Special Evening Telegram.—TRENTON, Oct. 4. Aviator Walsh was killed while making spiral descent in a Curtis biplane, Walsh met with three mishaps while flying at Halifax Provincial Exhibition two weeks ago.

Minard's Liniment—Cures Distemper.

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