

Co-operative Marketing.

Mr. A. B. Morine, K.C., Addresses Board of Trade.

(Continued.)

A local association on the North side of Bonaville Bay, for export in a suitable vessel? Think of the time, labor and expense that would have been saved. Think of the opportunity it would have been for the more financially independent fishermen.

THE MATTER OF GOVERNMENT CONTROL. I want to emphasize the point that from beginning to end the control of the co-operative organization would be solely in those financially interested as members contributing fish. There would be no Government appointees. There would be no politics. No considerations would have any weight, except those which concerned the profitable marketing of fish. Very definitely, each member would influence, and practically control his own fish, at least as intimately and practically as partners in a firm or company control the fish they are directly interested in. Under the Regulations 1920, this was not so, nor would it be so under the proposal called "Nationalization" recently made. There would be a Manager and adequate staff for each association and district exchange, and a General Manager and staff for Central, and of course there would be directors, but the overhead cost for exportation would be much less in the aggregate than it is now, when each exporter has some of his staff at least employed upon exportation matters which would be centralized under co-operation.

OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED. In discussions, I have heard three objections which I wish to consider briefly: (1) Co-operative exporting, coupled with a ban upon exportation except through the organization would, it is said, be MONOPOLY spelled in capital letters. It appears to me as though it would be the first breath of liberty to the fishermen, the death blow of privilege. Under the 1920 Regulations, a license, rather hard to get was essential to an exporter. Under existing conditions, bank accommodation, still harder to get by many, is essential to an exporter. Under "Nationalization" as proposed, no private person will be permitted to export. Under Co-operation, as I propose, anybody may export, without a license and much or little. It will confer on any man with small capital, but much pluck, the privilege of exporting on equal terms with the largest capitalist through his association.

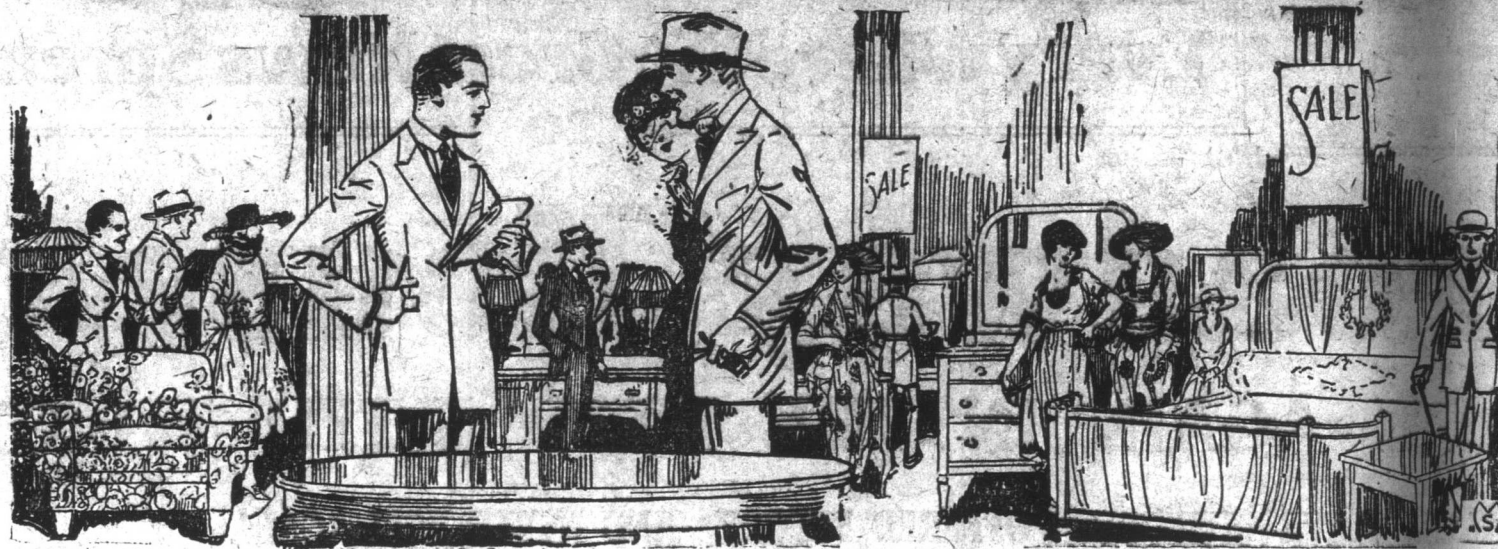
(2) It would interfere, it is said, with the sacro-sanct principle of demand and supply, which some people regard as a part of the decalogue. What is the meaning placed on those terms by the objection? By "demand" do they mean "quantity needed ultimately for consumption," and by "supply" do they mean "the quantity actually caught." Well, co-operation would not interfere with it within that meaning. It would not seek to create an artificial demand, which would be followed by very natural depression—by withholding a due supply of fish. It would only aid to regulate the supply in the markets so that there should always be enough, yet never too much over-supplying a market is as bad as withholding. It is not proposed to limit the supply so as to force prices above the natural value of fish, but only to prevent that senseless rivalry between sellers which causes fish to sell below its natural value.

(3) Co-operation will destroy the vested interests of present day exporters. Therefore, they will oppose it. If that were so, and it could be shown that co-operation would, nevertheless, be for the greatest good of the greatest number, so much the worse for the exporters, for the fight would have to go on. But it is not so. The large exporter would remain the large collector, producer, member, or whatever you may call him, as a partner in the organization—the name, not the substance, would be changed—unless the present day home selling fisherman becomes an exporter in his own right through the organization, and to the extent that the fisherman did become (which he would only do by enterprise, economy and pluck), a prosperous middle class would be created, whose prosperity would make them better buyers from present day exporters in their capacity as Merchant-Importers. In course of time (a very long time, I fear) the exporter of to-day would be such, I hope, pass away, supplanted by prosperous fishermen co-operative exporters for that would be a happy consummation for all the people of the Colony. Ireland's tenant farmers, Scotland's crofters, are rapidly becoming "peasant proprietors," and in this country we may build up a class of fishermen akin to the "peasant proprietor," the land-owning farmer, the contented, prosperous, middle class man of the United States and Canada, the broad based

MARKETING. Under the California system, as applied to different commodities, there are no different systems, there are no variations in marketing. Sometimes, apparently sales made by local associations, and sometimes by the District Exchanges, are made by the Central Exchange, but sales are made through the agents appointed by the Central, and the Central is the method of all sales, and all sales are remitted to Central, so there is perfect co-ordination. The first principle is to maintain the best possible line of sale for the fish directly interested, consistent with co-operation, there being no desire to regulate competition in local markets. There need be no restraint on the liberty of associations to sell their fish to whom they wish, but inasmuch as the ill to be cured is undue competition abroad, some method of limiting liberty becoming license, selling in foreign markets might have to be devised. It might be in practice that the dissemination of data by the Central to the fact that sales in each district would have to be made through the same agent, would be enough, for monopoly would not be the aim, only regulation.

LOCAL MARKETING. Discussion about organization has generally been directed to the sale of fish in foreign markets. It is timely to remind you that co-operative selling I am discussing would apply to sales in local markets also. An association would be confined to sales to exportation. Some of them might be in local markets for shipment in ocean going vessels. Many of them might be composed of members whose financial condition might induce them to sell locally. Their fish might be bought by merchant members of the association, for export by the association, or they might be sold by the members themselves. I think it is wasted in the local market. Recently, a number of fish sellers have been seen, with cargoes, or part of fish for local sale. Some have been left here to winter, while crews sent home. Why not that fish have been collected by local associations, for the members, so far as they are able to contribute for export or sale to a merchant here? Why not have been turned into

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Reg. \$ 95.00 Suite for \$ 78.75	Reg. \$100.00 Suite for \$ 82.50	Reg. \$141.00 Suite for \$116.87	Reg. \$150.00 Suite for \$118.12
Reg. \$108.00 Suite for \$ 97.50	Reg. \$115.00 Suite for \$ 96.62	Reg. \$155.00 Suite for \$127.50	Reg. \$195.00 Suite for \$162.50
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Reg. \$50.00 each for	\$41.06	Reg. \$35.00 each for \$28.75	Reg. \$41.50 each for \$31.81
Reg. \$52.00 each for	\$41.06	Reg. \$45.00 each for \$37.50	Reg. \$53.50 each for \$44.02
Reg. \$75.00 each for	\$62.50	Reg. \$75.00 each for	\$64.75

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BUREAUS. Reg. \$ 48.00 each for	\$36.35	Reg. \$ 77.00 each for	\$64.45
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THE FISHERMAN EXPORTER.

In his capacity as an adventurer, many exporters to-day carry on a Labrador station, fit out and operate vessels to the Banks and the Labrador, in supply boats and traps to be worked for them, on wages or shares. In all these cases the outfit is the owner of the fish, and could turn it into any association he belonged to. Inasmuch as most sharemen would not be able or willing to wait for payment in full till account was received of the sales abroad, the outfit would be under the necessity of paying them off at say current local rates. But many exporters also outfit for cash or on credit, partially or wholly, many owners or masters of craft who pursue the fishery on their own account. The fish caught belongs to the supplier, who, if he were independent enough, could turn the fish to an association for export on his own account, and deal with his sharemen as I have just indicated. Such an adventurer has now no such opportunity under existing methods but must sell locally at any price he may be fortunate enough to get here. He has no place to store his fish while awaiting export, no banking accommodation for advances, no means of procuring transportation to market, no foreign agent, no knowledge of exporting practices. The provision of exporting facilities for such a class would be, perhaps, the greatest boon of co-operation. It would give "a place in the sun" for the energetic, economic, ambitious fisherman, for whom there is in reality no outlet to-day under existing methods. It would not be a large class at the outset. It would grow slowly, I fear, but it would grow, all the same, and the whole Colony would be the better for it. A co-operative organization would have the most ample room for the capital and enterprise of the present day exporter. Conditions confer on exporters what I call a quasi-monopoly, but, as usual, with monopolies, it does them as much harm in one of their capacities as it does them good in another. They frequently profit nowadays by sales, but they lose continually by bad debts, and in the long run, they, in common with the whole people of the Colony would benefit by a changed system, resulting in the creation of a prosperous middle class, successful fishermen, exporters, of the produce of their own efforts.

CONCLUSION.

Commenting upon a Memorial recently presented to the Government by the United Fishermen, asking for the appointment of a Commission to acquire and disseminate information on marketing problems, the Advocate newspaper expressed great anger over the alleged implication that the people at large are at present unable to give an intelligent opinion upon these problems at a general election for members of the Assembly, and to give a mandate as to the way in which they shall be disposed of. Well, gentlemen, I have, as you hear, given considerable thought to the matter, and I freely admit that I cannot give an intelligent vote upon the problems. I want to know more, much more, about pooling, financing, marketing, distributing, and many other abstruse questions. How is it with you? Could you now vote with good judgement on free trade, co-operative marketing, or nationalization in regard to fish? Are we the only persons unqualified to exercise our franchise intelligently? 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