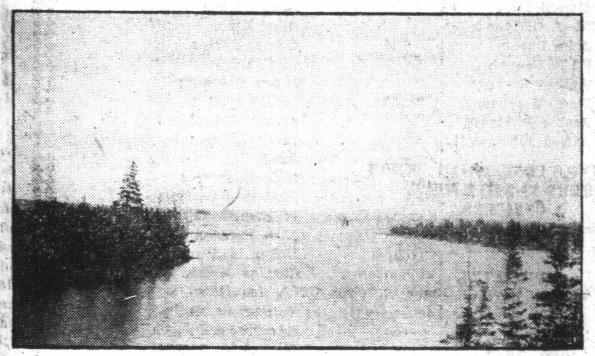
THE MAIL AND ADVOCATE, ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUN DLAND, DECEMBER 30, 1916-6.

W. F. Coaker--The Man And His Work. By a Friend

It was a certain Friday evening in themselves the friends of the fisher-penomonal and one stops and asks one exception, was returned with an It is presided over by a big man, for pamphlet, with surprising quickness said "Yes, we certainly need him April, 1909, I was passing a public men, that men were heartily sick of one's self the question-What of the overwhelming vote, Mr. Coaker is precisely that. A and yet with remarkable accuracy. A there." He is 'the greatest representhall in one of our largest northern it all. They flocked to hear W. F. organizer? What manner of man is he? self, who contested the strongest out- friend of mine who attended the re- hard-working, energetic man from ative of the people in the House tooutports. The building was lighted, Coaker in something of the same spir- William Ford Coaker needs no in- port Tory district Bonavista-being cent mammoth Convention at Cata- start to finish, he has communicated day. He is the best representative the evening was warm and all the it as they had gone to hear others. troduction to many readers of the returned with a vote never before ac- lina, said to me the other day, "It was these qualities to many of his em- Newfoundlander to-day. He thinks windows were open. It was evident But-they left with the assurance Advocate. He was born on the South corded any candidate in the country. an eye-opener. You may visit Coaker's ployees. The columns of the "Advo- with the masses. Swedenborg's theory that a public meeting of some sort that here was no imposter. Here was Side of St. John's on October 19th., The Constitution of the Union al- office in business hours day in and rate," plways at his disposal, are may be all right after all. Perhaps was in progress and casting about a man who felt as they felt, who un- 1871, the son of the late William lowed for commercial undertakings, day out, but you never see the man frequently availed of. His articles are W. F. Coaker sways the fishermen bemyself for an explanation I remember- derstood as they understood and who Coaker of Twillingate and Elizabeth consequently in 1911, Mr. Coaker at his highest until you see him at the clear and concise and when read, are cause they are, each one of them, a ed that Mr. W. F. Coaker was to ad-placed before them the opportunity Ford of St. John's. He left school at forméd the Union Trading Co. The head of a body of men." The first easily understood by the most illiter- little Coaker. Be that as it may, he



Coakerville Harbor.

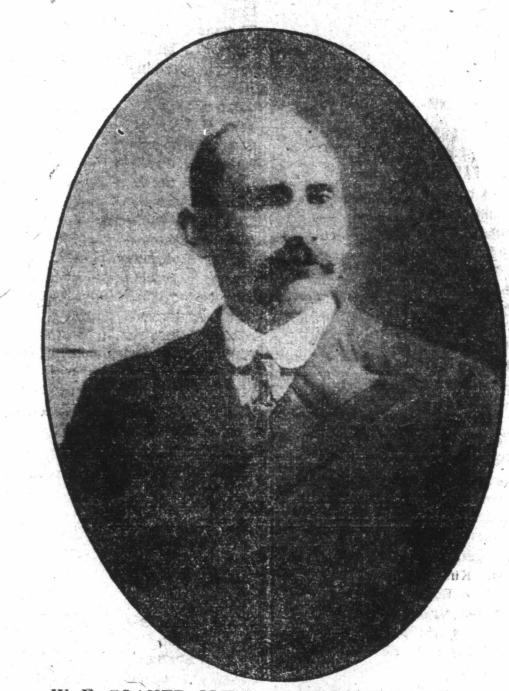
dress a meeting in that hall that to realize a vision which they had night, in the interests of the Fisher- held for many weary years of toil men's Protective Union. I had no de- and hardship; but a vision which, sire just then to enter the hail. It owing to the increase of the social was not difficult to hear from the out- political and commercial wrongs un side, so I went nearer and listened der which they groaned they felt just out of curiosity. I had enjoyed would never be realized. It was a the pratorical dispensations of Sir vision of independence, a vision of Robert Bond, I had been swayed by equal rights for all, a vision of freethe argumentative eloquence of Mr. dom. It acknowledged the rights of Morine, but there was something every man to have a soul of his own,

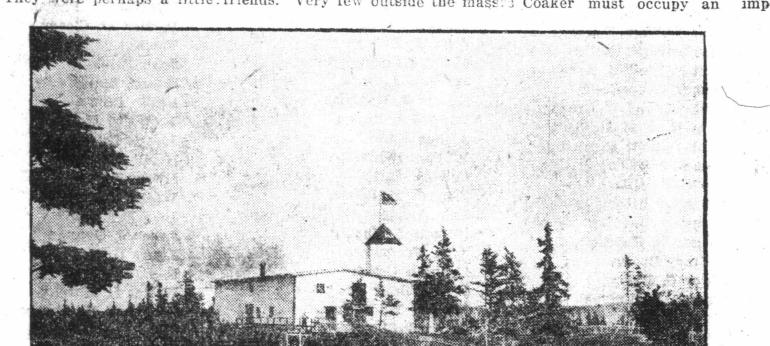
the early age of eleven and went to fishermen having full faith in this thought that strikes you then is ate. He exposes wrong-doing with has their universal and unbounded work; but later augmented his edu- marvellous man, readily bought up "Here is a leader of men." Undoubt- absolute fearlessness and challenges confidence. I said to him recently: cation by spending some time at the shares and Union stores were started edly he is. His giant personality anyone or anything not acting on the "Are you never, unexay when things General Protestant Academy under in the principal settlements. To-day overrules the whole. Men'forget their square. He thinks with lightning go wrong." His reply was: "I al-Principal Hancock, and at Bishop the Union operates thirty-five cash differences and recognize their com- rapidity. His pen seems to stick out ways do my best for the crowd"; and Feild College under Professor Black- stores, which did a business this year mon leader, their common friend. At directly from his brain, and his words the crowd knows it. When the hisall. At the age of 16 he was sent to of \$1,250,000; while fishermen have K---- recently he entered a crowded fall as thunder bolts. He detests graft tory of this country is written by an Herring Neck as the agent of Mc- invested \$300,000 in the Trading and Hall. The men had some question to and infidelity. He has few personal impartial pen, the name of W. F. Dougall & Templeton and on the dis- Export Companies. Both Companies ask him. They were perhaps a little friends. Very few outside the masses Coaker must occupy an important

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solution of the firm some four years will pay a ten per cent. dividend this later Mr. Coaker bought out the busi- year. The F.P.U. itself has \$20,000 ness, of which he was manager. In in funds accumulated through dis-1895 he gave up his business at Her- counts on tea, tobacco and butter ring Neck and went to live on a farm, The Export Co., formed in 1915, and which he had cleared on an island in capitalized at \$1,000,000, has for its the mouth of Dildo Run, now known object the buying and exporting diras Coakerville. In 1897 he again ect, local fishery products of all kinds. went to Herring Neck as Telegraph This year President Coaker has estab operator and post master, but the lished two additional Union compan Liberal Party being defeated at the ies, viz., the Union Shipbuilding Co. polls Mr. Coaker lost his position and and the Union Electric Light and





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the House. He goes to the bottom of counted at the next election, the coun-

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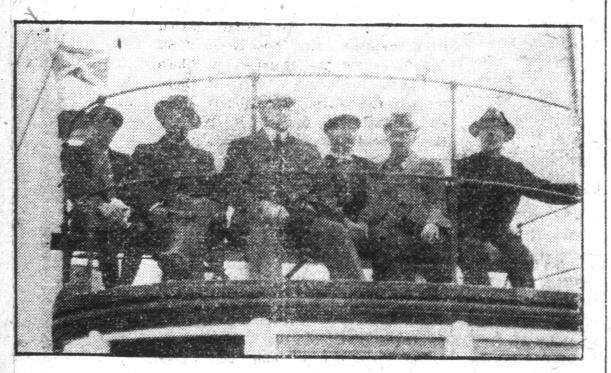
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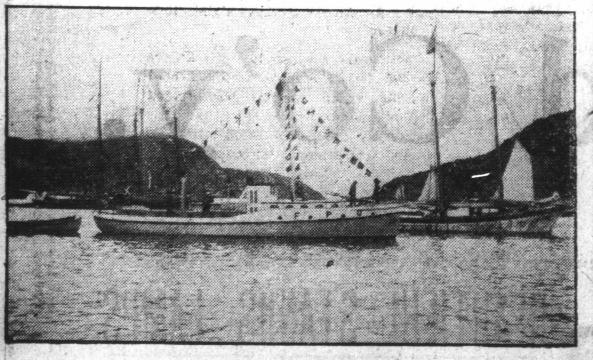
bor. Bu Good



Snap Shot taken off Grate's Cove, August 1st, 1916, by Pres. Coaker.

about the speech of the man I listened to think for himself. It held out to to then, which I had never experienced every man a square deal, a just rebefore. There was a sincerity about ward for his toil; and permitted him it which needed no cratory to gild it; a word in the affairs of his country there was such a calm confidence for the promiton of good, clean, gov-

in the hall, and for the first time lin- the organization their active support to Newfoundland in the same year itie towns of Bonavista, Catalina and tening to W. F. Coaker. The hall was and co-operation.



5

New F.P.U. Motor Yacht.

W. F. COAKER, M.H.A., PRESIDENT OF THE F.P.U.

about the remarks of the man that ernment, and so in furtherance of went back to Coakerville. In 1900 he Power Co. The object is to operate they needed no argument to impress that aim, men enrolled themselves as went to Canada and worked on a at Port Union. Catalina, a ship-buildthem further. I soon found my elf members of the F. P. U. and pledged sock farm at Danville. He returned ing yard, a marine dock and to light

In 1902 he became government oper- Ellisten. The Union Publishing Cond packed with men, yet, save for the What happened in that settlement ator at Lewisporte and late in the pany, which was formed in 1911, new

same year was transferred to Port publishes at its printing office, three Blandford, where he held the three newspapers, a morning, an evening positions of operator, sub-collector and a weekly Advocate. The Mornandp ost master. In 1904 he resigned ing Advocate, which only appeared those positions and in 1905 was at recently, has already become very Coakerville again; where he remain-popular. The circulation of these ed until the furtherance of his plans papers is away and above that of in connection with the development others in the Colony. of the F. P. U. necessitated his mov- It is the intention of the President

ing to St. John's. to have the Headquarters of the Union

From the brief biographical sketch activities at Port Union. Consequentforward to success. The has great file in from the lobbies. All is us and our children, socially, comgiven above, it is apparent that Mr. ly in May of this year a start was faith in the future of the Colony, interest then. Coaker, previous to the organization made at construction work, and at Hence his confidence in the success of He has done great good while in of his labours. When the votes are of the F. P. U., had an experience of the recent Convention the delegates his enterprises. men and things, which must were astonished at the progress al- Holding the Presidencies of all the every thing. I should say he has an try will be greatly disappointed if the

have been of incalculable value ready made. The premises and build- Companies affiliated with the F.P.U., analytic-synthetic brain. He ques- followers of Mr. Coaker do not repreto him in the great work he has under- ungs will be colossal. The breastwork he is necessarily a very busy man, tions and cross questions severely, sent a majority of the members of the taken and brought to such phenom- from which four piers will project. Yet he finds time for considerable He wants the truth. He demands the House of Assembly, for political power enal success. As a young man he had are 400 feet in length. The fish stores, writing and the interests of his con- truth and he gets it. I was listening must be forthcoming if many of the seen the greatest financial disasters provision and dry goods stores, a stituents are neglected. He : to a heated debate in the House last great reforms he stands for are to the country ever witnessed, he had bakery, a cooperage and dwelling at his desk from 8.30 a.m. till 6.30 p.m. session with a friend who is not the be realized. gone through the darkest days of our houses are all under construction. daily and often after tea. In the early most ardent of Coakerites. I said to In conclusion, I invite my readers

voice of the speaker, silence reigned that night eight years ago has hap- history. He felt that something was The electric plant will be finished in days of the Union he worked eighteen him after the debate: "Even if the supreme. What a contrast it was with pened since in hundreds of others, in wrong with the whole order of things the summer of 1917, and then ship- hours daily. In business he 'arrives Union never comes to anything great- to unite with me in wishing him a the tumultous scenes I had experime North, South and West of this social, commercial and political. He building will begin in earnest. The at conclusions quickly. He will er, or goes a step farther, don't you Happy and Prosperous New Year and ienced at meetings in that hall, in the Island, until to-day the F. P. U. has saw what that something was; and he Company has a small army of men digest a conversation, a letter, or a think we need W. F. Coaker?" He many of 'em. fall previous of 1908, and in that over 250 local councils, aggregating set himself with characteristic energy employed this winter in getting tim-



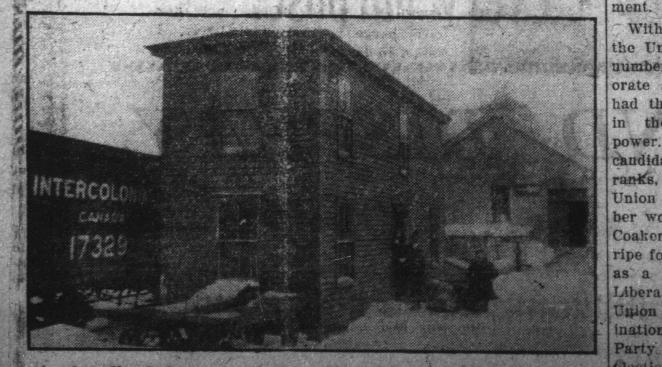
Barn at Coakerville.

He asked them to go understand him. Yet you cannot be place in its pages. He lives to-day in doubtful. ahead with their questions. They closely connected with the man with- the hearts of the masses as the surest hesitated. Finally some one said, out being impressed by his sincerity and greatest friend they've ever had. "You speak first, sir." Then the re- in word and action, much as you may And what of the future? He faces it quest became general. He acceded, dislike his policy and his methods. with the calm confidence that has alascended the platform and spoke for In the House of Assembly he is ways characterized him. He will suctwo hours. He electrified the audience, eagerly listened to. He is a good ceed. He invites success by his very After it was over he said, "Now for speaker, and has the talent of arous- confidence. Again the people are your questions." The answer was an ing great interest among his hearers, with him, He changes very little. He additional \$3,000 invested in Union Take an ordinary afternoon in the is as sincere and as unaffected now as Companies. He reassures the most House. Everything is quiet and som- when I first met him in a seine boat sceptical. He is calmly confident. He nolent. Members opposite are dozing, at C--- ten years ago. And so we meets conditions in a proper spirit. In Mr. Coaker rises, "Mr. Speaker," and leave him. Facing the future with the business he is progressive, farseeing, instantly, as if a galvanic battery were glorious record of the past eight years and astute. No Qains will be spared discharged, the House sits up. Meth- Right must prevail and Newto get the best to push his plans for- bers present lean forward. Others foundland will be a better place for



President Coaker's Home at Coakervine.

same spring of 1909. For two hours a membership of 22,500, with its in- to the task of changing conditions; ber of the best kind for the building he held that audience spellbound. fluence felt in every electoral district and to usher in for the fishermen and of vessels from 50 tons and upwards. Men had gone there out of curiosity in the country. It is the greatest labourers, for the masses of New- The Union Trading Company already and nothing more. So many impost rs organization of its kind the country foundland, an age of independence, an possesses two fine vessels, the "Hickhad appeared before who claimed has ever seen. Its success has been era of justice, a day of clean govern- man" and "Paragon." These vessels



Newfoundland Government Fost Office Shack at North Sydney.

have been constantly in use the past

With keen foresight, he felt that year conveying freight for Union the Union, strong as it might be in stores to and from Headquarters, and numbers, could do very little to ameli- they have saved thousands of dollars orate and better conditions, until it to the Company.

had through its own representatives Briefly, this is the record of the in the Assembly, direct political work of W. F. Coaker in eight years. power. Accordingly in 1913, nine The organization of the F.P.U. was in candidates, selected from the Union itself a stupendous task. But the ranks, contested districts in which the time was ripe when Coaker came. Union had been organized. The num- Every device that could be got up by ber would have been greater, but Mr. party machinery, party heelers and Coaker, feeling that the time was not grafters, was tried to deter him and ripe for the Union to face the country wreck his plans. But he persevered. as a party, joined forces with the He was strong in the confidence that Liberal Parix, and consequently some he was fighting for the masses. He Union candidates gave up their non- trusted the people and they responded inations to make room for Liberal to that trust. If no other thing exist-Party candidates. The result of the ed to-day but the F.P.U. that organiflection for the Union was a glorious zation in itself would be his everlastsucess. Every Union candidates, with ing monument. It is a big organization,

