Pelagic Sealing in the North Pacific Ocean

IN he House of Commons on Thursday, February 27h, Mr. Wm. Sloan, M.P., delivered a very interesting speech on the subject of the Canadian Pelagic Sealing Operations in the North Pacific Ocean. He spoke in part as follows:

This question is one which has long been a source of irritation and conflicting interest between the United States and Canada; the United States for years endeavoring to control and assert jurisdiction over the high seas in the interests of the seal monopoly on the Pribyloff islands; Canada, on the other hand, following what she claimed for her citizens to be a legitimate and honorable calling in the pursuit of the fur seal at sea.

The Canadian sealers, known as the Canadian pelagic sealers, have followed with varying success their hazardous occupation, severely handicapped by the persistent efforts to drive them off the Pacific ocean. They have been interfered with and molested from the very commencement of their enterprise. Seizures, arrests, imprisonment, confiscation and other high-handed acts were of common occurrence on the part of the United States, assisted by Russia.

Great Britain strongly protested against the treatment of her Canadian subjects, claiming for pelagic sealing that it was "the legitimate development of the original method of taking seals practised by the Indians on the coast of America." Great Britain further claimed for her subjects "the right to come and go upon the high seas without let or hindrance, and take therefrom at will and pleasure the produce of the sea." Russia and the United States paid substantial sums to Great Britain for assuming to treat sealing in the open sea as "piracy."

Restrictive regulations have also been imposed upon our sealers, but without having the effect desired. Recently, however, Japan, not being subject to any such restrictions, has engaged in pelagic sealing. This new condition is one which I propose to discuss later in my remarks, but before doing so I desire to give a brief review of the main incidents connected with this industry in which we are so directly interested.

The historical features in connection with this question date from the exploration and discoveries of Behring, who was dispatched by Russia in the year 1728 on a voyage of discovery in the North Pacific Ocean. It was not until 1786, however, that the important discovery of the Pribyloff seal islands was made by Russia. From that time on and up to the date of the purchase of Alaska by the United States, Russia enjoyed a practical monopoly of the fur-seal industry. Following the acquisition of Alaska by the United States in 1867, legislation was adopted on the 1st of July, 1870, under which, the Alaska Commercial Company secured a lease for a term of twenty years from the 1st day of May, 1870, for the exclusive right to take seals on the Pribyloff islands. Prior to the transfer of this territory from Russia, the seal hunting conducted by British subjects was practically confined to the West Coast Indians, but about that time, and for some years after, the business began to attract attention and some attempt was made to hunt seals by the method now known as pelagic sealing. About the years 1878 and 1879 several vessels were engaged therein; the number was gradually increased, although the operations were confined to the North Pacific ocean, outside of Behring sea. It was not until about the year 1885 that anything like a concerted movement to Behring sea commenced, although in previous years some vessels had entered these waters with interference occurring to, but two or three United States vessels, which approached close to the islands. The attention of the lessees of the Pribyloff islands was attracted to this menace of their hitherto practical monopoly of the sealing business in this locality, and strenuous efforts were made by them to discourage and prevent the growing industry of pelagic sealing.

In the summer of 1886 the United States government for the first time sought to exercise as against foreign nations exclusive jurisdiction over Behring sea, outside the territorial limit (three miles,) by the seizure of three British sealing schooners and the warning out of a fourth. Great Britain immediately remonstrated against these extra territorial claims and reserved all rights to compensation.

In 1887, while diplomatic correspondence was proceeding, six additional British sealers were seized and one was ordered not to enter Behring sea by United States authorities. All the vessels seized were condemned, and the masters and mates were fined and imprisoned. Renewed protests were filed and diplomatic correspondence resulted, having in view the settlement of the main question as to the right of the United States to territorial claims in the Behring sea.

In consequence of pending negotiations, no attempt was made during 1888 to prevent British vessels from participating in the seal fishery of Behring sea.

In the year 1889, negotiations not having resulted in a satisfactory solution of the question at issue, the United States government issued a proclamation against sealing, and five British vessels were seized in, and three ordered out of Behring sea.

A conference was held at Washington in the spring of 1890, resulting in a proposed convention providing for a mixed commission of experts to report on regulations on land and at sea, pending which a spring and fall close season was to be observed on land and at sea north of a line to be drawn; the pelagic sealers to be prohibited from approaching within ten miles of the islands, etc. This proposal was eventually rejected by United States, and orders were issued for the seizure of log books and seal skins of vessels found sealing in the Behring sea. Great Britain formally protested.

During the pendency of negotiations, for the purpose of avoiding differences and with a view of promoting a settlement of the questions existing between the two governments touching their respective rights in Behring sea, and for the preservation of the seal species, a modus vivendi was effected on the 15th June, 1891, by which it was agreed that Great Britain should, on the one hand, until May, 1892, prohibit seal killing in that part of Behring sea lying eastward of the line of demarcation described in the treaty of 1867 between the United States and Russia, and that the United States should, on the other hand, prohibit seal killing for the same period in the same part of Behring sea and on the shores and islands thereof, in excess of a stipulated number—7,500—for food for the natives. This prohibition was strongly protested against, and the claims were filed, which resulted in the payment by Her Majesty's government of compensation to the sealers for loss that season through insufficient notice, to the amount of $100,234.

On the 29th of February, 1892, a treaty between Great Britain and the United States providing for arbitration respecting the seal fisheries in the Behring sea, was signed, and it was deemed expedient that a similar arrangement to the modus vivendi of 1891 should obtain during the period necessary to secure the award of the arbitrators. Consequently a formal convention was concluded on the 18th April, 1892, which effected such a purpose, and under which the sealers were debarred from entering Behring sea during the sealing season of 1892 and 1893.

Thus forced from the eastern half of Behring sea in 1892, the sealers, instead of returning to Victoria, from the Aleutian passes and abandoning their voyages exploited the Asiatic waters, and six were seized and four were interfered with by the Russian authorities.

During 1892 the steamer "Coquitalam" was chartered by the sealers to convey their coast catch home and to supply them for a continuance of their voyage in Asiatic waters. Before she had fulfilled her mission and after she had made a few transfers of provisions and collected about 6,000 skins all of which took place outside the territorial limit in the North Pacific ocean, she was seized by the United States authorities for unloading cargo within four leagues of the coast. This case was defended in the United States courts, until finally a decision was given adverse to the United States, resulting in claims amounting to $107,446.14. This claim has not yet been paid.

In 1893, growing out of the Russian seizures of the year previous, Great Britain entered into an agreement with the Russian government, providing protective zones of 30 miles around the Russian seal islands and ten miles along the Russian coast, from which limits the Canadian sealers were debarred. During the year the award of the Paris arbitration was reached. In the first five questions of right which had been raised, the claim to any extra territorial jurisdiction in Behring sea by the United States was disallowed, and the second branch of the award provided concurrent regulations for the protection of the seal fishery.

The operations of the pelagic sealers during the year 1894 were conducted under new conditions imposed by the Paris award and legislation of the respective governments for its application. At the outset the prevailing opinion in Canada, especially among the sealers themselves, was that the restrictions were severe and the legislation unnecessarily penal. These views were corroborated by the United States authorities connected with the commission, who were of the opinion that pelagic sealing could no longer proceed with profit under the new condition of affairs. Although the catch that year proved to be the largest in the history of the industry, being 95,048, 57,000 skins were taken in Asiatic waters, which number alone was larger than the total taken in all waters of any previous year except the one immediately preceding. This year the supplementary argument for the sealing up of implements during the close season, entered into by exchange of notes between Her Majesty's government and that of the United States, was put in force, but instead of protecting the sealers from unnecessary interference as intended, it proved only another excuse for seizure, and two vessels, the "Wanderer" and the "Favorite," were seized for the possession each of one unsealed gun on board.

In 1895, for reasons previously explained, Great Britain was unable to agree to the renewal of the arrangement of sealing up of arms, and complaint was made of the excessive interference and boarding of vessels. This year strenuous efforts were made by the United States government to bring about a revision of the Paris regulations, the inefficiency of which it was stated was shown by the results in 1894, and the closure of Behring sea from America to Russia was asked and a resort to a quadripartite convention, including Russia and Japan.

In 1896 practically the same proposals were renewed, to which Great Britain was unable to accede. But in view of conflicting and indiscriminate contentions, touching the effect of pelagic sealing, scientific inquiries on the islands and at sea were undertaken by Great Britain and Canada, as well as by the United States. This year also a convention for the assessment of the claims growing out of the seizures previous to arbitration was signed, and the work of inquiry thereinto begun.

An adjustment of Great Britain's claims to compensation followed, the award of $437,145.44 rendered by the claims commissioners in December, 1897, after full and exhaustive examination of witnesses by counsel on both sides, thus finally disposing of United States obligations attending unlawful seizures of British vessels in the open sea.

In 1897 continued proposals for supplementary arrangements for the sealming up of firearms during the close season in Behring sea and the examination of seal skins at Victoria by the United States officials were received, Her Majesty's government finally consenting to the sealing up of arms. This year the schooner "Kate" was seized in Behring sea, two fur-seal skins being found on board bearing evidence of having been shot. She was afterwards released, as she did not have any guns on board.

The sealers continued to press for relaxation of the Paris regulations, suggesting the reduction of the protective zone from 60 to 30 miles and the permission of pelagic sealing in the Pacific until 30th of June instead 1st of May, the protection of vessels from unnecessary boarding and searching and consequent delay, and some other amendments in the regulations to prevent unnecessary seizure, while the United States government insisted for the revision thereof looking to greater restriction.

The United States proposed that the government of Great Britain and the United States agree at once to a modus vivendi providing for the complete suspension of the killing of seals in all the waters of the Pacific ocean and Behring sea for one year from the 31st December, 1897, and for suspension of all killing of seals on the Pribyloff islands for the same period.

To this proposition Canada was unable to agree.

By the terms of the Paris award, the regulations for the government of the seal fishery were to be subjected to a new examination every five years, so as to enable both interested governments to consider whether, in the light of past experience there was occasion for any modification thereof.

The year 1898 concluded the first five-year term of the regulation; the time, therefore, had arrived for any revision that might be considered necessary. The representations made to the Canadian government by those engaged in the sealing industry in British Columbia were to the effect that no modifications of these regulations should be agreed to in the nature of further limitations to the business, but that, on the contrary, the successful prosecution of the industry demanded that the existing restrictions should be curtailed alike as to the close season around the Pribyloff islands.

Summarized, these restrictions are: Under the regulations provided by arbitration and the arrangement entered into with Russia, as well as under admittde principles of international law, the sealers are today operating under the following prohibitions:

1. They are excluded at all times from the three-mile limit along the coast of the United States in the north Pacific ocean;

2. They may not at any time approach the Pribyloff islands within a zone of 60 miles;

3. They may not at any time use firearms in the Behring sea.

4. They may not use rifles, but are confined to shot-guns in the open season, in all that water area situated north of the 35th degree of north latitude, and eastward to the 180th degree of longitude from Greenwich till it strikes the water boundary described in the treaty of 1867 and following that line up to Behring straits, comprising approximately 5,000,000 square miles;

5. They are precluded from using nets or explosives in the above area;

6. Within the above area they cannot take seals in any manner whatever between 1st day of May and the 31st day of July;

7. They may not take seals within a zone of 30 miles around the Kommandorski islands and Copper islands.

8. They may not take seals within a zone of 10 miles along any of the Russian coasts on the mainland in the North Pacific ocean, and these restrictions have been extended by legislation to give them effect and application.

The Behring sea question was also one of those that received the consideration of the Joint High Commission, which formally opened at Quebec, August 23, 1898. A proposal was submitted, in effect that pelagic sealing should be prohibited in North Pacific ocean, and that the government of the United States pay to Great Britain a certain sum in full compensation for the relinquishment of the rights of her subjects to engage in sealing in that ocean. This proposal was not favored by Canada, as it was felt that our present rights should not be further relinquished.

Up to the year 1908, pelagic sealing had been recognized mainly as a Canadian industry, but during this year, as a result of a bounty of $10 per ton given by the Japanese government to encourage the development of the deep-sea fisheries, including pelagic sealing, there were nineteen vessels flying the Japanese flag sealing off the Japanese coast. Since that time the Japanese operations have extended over the North Pacific ocean, without regard to the regulations imposed upon Canadian subjects, with the result that their untrammelled operations are proving dangerous to Canadian interests. Recent despatches from Japan state that there are now some thirty pelagic sealers under the Japanese flag, who are operating without interference or restriction.

This point was emphasized and brought very forcibly to the attention of the people of Canada by the seizure of the Canadian schooner "Carlotta G. Cox" by the United States revenue cutter "Rush" on May 29th, 1907, while in north latitude 59 degrees 10 minutes and west longitude 141 degrees 19 minutes. This locality is known as the Fairweather Grounds, and the point of seizure was made for an alleged violation of the regulations of the Paris Tribunal of Arbitration, the offence claimed being sealing in the closed season, namely, May 1 to July 31.

The humiliating feature of this may be more fully understood when I state that there were in that immediate vicinity, when the seizure was made, no less than five Japanese sealing schooners pursuing their calling unmolested. The only schooner seized was the one flying the British flag. Further comment upon this incident would appear unnecessary.

Such, in brief Mr. Speaker, is an outline of the history of pelagic sealing up to the present time.

I have referred briefly to the treaty between Great Britain and the United States for the arbitration of the seal fisheries in the Behring sea, signed at Washington 29th February, 1892, and I wish to consider the last paragraph of Article VII. of this treaty, reading as follows:

"The high contracting parties furthermore agree to co-operate in securing the adhesion of the other powers to such regulations."

Great Britain in the outline of argument presented to the Tribunal of Arbitration was also emphatic on this point at this time, as on page 9, British case, I find the following:

"Great Britain has throughout been favorably disposed to the adoption of general measures of control of the fur-seal fishery, should these be found necessary or desirable with a view to the protection of the fur-seals, provided that such measures be equitable and formed on just grounds of common interest and that the adhesion of other powers be secured, as a guarantee of their continued and impartial execution."

Again on page 9 of the argument of Great Britain:

"So long as the claim of the United States to impose regulations on pelagic sealing is based on the assertions of a legal right, that claim is strenuously opposed, and the right as strenuously denied.

"But when the question is put on the lower and practical plane of common benefit to all the nations interested, on the recognition of the right of the pelagic sealers as well as of that of the island sealers, then the British government will cordially co-operate in giving effect to such measures as may be found necessary for the preservation of the fur seals.

"Should any regulations be the outcome of this arbitration it is confidently expected by Her Majesty's government that they will be such as not to protect only the United States in the manner in which their present contention urges, but to protect an industry in which all the nations of the world have an interest.

"It were useless to make regulations which should bind only the citizens and subjects of the United States and Great Britain. As in the case of the Jan Mayen fisheries, so in the case of the Pacific fisheries, the subjects of all the nations who now participate in them, or who may be reasonably expected to do so, ought to be equally bound."

With special reference to this, I am going to read to the House some correspondence which passed between the two governments interested and the other powers also, and propose to make some comment upon the apparent indifference displayed in securing this adhension.

* * * * * * * *

The treaty between Great Britain and Japan, ratified July 17, 1904, marked, as has been recently stated in the House by the Hon. the Postmaster-General, "a new era in the history of Japan." The negotiations leading up to this treaty occupied months, during the very time that the Behring Sea question was prominent, and although I have read the published correspondence which took place between Great Britain and Japan at this time in reference to this treaty I fail to find where Great Britain had ever suggested, much less urged, upon Japan the desirability of her adherance to the Paris award. On the contrary, although the United States had written Great Britain as to the urgency with special reference to Japan and Russia of despatching the identic note on May 7, and again on May 22, it was not until after the treaty with Japan, signed on July 17, that any attention was paid by Great Britain to the request of the United States. Japan at that time would, no doubt, have readily consented to respect the regulations adopted for the protection of the fur seals if requested to do so by Great Britain, rather than jeopardize the treaty which was to give her a new status in the world's nations.

It is difficult to understand Great Britain's failure to protect the Canadian pelagic sealers and the regulations for the protection of the fur seal with so favorable an opportunity presented, especially when I remind you that she was emphatic on this point both in the case, and in the argument presented to the tribunal.

The United States also concluded an important treaty of trade and commerce with Japan on November 22, 1894. But the United States did not exhibit the aggressive spirit which we generally associate and credit her with possessing. They, too, appeared to have been as indifferent as Great Britain in securing Japan's adhesion to the identic note.

The Hon. Elihu Root, the present secretary of state, has stated on many occasions his friendly interest in Canada, but by exacting from Canada a strict adherance to the regulations for the protection of the fur seal, in view of the inability of the United States to make the same operative as against Japan, it cannot in any sense be construed as sympathetic to our interests.

Especially is this so when it is apparent that while the United States is patrolling over 5,000,000 square miles of the North Pacific ocean as against the Canadian sealer, yet as I will show they are evidently powerless to protect even the Pribyloff Islands and their territorial waters there from the Japanese sealers, who have taken thousands of seals within the three mile limit around their islands and actually landed and killed seals on these same islands proving conclusively to that extent that the concurrent regulations are now useless and their enforcement against Canada by the United States is inconsistent to say the least.

It is doubtful, at this time, if the people of the United States would be prepared to concur fully in a policy which discriminated against the Canadian sealers and in favor of the Japanese sealers.

Japan being an ally of Great Britain, it might even be reasonable to suppose that she would respect the regulations entered into and which were binding on the subjects of Great Britain. But Japan, on the contrary, is ignoring those regulations entirely, while British subjects are laboring under the disabilities imposed upon them by the regulations which I have previously summarized.

When the attention of Japan was called to the report that efforts would be made by the Canadian Pelagic Sealers to evade the regulations by the use of the Japanese flag, prompt measures were taken to prevent this, and it was characterized as "dishonorable business" and "designing schemes contrived to evade the law." I do not know if the report was well founded or otherwise. It is now immaterial. But the attitude of Japan was and is that it was dishonorable for Canadian sealers to use the Japanese flag to evade the regulations; but it was not dishonorable for the Japanese flag to ignore the regulations. It was dishonorable for the Canadian sealer to evade the regulations; but it was not dishonorable for the Japanese sealer to ignore the regulations. It was dishonorable for a subject to evade the disabilities imposed upon him by his nation; but it was not dishonorable for the subject of another nation to take advantage of these disabilities. It is, however, apparently perfectly legitimate for the subjects of Japan to not only set aside the regulations but to even invade also the territory and territorial waters of the United States in their pursuit of the fur-seal, as I have just pointed out.

The advent of the Japanese sealers operating without restriction has materially decreased the catches of our sealers as the following figures would indicate:

1905 Average skins per vessel....725
1906 Average skins per vessel....596
1907 Average skins per vessel....359

For instance, this can be more readily understood when it is remembered that there is a 60-mile zone around Pribyloff Islands which Canadian sealers may not enter, and outside of this zone they are confined to the use of spears. The Japanese sealers operating within the zone area and using fire-arms make the seal more wary and impossible to approach within spearing distance. The final result is not difficult to foresee. This government is in no wise responsible for the bringing into existence of these discriminating restrictions, but I trust, Mr. Speaker, that this government will not be saddled with the responsibility of their further continuance, and that an earnest effort will be made for an arrangement of a more equitable and satisfactory character.

What I contend for, is this, Mr. Speaker, that so long as unrestricted Pelagic Sealing is to be recognized, as in the case of Japan, then Canada must have equal rights.

Mr. Sproule: Would it not have been an opportune time to make representations before the treaty was finally accepted by Canada?

Mr. Sloan: I think I made that clear, that it was done on the part of Great Britain. Some proposals have been submitted by the United States looking to a settlement of the question. One of the first was in the form of a Bill, introduced in the United States House of Representatives in 1892, which provided that if the President should fail to secure a suggested modus vivendi with Great Britain, then authority be granted for the destruction of all seal life on the islands, except 10,000 females and 1,000 males. A Bill of a similar nature was introduced by Mr. Dingley in 1894. To my mind this proposal was unworthy even of criticism.

In 1895-6 the United States made strong efforts to get the other Powers, viz.: Great Britain, Japan and Russia with herself into a conference, to be known as the quadripartite convention. From the fact that Russia and Japan being owners of seal islands, and having already expressed a desire for the extension of the Paris regulations to the whole of the North Pacific ocean north of the 35 degree of north latitude, and their interests at this time being identical with those of the United States, it can readily be seen that Great Britain acted wisely in not committing herself and her Canadian subjects to what would have most assuredly have resulted in a further abridgement of our privileges on the Pacific ocean.

In 1898-9, originating at the Joint High Commission, was a proposal to prohibit pelagic sealing; the United States government agreeing to compensate in full the pelagic sealers. If, as is understood, this proposal meant the abandonment of our birthright for all time to kill seals at sea, then, Mr. Speaker, it is one which this government could not well entertain.

In the speech from the Throne at the opening of this session of parliament it was announced that an agreement had been arrived at to submit, in conjunction with Newfoundland, to the Hague Tribunal for interpretation Article I. of the treaty of 1818.

I have no intention of making further allusion to this proposal at this time, other than to say that any abridgement of Article I. of the treaty of 1818 may have serious results to our fisheries on the Pacific coast, as it is by virtue of this treaty that our fishery rights are secured and maintained.

W. F. Maclean: Does the treaty refer to the seal fisheries?

Mr. Sloan: What treaty?

Mr. W. F. Maclean: The treaty of 1818.

Mr. Sloan: I have not so contended. The submission, however, of the fur-seal fisheries, which I have been discussing, to the Hague Tribunal would I think, be received with favor. And I would suggest the total prohibition of killing seals, both on land and sea for a term of years, or until such time as the various herds had recovered from their present depleted condition. This would involve the compensation of the pelagic sealers by their respective governments.

When the herds had again recuperated the killing could then be supervised and the skins divided pro rata among the four nations interested until such time as they had been recouped for the amounts expended on compensation. The other maritime Powers, in the meantime, agreeing to the above proposal. Afterwards, if desirous of sharing in the industry, they could not be denied.

The proposal will preserve to Canada equal rights to the seas with the other nations of the world and relieve us of our present disabilities.

Unless commercial and monetary considerations are eliminated and some such arrangement entered into, there will in a few years be nothing left for which to negotiate. It is fruitless to rely upon concurrent regulations as between individual nations, or even groups of nations, for a settlement of this question. The only permanent solution, in my judgment, is the adoption of a universal law of nations and the Hague conference is the tribunal to give it a definite expression.

With further reference to this, Mr. Whitlaw Reid, United States ambassador to Great Britain, on the eve of his departure to London, in publicly speaking on matters relating to the two countries is reported to have said:

"We have a little list of other matters unadjusted betwen our two countries. They relate chiefly to Canada. Peoples who have large interests along three thousand miles of frontier, as well as around the globe, must constantly have outstanding questions; but we rely upon the fairness of our Canadian friends, headed by the accomplished statesman, whose services they enjoy as premier, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, to get most of them equitably adjusted between ourselves, and what we cannot settle the Hague conference surely can."

Because, Mr. Speaker, we refuse to recognize the property rights to the fur-seal in the open sea, which is claimed by the United States, our attitude has been referred to by them as "unneighborly, in that it is destroying a valuable industry of our government."

We have in Canada a parallel case in the important salmon fisheries of the Fraser river, which have been for many years recognized as a Canadian industry.

Yearly, we have the runs of salmon coming in from the ocean through the Straits of Fuca and ascending the Fraser to the spawning grounds. During recent years the United States fishermen have in their territorial waters trapped these salmon in extravagant quantities with the result that it has almost destroyed our industry. And, although these salmon spawn in Canadian territory and are returning to Canadian rivers when caught, we do not characterize the action of the Americans as unneighborly; but on the contrary we are adopting more stringent regulations upon our fishermen. We are yearly spending increasingly large sums even in artificial propagation and taking every means possible to preserve the industry to the benefit, not only of Canada, but of the United States.

Before resuming my seat I shall give briefly some figures showing the commercial importance of the fur-seal industry under discussion. The figures submitted are also taken from the report on the Alaskan fur-seal Fisheries, made 31st August, 1906, by Edwin W. Sims, from the most authentic data obtainable:

The total number killed on the Pribyloff Islands from the years 1868 to 1906, inclusive, was 2,464,248.

The revenue paid to the government of the United States by lessees was $9,311,054.77.

Price obtained for raw skins, (London sales) was $36,935,639.

The figures relating to pelagic sealing for the same years and from the same source are as follows:

Total number pelagic catch in the North Pacific ocean, 877,331.

Total price obtained for the raw skins (London sales) was $10,307,359.

These figures do not include fur-seals killed by Russia on the Kommandorsky islands, Copper islands and Robben reef, or by Japan on the Kurile islands.

Having referred to the depleted condition of the seal herd frequenting Pribyloff islands during the breeding season, a few further remarks might also be of interest.

When the United States took possession of these islands in 1868 the approximate size of the seal herd was 2,000,000. It will be seen from these figures that the herd had not been depleted by Russia; Russia's average killing for the previous ten years being 35,039, while during the first year of the United States' possession, no less than 242,000 seals were killed.

The exclusive lease given to the Alaska Commercial Company, for twenty years allowed this company to kill 100,000 seals per annum. On the expiration of their lease in 1890 it was estimated that the herd had decreased to 900,000.

In 1890 an exclusive lease was given to the North American Commercial Company, with restrictive regulations—as to the number of seals to be killed. This lease expires in 1910.

The last estimate of the herd was made in 1906 and it is given as under 200,000. At the present rate of decrease the herd will be practically extinct in five years.

I have shown that Canadian pelagic sealers are victims of discrimination, fatal to their industry.

I have shown the value to the world of the fur-seal fisheries of the North Pacific ocean.

I have pointed out the urgency of action being taken to save this valuable animal from total extinction.

I have suggested the Hague Tribunal as competent and unbiased to deal with this question.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, the destruction of the fur-seal species would be unwarranted; furthermore it would be an unnatural, immoral and unpatriotic policy.

The protection and conservation of the fur-seals in the North Pacific ocean is an obligation due posterity by the nations of today who are directly responsible and directly interested.

This question is not one that can be settled on lines of selfish consideration. It can only be settled by compromise and generous broad patriotic statesmanship.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier: Mr. Speaker, I did not quite follow my hon. friend's reference to the treaty of 1818.

Mr. Sloan: In reply to the right hon. gentleman, I stated that as the treaty of 1818 applies also to the Pacific coast, I claim that any abridgement of that treaty would affect equally the Atlantic and Pacific fisheries.

The Great White Plague

At least the public seems to be thoroughly aroused not only to the danger of tuberculosis, but to the fact that this danger may be avoided, says the Toronto Mail and Empire. Until a few years ago, the man upon whom consumption had laid its icy grip was held to be beyond human power. He was doomed. He met the disease "lying down," so to speak, and made little or no mental resistance to its ravages. We may thank God that consumption is no longer a terror, and that every victim not actually in extremis has a good fighting chance for his life. The more widespread becomes the idea that consumption can be fought like typhoid or influenza, the fewer the deaths will be, because Hope is the worst enemy of the disease.

But although consumption can be prevented, and can be cured as certainly as can any other malady, it needs special weapons. These the people must provide; and the purpose of the campaign that is being patriotically carried on by many leading citizens is to show us what these weapons are, and how they are to be used. Special credit is due to Judge Barron, of Stratford, who seems to have dedicated himself to the work of rousing the people. His agitation has borne fruit in two or three resolutions on the subject that the Ontario Legislature will consider, and in meetings like that held in the Royal Alexandra Theatre on Wednesday night. Difference of opinion there is as to ways and means, but we believe there is no difference of opinion as to the necessity for some advanced legislation, possibly along the lines suggested in Mr. Downey's bill.

If we are about to enter on an era in which consumption will be as rare in Ontario as is leprosy, it is fitting that we should offer a national salute to the great German who more than any man has made that era possible. It was in 1882 that Dr. Robert Koch announced to the world his cardinal discovery that tuberculosis is due to inoculation by the tubercle bacillus. Before this principle was accepted physicians had been groping in the dark, and the proportion of cures to cases was pitifully small. Nor did Koch induce the profession to accept his conclusions without a long, fierce battle. In fact, the hopelessness of medical men was a faithful reflection of the hopelessness of the laity; but gradually Koch forced hope and cheer into them, and now it is unlikely that any capable medical man does not unreservedly accept Koch's prime discovery.

The discovery of the cause by no means ended Koch's interest in tuberculosis. On the contrary, he spent many years in experimenting for a cure. From the beginning he worked upon the belief that some product of the bacillus would be found to constitute a specific for the disease itself. Finally he was able to announce the discovery of tuberculin. It was supposed that injections of this preparation would check the disease. By the time Koch discovered tuberculin he was generally recognized as the world's greatest authority on the subject. Therefore nearly everybody unhesitatingly accepted tuberculin. It was hastily prescribed in thousands of hopeless cases, and by thousands of medical men who were swept along by enthusiasm. Here and there it succeeded, but in so many cases it failed that there came a great reaction against it. The pendulum swept back from truth as far as enthusiasm had carried it forward; and for years no one prescribed tuberculin. Nevertheless, in the opinion of many experts, tuberculin remains today a living force.

It is not the specific that was at first hoped, nor is it the delusion that later it was called. Some medical men have cautiously used it for fifteen years, and with the most satisfactory results. Beraneck and Von Behring have improved it; and the latter in tulose claims to have a serum that will render one immune from tuberculosis. It is probable that this announcement was prematurely made; but the weight of evidence goes to show that Von Behring no more than Koch is deserving of the general condemnation that the apparent failure of his remedy drew forth. Much, too, may come of the work of Wright and others with reference to the opsonic index.

What we commonly call medicines are considered of little use as weapons against tuberculosis. Sunlight and fresh air remain the most powerful curative agencies, as they are also the surest preventives. Strengthening food, warm clothing, plenty of fresh air, and no over-exertion—these should be the watchwords in the war upon the White Plague. Not in a single fight is the enemy vanquished, but in a long fought war, in which the struggle goes on night and day. Statistics prove that in Canada, Great Britain and the United States the mortality from tuberculosis is being steadily reduced. A great forward movement will stamp it out, and another generation may know it not.

The Selection of Our Companions

The education of character is very much a question of models; we mould ourselves so unconsciously after the character, manners, habits, and opinions of those who are about us. Good rules may do much, but models do far more, for in the latter we have instruction in action—wisdom at work. Good admonition and bad example only build with one hand to pull down with the other. Hence the great importance of exercising great care in the selection of companions, especially in youth. There is a magnetic affinity in young persons which insensibly tends to assimilate them to each other's likeness. Mr. Edgeworth was so strongly convinced that from sympathy they involuntarily imitated or caught the tone of the company they frequented, that he held it to be of the most essential importance that they should be taught to select the very best models. "No company or good company," was his motto. Lord Collingwood, writing to a young friend, said: "Hold it as a maxim, that you had better be alone than in mean company. Let your companions be such as yourself or superior; for the worth of a man will always be ruled by that of his company." It was a remark of the famous Dr. Sydenham that everybody some time or other would be the better or worse for having but spoken to a good or a bad man. As Sir Peter Lely made it a rule never to look at a bad picture if he could help it, believing that when he did, so his pencil caught a taint from it, so, whoever chooses to gaze often upon a debased specimen of humanity and to frequent his society, cannot help gradually assimilating himself to that sort of model.—From Self-Help.

White linen gowns showing a touch of color are considered smarter than all white this season. Handsome white linen gowns and suits are made up with considerable color in hems, collar, cuffs, belts, etc. Often these so-called hems on lower edge of skirt will be a foot or more deep. Pale blue linen so trimmed would be an effective suit. The skirt could be circular, and the coat, in cutaway style, quite long and much cut away in the front. Exquisite hand embroidered covered the connection of hems and the material.