

# PRESIDENT COAKER'S ABLE SPEECH

## On the Amendments to the Fishery Bill

**Refuses to Accept Inteferece of Dumping Chamber---Asserts Economic Candle Burning Both Ends---Unless Conditions Change Financial Disaster Inevitable---Business Men Badly Trained, Spend \$10,000 Where Fathers Spent \$2,000---Export Co. Plans for Uplift Conception Bay Fishermen---Says People Will Demand a Term of Union Government in Order to Initiate Essential Changes and Reforms and to Develop the Fisheries**

Mr. Speaker, I rise for the purpose of seconding the proposition of the honourable member for Bonavista, Mr. Morine, regarding the amendments made by the Upper House; and I am strongly of the opinion that if these amendments were accepted to the Bill the worth of the Bill would be destroyed. It would be a useless thing and inoperative and would not fulfil the purpose for which we intended it in any way, and it would be much better not to have any Bill at all than to have a Bill on the lines laid down by those amendments. One of the surprising things about the conduct of the Upper House as regards this Bill and the amendments is the somersault of some of the members in connection with the clause forming the Board to fix a price. One day the gentlemen of the Upper House argued that the clause was a fairly good one, and that the intention of giving the President of the Board of Trade the right to be one member of the Board and of giving the President of the F. P. U. the right to be another was all right. The next day we find them discussing the same clause again, and on some one moving that the whole thing be capsize and nearly every man in the Upper House voted against that which he had supported the day before. In addition to that the principal opponents of the clause on the 1st day who had argued strongly against it voted in favour of it when the vote was taken. Who can explain such conduct as that? Who can now have any confidence in the members of that House.

This Bill was brought into this House with the idea of trying to create greater confidence between the buyer and seller as regards the Labrador Fishery. If you cannot establish confidence, all our efforts to improve matters will be in vain. Fishermen in the past have considered that they have not been treated fairly because they have not had a say in the fixing of the price. There has been a strong agitation all over Conception Bay the last four or five years in connection with this matter. Our Councils have taken the matter up and have given it considerable attention—a great deal more attention than the members of the Upper House have given such an important matter. This Bill was not brought in here after a few days or a few weeks of consideration, but after we had given it months of consideration, and delegates from Conception Bay had spent hours and hours discussing the matter in all its aspects, and they arrived at the conclusion that these proposals would be the most suitable for all concerned. Now it seems that all our efforts have been in vain and it is no good for us to try and improve present conditions if we are going to be blocked in every thing by the gentlemen in the Upper House. Conditions must change. The Labrador fishery cannot continue as it has been. We must have a change. Who is going to bring this change about? Are the business men going to do it? Is the Government going to do it? The business men certainly will not because they have always been opposed to changes. On the other hand you cannot get a Government to go into a matter like this without bringing in politics or personal interests. The whole business will remain as it has in the past and dissatisfaction and feelings of unrest will be manifest. Another thing suggested by the Upper House is that we take the right of being a member of that Board from the F. P. U. as representing the fishermen and place it in the hands of members of this House. How many members of this House are interested in the Labrador fishery. How many men know Labrador fish from shore fish. The Conception Bay members are the only members interested in this Bill. There are very few men from Trinity Bay, Bonavista Bay who go on the Labrador who are interested in this measure. These men, however, bring their fish home and do not ship it from the Coast. The Conception Bay men, however, are solely interested in this measure and every one knows the conditions which have existed this spring and the conditions

as regards these men are intolerable and reflect upon the Government whom they so strongly supported in 1913.

Conception Bay fishermen go down on the Coast and catch the fish and have to depend upon some one to take it from them, and when the buyer has it in his possession for five or six weeks and the men have arrived home, the buyers fix the price and the men have nothing to say about it. One man gets \$4.00 for his fish and another gets \$3.60. The buyer will answer I am giving you what the majority of exporters say is to be the price and you must take it. These conditions must change. Now as I said here the other day we are burning the candle at both ends and conditions are such that we, as members representing the people of the country, ought to give a great deal of attention to. Formerly the business men of the community were tensely fair.

They were fatherly, paternal men. The old men Grieve and Stewart and many of these old business men were almost fathers to their dealers and the dealers went to them when they were in trouble and they were ever ready to advise them and do the best possible for them.

These men were content to toil themselves, and often worked from twelve to fourteen hours per day, accomplishing as much in one day as our present business men do in three days. They lived over their stores on Water Street at a very small expense, not greater than one-fifth of what it now takes to maintain our so-called business men. The old heads of those business firms were considerable old men and there was complete confidence existing between them and their dealers. The dealers always confided in them, took their advice, and they were always properly treated. These conditions were changed materially by the fact that the old merchants considered the education to be derived in Newfoundland not good enough for their sons, so they sent them across to be educated at the big colleges in England, where they mixed with the sons of dukes and lords and brewers who had any amount of money to spend on all sorts of frivolities, with the result that they did not receive the training to fit them for the work which awaited them as young business men of Newfoundland. These young men returned to Newfoundland with a training which fitted them only for playing cricket and football, drinking whiskey, smoking cigars, and indulging in those pastimes which contribute to make a man a sport. In due time the whole business of this country came under their charge, and of course, not knowing the meaning of the word "economy," these men spent \$10,000 a year to maintain themselves where their fathers had spent \$2,000. This additional money had to come from their business, and it was the people who had to pay for this waste. There are firms here to-day which maintain three or four families as partners, and who spend \$25,000 or more to maintain those connected with the firm where \$5,000 should suffice. In ten years such a firm would be out \$200,000 which ought to have been invested in the business and available for normal development. This has been going on from year to year until many of our business houses have become entangled, on the one hand through the extravagance of the principals who run the firms, and on the other hand through the cursed system of giving out goods on credit. Thus, the candle is burning at both ends and the economic situation of the country is endangered thereby.

Permanent prosperity cannot prevail while these conditions exist. The credit system is injurious, not only to the business man, but to the men themselves. It injures because of the fact that a man who enters an office with a list of goods to be obtained on credit is very often indifferent as to whether he can get along with less or not. He takes a barrel of pork where it might be that a half barrel would have sufficed. He gets \$50 worth of goods where \$25 worth would have done and he is encouraged

to transact business in this way because of the fact that he is in debt and it makes little difference to him whether he gets little or much or whether he secured little or much fish. If he secures 50 quintals he must hand it in to his merchant and it must go into his account. If he secures 25 quintals, the same thing happens. He knows that it is next to impossible to get out of the mesh in which he is entangled through debt, and that takes all the enthusiasm, courage, and ambition out of him. He therefore becomes indifferent and careless as to both what he buys and what he produces. That is only a portion of it, for very often we find that the man who pays his account and makes two ends meet has to pay a certain percentage of the debts of those who do not pay. Thus, the paying man has often to pay the debts of the man whose enthusiasm, interest and ambition have been blighted by this credit system. If you want to encourage the men to do their utmost, conditions must change. The men must free themselves from debt and be taught that the only profitable way for them to get along is to pay as they go.

Many a man who takes a barrel of pork on credit in the Spring of the year would get along with only a half barrel if he had to pay cash for it. This system is so demoralizing that the man does not stop to think about the consequences of using 50 per cent or 100 per cent more than he should of any particular article, simply because of the system which is in vogue. Then, again, should a man succeed in getting clear of debt, in order to do so he has to work and toil, and produce at least 40 per cent more in order to pay the exorbitant prices charged because of the credit system. It is a system which encourages a man to be neither thrifty nor economical. A country's business can never be permanently built upon such a system. A country can never be prosperous while things run as they are to-day. Financial disaster is inevitable. A cure is essential. Who is to initiate and administer this cure? It is useless to expect the merchants to initiate any changes in this respect. They oppose every change. They oppose all the changes suggested by the F. P. U. and combine in every way to keep the Union from bringing about those necessary alterations which will uplift and benefit our people.

The Government, on the other hand, are just as indifferent and careless and they confine themselves to building railways, looking after their best friends, providing fat jobs and large salaries for them, and indulging in picnicing generally, they cannot find time to attend to the business which the fishermen want attended to or to develop to the fishing of the Colony. All Government have been indifferent in this respect. They pretend to represent the fishermen, but in reality they only do that immediately previous to an election. As soon as the elections are over, the fishermen are forgotten for another period of four years.

If the changes to which I have referred are to be brought about, they must be brought about by the fishermen themselves. They will find no other friend to help them. The Government have a very great responsibility in this matter, and a great deal could be accomplished if they would put their shoulders to the wheel and make an attempt to develop the fisheries and assist the fishermen to become free. The people will have to make up their minds to oust the present Government and replace it by a fisherman's government controlled by the F.P.U. If we had four years of government controlled by the F. P. U., wonderful changes would be brought about, and the results would be felt, not only by the fishermen but by the business men in general. If the policy of developing the fishery was pursued for four years as persistently as the Government has pursued the Railway Policy, and with the same interest, the improvements with in four years would be so apparent that people would never dream of again going back to old conditions

or to political parties that exist for what they can secure for themselves and their friends.

The fishermen of Conception Bay are facing a situation which looks any thing but encouraging. In my opinion the Labrador fishery, so far as the Conception Bay fishermen are concerned, will soon be a thing of the past unless very material changes are soon established. The Union is endeavoring to do its best to aid the fishermen of Conception Bay, and after some consideration, has decided that one of the ways in which the fishermen could be assisted would be by establishing a couple of large stations on the Labrador where supplies would be carried and fish could be collected, packed and shipped abroad. The Export Company will endeavor to have two stations established on the Labrador in order to meet the requirements of Conception Bay. These stations will carry supplies so that the planters will be able to secure them there instead of bringing them down from Newfoundland. Supplies can be sold as cheaply on the Labrador as they can in Conception Bay, for ready cash. If the fishermen do not do well, they will not require large supplies. If the fish is plentiful, no doubt they will use more supplies. They will cut their garment according to their cloth, with the result that the losses for a bad season will be much smaller than they have been in the past.

The fish collected from the different harbours at these centres, will be packed in casks and shipped abroad in steamers. These steamers will bring salt and the stations will contain stores large enough to store sufficient salt for the season. They will have the proper machinery for handling the salt in order to give despatch to the steamers. The fish being packed in casks, can be very quickly trans-shipped and, as a result, freights by steamer will be very low. The late fish can be brought by steamer in salt bulk to Newfoundland ports or to American ports, and thus the fishermen will be induced to remain on the Coast as long as they can catch any fish and make any profits.

By the free use of motor boats, traps, gill nets, and trawls, 100 per cent more fish could easily be secured, and the fishermen, instead of making their \$50 or \$100 for the season, could easily double that amount if they were fitted with the necessary facilities for prosecuting the fishery. The fishermen would then become their own importers and exporters, and whatever profits were made in connection with the sale of fish abroad would be returned to the fishermen after all costs in connection therewith were deducted.

One discouraging feature about proposal is that the fishermen in Conception Bay are not as well off as their Northern fellow-countrymen, and it will be difficult to raise amongst them a fair proportion of capital to buy shares in the Export Co. in order to establish the business on a good basis. Considerable capital would be required to carry on the business. I feel, however, that in such a plan as this lies the only hope for the future as far as the Conception Bay fishermen are concerned. The fishermen of that Bay need not look for any help or aid from the present Government or from our business men with regard to the development of the fisheries on the Labrador. Whatever is to be accomplished must be accomplished by their own exertions, and I trust that though the influence of the Fishermen's Protective Union, within the next four or five years conditions will be so changed with regard to the Labrador fishery, as it affects Conception Bay, that new life will be instilled so that a large proportion of the people will find it beneficial to proceed to the Labrador to prosecute the fishery, and will secure much larger results.

The day of shipping fish in cargoes abroad will soon be abandoned, for it has been found that the men who ship fish abroad in casks receive the best price and run less risks. Therefore, if the fishery is to be continued

by Conception Bay men on the Labrador Coast, ways and means will have to be devised to ship that fish in casks and to get the fish to market as early as possible in the season. I think the F. P. U.'s proposals in this respect will prove successful. The people want to see the fishermen's Union policy adopted for three or four years. In the past they have trusted to Governments and merchants and they find that they have been treated badly and have lost confidence in both. At last they have made up their minds to exert themselves in order to establish a Government controlled entirely by themselves. This "new doctrine" or "new Gospel," as it has been termed, is sure to be endorsed by the fishermen, and, no matter what opposition they have to contend with, it is only a matter of a few years when all the outport districts will respond to the appeal of the F. P. U. to place in power a Government controlled by the fishermen.

The building of railways is a very good thing where it means opening and developing a country. Newfoundland's riches do not lie inland, but in her fisheries, and yet we have spent ten millions of dollars in branch railways and not a thousand dollars during the same period to develop her fisheries. The building of railways cannot add a single cent to the value of a fish nor can it aid the fishermen in adding a single quintal to his catch of fish. It does not, therefore, appeal to the fishermen as some of our politicians expected that it would. Had one-half of the money expended in building railways been used to advance the welfare of the fisheries during the past six years, things would be in a far better position commercially than they are to-day. I can guarantee on this, and that is when the next appeal is made to the country, that these people will back up the proposals of the F.P.U. in spite of all that the Government can do or say. We have no desire to operate a Government or to have the responsibility of running departments, but we do hope and we do intend to have a Government chiefly composed of Union members, who will be strong enough to insist upon a fishery policy being carried out during its term of office.

I have no doubt whatever as to what the result of the next appeal to the people will be. Changes of Government are essential for the well-being of a country, and if a change of Government was to take place every four years, the people would find themselves greatly benefited thereby. All Governments usually do their best during the first four years and they usually do their dirty work when they are elected for a second term.

I cannot see how any of the amendments proposed to his Bill can be accepted by this House. To accept any of them would be to injure the Bill or make it inoperative. I therefore hope that the amendments will be sent back to the Upper House with the intimation that they cannot be accepted by this House. We have a right to demand such legislation, as being directly responsible to the people and in close contact with them continually, we know what they desire and what would benefit all concerned. It is unfair and injurious to have such measures cut to pieces by the Upper House, and as the Legislature sits from year to year, even if some point is overlooked, such may easily be subsequently adjusted. I therefore have much pleasure in seconding the resolution proposed by Mr. Morine and trust the House will see its way to endorse this resolution.

**Just Arrived**

Shipment of

**GLASS FLOATS**

4 inch size--Far superior to all other sizes

**ROBERT TEMPLETON**

333 Water Street.

**IMPORTANT!**

It is important to know where you can buy the following Goods:

**---Cheapest and Best---**

CHILDS' and MISSES' WHITE WHITE JEAN SAILOR DRESSES, prices from \$1.80 to \$2.90.  
 CHILDS' and MISSES' BLUE SERGE SAILOR DRESSES, prices from \$2.00 to \$3.70.  
 CHILDS' and MISSES' WHITE LAWN and FANCY BLOUSE ROBES, prices from 70c. to \$3.60.  
 CHILDS' OVERALLS, assorted colors and prices.  
 CHILDS' TUNICS, assorted colors and prices.

—Also—

Job Line of SKIRT EMBROIDERY & INSERTION

**---Samples---**

A Sample Line of Ladies' LACE & SILK BLOUSES, American, no two alike.

**Nicholle, Inkpen & Chafe**  
 Limited.  
 Agents for Ungars Laundry & Dye Works,  
 Halifax, N.S.

**THE BEST IS CHEAPER IN THE END**

Order a Case To-day

**"EVERY DAY" BRAND**  
 EVAPORATED MILK



**Job's Stores Limited.**  
 DISTRIBUTORS

**Write For Our Low Prices**

—of—

**Ham Butt Pork**  
**Fat Back Pork**  
**Boneless Beef**  
**Special Family Beef**  
**Granulated Sugar**  
**Raisins & Currants**

—and—

**All Lines of General Provisions.**

**HEARN & COMPANY**  
 St. John's, Newfoundland.

**A UNION'S MAN'S SON WRITES**

(Editor Mail and Advocate)

Dear Sir,—Please allow me space for a few words from Trouty.

The majority of the men here are in in the Union and take great interest in its doings and its leader. They have just got their new hall painted and it looks fine. We are beginning to realize how much the Union has done for the fishermen.

I have heard my grandfather say that you could only get a little bit of Indian meal and a drop of Molasses to tide you over for the winter, while fish was down to nothing because the Graball merchants had put it down, making us believe that there was some sort of slackness in the market.

It is a great pity that we did not have a Coaker ten years ago to stick up for the poor man's rights.

Wishing the Union success and its leader long life.

—UNION MAN'S SON.  
 Trouty, May 29, 1915.

Ask your dealer for Wallace's Souvenir box chocolates. Three pictures of 1st Nfd. Contingent on cover—quality "Most excellent."

ap12,tf