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Sept. 50—Athena, P. Y. Cher., London

## Conference Between British and Nfld. Members of Empire Parliamentary Association

The third Parliamentary Conference was held on Saturday forenoon with Hon. C. J. Fox, Speaker of the House of Assembly presiding. In his opening remarks Mr. Fox spoke as follows:

Mr. Fox—I have the honour, this morning of opening today's sessions of this Conference. I deeply appreciate the privilege and avail of the opportunity to welcome the members of the English branch of the Parliamentary Association. This may seem to be somewhat formal, but it is extended with all sincerity. We are all gratified to know that this visit has not been unenjoyable to you. We are drawing near the end of this conference, and I sincerely trust that some practical benefit may result from it both to you and to us. It was never intended that the conference should have a desecrative effect, but that does not detract from its importance. This Association has no executive power; it is an organization representing the parliaments of the Empire. Its object is to get an insight into the economic, political and social problems existing in the British Empire. It is Imperialistic in its character and its mission is to foster the sense of the colonies. Premier Bruce has said that ignorance of our needs is our besetting fault. The Mother Country has need of us and we shall have to take our place by her side, to aid her in every way possible. By doing this we will be of benefit to her and it will be advantageous to ourselves. I have great pleasure in asking Hon. Mr. Bennett to open this session by reading his paper on "Promotion of Trade Organization between Newfoundland and the United Kingdom."

Mr. Bennett—in rising to submit this paper I may say that I fully realize the importance of it and my inability to do justice to it. The most serious subject of the three that were to be discussed is the one now before us. It has been well aired during the last two days and there is little more that I can do to bring more ideas of the subject before you. I realize the importance of Mr. Lunn's words as he expressed them yesterday at the Board of Trade. Here I may take the opportunity of congratulating him on his address. It was a great credit to him and deserves to be put on record as an effort to further Imperial trade.

I trust that the remarks which I have to make will have the effect of bringing some light on this most important subject.

In presenting to you a review of the Trade of Newfoundland which shows that our trade with the United Kingdom has during the last forty years fluctuated considerably and declined from what it was previous to 1888, I may say that such decline is due mainly to several factors over which we have no control. One of the original of these was the failure of the British manufacturer to meet the wants of the importers of Newfoundland and respecting the make of certain articles needed by the trade. Other factors were communications and freight rates. As soon as steamer lines were inaugurated between the neighbouring continent and Newfoundland and that travelling salesmen invaded the country from Canada and the United States greater facilities were given our importers to obtain goods that they had hitherto depended on the United States for. The matter of freight rates between this country and the United Kingdom was fully set forth in the evidence taken by the Royal Commission which visited here in 1914. I do not now propose to go further into this question, but it was then pointed out that a Toronto merchant could obtain a through rate of freight from Liverpool at the same rate as a Newfoundland merchant was charged for the same class of goods purchased in the United Kingdom and shipped from Liverpool. The distance from Liverpool to Newfoundland is approximately 2000 miles while that to Toronto is nearly double the distance.

During the great war trade with the United Kingdom was almost impossible, as many articles needed for our trade could not be obtained therefrom, and we had to look principally to the United States for our supplies. This trade was deflected to the neighbouring continent which had heretofore been solely with the United Kingdom. This may be seen by comparison of the imports of cotton fabrics, other textiles, readymades, boots and shoes and several other manufactures. This trade is to some extent returning to

the mother country but very slowly. The total Trade for Newfoundland during the year ended 30th June, 1924, which is the end of our fiscal year, amounted to \$48,748,753, being made up of Imports amounting to \$27,677,182, and exports \$21,071,571.

Turning to a comparison of this import trade of 1924 with that of 1923-4, we find that the distribution of the import trade during 1924 and the year ended 30th June, 1924, has been:

Fiscal Year	United Kingdom	Per Cent.	Canada	Per Cent.	United States	Per Cent.	Elsewhere	Per Cent.
1923-4	\$3,265,229	44.0	\$2,041,144	27.5	\$1,602,138	21.5	\$1,839,242	24.0
1924	\$3,265,229	44.0	\$2,041,144	27.5	\$1,602,138	21.5	\$1,839,242	24.0

By far the most important import into Newfoundland is that of flour, which for 1923-24 amounted to \$3,524,892 or about 19.3 per cent of the total imports. The second largest import into Newfoundland is meat, which in 1923-24 amounted to \$1,817,958, or to 6.5 per cent of the total imports. Of this total, meat to the value of \$1,464,098, came from the United States, being 80.5 per cent of the whole meat import. The United States has, as may be seen by the foregoing tables almost a complete monopoly of the supply of olein, lard and tallow.

The most important food products imported from countries other than the United Kingdom, Canada and

the United States, in 1923-24, were:

Beans, \$4,587; Holland, \$4,585; St. Pierre, \$2.

Fruit, \$7,130; B. W. Indies, \$3,111; Spain, \$3,147; Greece, \$56,587; Straits Settlements, \$293; Honolulu, \$430; St. Pierre, \$12.

Molasses, \$317,562; All from British West Indies.

Olein, \$18,160;—From France.

Salt, \$105,468;—B. W. Indies, \$2,375; Italy, \$575; Portugal, \$26,525; St. Pierre, \$1,183; Spain, \$74,509.

Spirits, \$21,792;—France, \$13,200; Irish Free State, \$608; British West Indies, \$7,984.

Fiscal Year	United Kingdom	Per Cent.	Canada	Per Cent.	United States	Per Cent.	Elsewhere	Per Cent.
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These figures show that as regards imports the United Kingdom has come from the first position to occupy the third, and that, too, a bad third. Canadian imports continue to occupy the first place at present, on the mean of the last three years. It will be noticed that imports from the Dominion, and also from the United States, exceeded what they were from the United Kingdom thirty-six years ago. The United States is therefore a greater factor than Canada in displacing the United Kingdom from its former position in the import trade of Newfoundland.

Food and Beverages imported, 1923-24 to 1923-4.

Value	Per Cent of Total Imports	Population
\$5,807,155	43.3	\$33,48
\$5,565,693	44.3	\$25,56
\$5,585,127	34.6	\$6,44

total imports for the year. Flour is imported almost exclusively from Canada and the United States, the larger portion coming from Canada.

No. of Barrels	Value	Per Cent.	No. of Barrels	Value	Per Cent.
1921-2	\$3,151,670	89.8	42,788	\$254,941	10.1
1922-3	\$3,272,556	93.9	24,150	\$165,319	6.1
1923-4	\$3,388,447	99.5	12,237	\$73,610	3

Of the mean of the three years Canada supplied in quantity 93.3 per cent of the flour and in value 94.4 per cent, while 6.6 per cent in quantity and 5.6 per cent in value came from the United States. Canada has practically a monopoly of the trade in animals, apples, cheese, butter and potatoes.

The second largest import into Newfoundland is meat, which in 1923-24 amounted to \$1,817,958, or to 6.5 per cent of the total imports. Of this total, meat to the value of \$1,464,098, came from the United States, being 80.5 per cent of the whole meat import. The United States has, as may be seen by the foregoing tables almost a complete monopoly of the supply of olein, lard and tallow.

The most important food products imported from countries other than the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States, in 1923-24, were:

Year	United Kingdom	Per Cent.	Canada	Per Cent.	United States	Per Cent.	Elsewhere	Per Cent.
1921-22	5.7	55.5	31.0	7.7	10.1	10.1	9.0	9.0
1922-23	6.5	50.8	32.2	10.1	10.1	10.1	9.0	9.0
1923-24	6.4	47.4	36.9	9.0	10.1	10.1	9.0	9.0

The principal food imports from the United Kingdom in 1923-24, were:

Tea, \$1,614,461

Groceries, \$3,497

Spirit, \$31,660

Sugar, \$45,543

Confectionery, \$1,294

Cocoa & Chocolate, \$1,147

Jams & Jellies, \$17,194

increase of total exports to that country from \$1,824,235 in 1908-10 to \$7,615,069 in 1923-4.

In conclusion I may say that the general desire of the merchants of Newfoundland is to buy from the Mother Country, and they would readily do so if greater facilities of communication could be arranged and freight rates adjusted to offset the competition with the neighbouring continent.

The foregoing facts have been rapidly gathered and may not be as clear as they might be. With regard to the trade with the United States I would like to say that during the war because of its proximity to us and of the impossibility of getting goods, such as clothing, and fine dry goods, etc., from England, the trade went to America. According to business men around St. John's this trade would only be brought back to the United Kingdom with great difficulty. There is plenty of evidence that American goods are being imported by the names of the shops on Water St. The people here have been educated to the American way of putting up clothes. The women's apparel is advertised in an attractive way and they have the latest styles. A woman or a girl buys more for the style than for the quality. Whether this trade will ever return to the United Kingdom time alone will tell. The members of the Delegation will understand that during the war the American industries were speeded up to a great extent and nowadays they have a surplus of production and they must find a market without interfering with their general trade. Newfoundland is more or less the dumping ground of this surplus. The Minister of Finance and Customs is present to-day and he may be able to tell the members of the situation and of the difficulty of readjusting things. Recently in the House of Assembly the local manufacturers had complained of the difficulty of making boots and shoes when a pair of boots of American make could be bought for twenty cents. Again Newfoundland is filled with American salesmen whose persistence is proverbial. They get the orders and as there are few, if any, English salesmen they have no competition. There is also the difficulty of getting articles here from the Old Country; months often passing before an order is delivered. These are the things we have to contend with and are all matters which affect the trade between Newfoundland and the mother country. I hope as there are business men here that some figures may be given to substantiate these points and give the delegation a clear idea of the obstacles in the way of trade between Newfoundland and England.

MR. WM. LUNN expressed the opinion that Mr. Bennett's paper was a confirmation of his address at the Board of Trade. It appeared to him that the cause of the change from British trade to American trade was difficult to answer. Not fifty per cent of the trade with England that was done a few years ago was done in 1924. He hoped to hear from the business Legislators present what the real difficulties were.

HON. S. MILLEY briefly discussed Newfoundland's commercial relationships with Britain. War conditions had compelled purchases of dry goods and many other articles from the United States. The difficulties of supply, the high rates, and the uncertainties of delivery owing to a situation which compelled first attention to military needs, left no option in this respect. But the desire to trade with the Old Country exists, and speaking of his own business, he said that purchases from England had increased 100 per cent during the last two years. Given adequate trade with Britain was bound to return to the position of supremacy which it had held in earlier years.

DR. HAYDEN GUEST pledged himself as a propagandist for a regular direct trans-Atlantic service. It should prove a sound business proposition as well as one in Imperial interests.

HON. SIR JOHN CROSBIE, K.B.E., said that the crux of the whole situation was the facilities afforded. We had gone back from the Allan Line fortnightly service to a service once a month. There is uncertainty in prices and in freight rates. The falling off had commenced before the war, even then the imports of British manufactured goods were falling off. Once 40 or 50 cargoes of Newfoundland fish were sent to Exeter. The number has fallen to two or three. Our fish was carried over in Norwegian bottoms. We were forced to employ them, not from preference, but because we cannot fight against the competition. The United States made British Colonies, including Newfoundland, a dumping ground, selling their goods, not at cost, but below it. There was a dumping clause on the Statute Book, but no endeavour to enforce it was insisted on. To do so involved no easy job to the doers. We have to pay more for English bought goods, but there is this in their favor, they stand longer, wear better and are better made. English goods are built to last. He was disappointed at the silence of business men when the matter was considered yesterday by Mr. Lunn, M.P., in his admirable address before the Board of Trade—perhaps silence was the wisest way out. To the British delegates he would say: "If you cannot give us better service than a three weeks' service, then, forget it." He asked every

(Continued on page 10.)

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The total value of our Export of Fishery and Marine Products for the same period was \$10,877,498 so that the export of these products to the United Kingdom was 7.4 per cent of the whole.

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