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Conference Between British and Nfld. Members of Empire Parliamentary Association

(Continued from 7th page.)

British interests and British authority in the early history of the Colony. Colonization of other possessions was encouraged and subsidized in many cases, but the design was to make this a fishing station, to be resorted to by fishermen from the British Isles. Later, privileges in our waters were conceded to the French, and still later to the inhabitants of the United States, and both of these concessions have in their time played a part in retarding the development of this Colony, and the development of its resources other than the fishery. We are even to-day paying a price for rights conceded to French and Americans in the bays and harbours of this Island.

Settlement was discouraged by the shipowners and traders of the West of England, whose crews fished in the waters of this Colony, as they wished to retain exclusive rights of the harbours and fishing coasts for their servants. Stringent laws were passed prohibiting settlement within six miles of the shores, forbidding fishermen to remain behind at the close of the fishing season, and making it illegal to build or repair a house without a special license. A new era began in the history of the Colony in the latter part of the eighteenth century. Following the French revolution, Newfoundland attained great prosperity, no less than seven thousand immigrants arrived in 1814 alone. The first settlers of the Colony, in the main, were west countrymen, Devonshire men, but Irish immigration was large in the early part of the nineteenth century, and these Irish immigrants mainly settled around the Avalon Peninsula, with St. John's as a centre.

In 1854, the population numbered 1750; over a hundred years later it had only reached 7,000. In 1864 it was 20,000, but in 1883 it had reached 60,000. In 1886, 75,000. In 1887, 124,000. In 1889, 146,000. From which period the increase seems to have been by natural growth, and not to any considerable extent by immigration. By the census taken in 1921, the total population was 263,000. The census returns since 1874 would seem to indicate that the natural growth is about 15.5 per cent. per ten years, and the immigration about 3.4 per cent. per ten years, so that the average increase in population is about one per cent. per year. In 1921, the native born were 88.5 per cent. of the population. The emigration is chiefly to the United States and Canada. The opening of the mines at Bell Island does not appear to have caused any immigration, and the establishment of the Paper Mills at Grand Falls very little, and although the construction and preliminary operations on the Humber have brought a few hundred immi-

grants to the Colony, it is not likely that the majority of them will remain, but that they will be replaced by native born as soon as the latter have learned necessary special duties. It is noticeable that the increase in population have been in industrial centres, such as St. John's and Grand Falls, and in the more Northern districts, amongst the fishing population, where the natural increase is large, and the emigration small. The districts in Conception Bay and Placentia Bay, where the shore fishery has slowly but surely declined, show no growth in population and sometimes a loss, either by migration to St. John's, or to other industrial centres, or by emigration from the Colony. One would gather from these facts that there is a slow but sure contraction of the area in which the people are subsisting upon earnings drawn from new industries within the Colony, or from the fruits of labor outside the Colony. There has been no increase during the past forty years in the number of persons engaged in catching and curing fish, and the increase in population represents an increase of those engaged in other occupations. Fishermen are not increasing, laborers are. The loss of population from various districts has been, hitherto, in part, to the coal mining district of Nova Scotia, or to the United States, where the emigrants engaged in various occupations.

There is no need or room for immigrants to this Colony to engage in the fisheries now carried on, as carried on, and immigrants could only be successful in the fisheries if capital had been brought to the Colony to develop them in home ways; indeed more men engaged in the fisheries as now conducted would, apparently, be injurious to those now earning a livelihood in their pursuit. The fishery now carried on upon the Grand Banks, by fishermen from Gloucester, Massachusetts, and from Lunenburg, N.S., might be more profitably conducted if this Colony were made the base of operations, and there is room and a pleasing prospect for the immigration of both capital and men to the Colony for the development of this fishery, especially for supplying fresh fish to the markets of the United States and Canada.

The number now engaged in and about the fishery of the Colony is about the same now as forty years ago, but the number has been kept up by the natural growth in the Northern districts, and there has been a decline of the number of fishermen residing in the Southern districts, particularly those connected with the Peninsula of Avalon. It seems as though the increase by natural growth in the Northern districts were being engaged in the fisheries, while the increase by natural growth in the

Southern districts were being employed in skilled and unskilled labor connected with the development of the Colony's natural resources of the soil such as mines or forests, and supplied the greater portion of the emigration from the Colony.

Having regard to the existing large labour-giving industries of the Colony other than the fisheries, one feels that as at present developed they are sufficiently supplied with labourers by the people of the Colony and do not offer any invitation to immigration; but an observer might conclude that any increase in these labour-giving industries here, by increase of numbers or of output, would create a labour situation which would have to be supplied to some extent, by immigration. There are always, of course, here as elsewhere, unemployed men, and also, there will always be a large number of persons, temporarily unemployed because they do not care for particular occupations. The labour troubles in the mines of Cape Breton caused the return to this Colony of a number of men who had been employed there or a long time; and the termination of construction on the Humber project threw out of work a considerable number of men for whom other employment in the Island had to be found this year, but at the present time everybody who really wishes employment, and is prepared to take what is at hand, seems to be occupied, and there is no good reason to doubt that there will be continued employment, except, perhaps in the mid-winter season, for all in the Colony who really desire it. At present, immigration is not essential or even necessary for the labour situation, and the bringing in of any considerable number of unskilled laborers should be deprecated as likely to create an unpleasant situation here. But, on the other hand, the point seems to have been reached in this Colony at which, if the fishermen are to be kept at their industry, any large increase of industries or development of operations would have to be met by carefully selected immigration. If, as we all hope, outside capital should flow to the Colony for the purpose of largely increasing its industries, by way of developing its natural resources or otherwise, with development from outside capital might also come outside people. We do not need immigration so much as we need more capital for investment, but we shall be prepared to welcome the immigration made necessary by investment. You can send your people to us, but first send us your money; the wide spaces are here, and the natural resources, we hope, and their development will largely depend upon outsiders, and the work which immigrants can find here must be created here by outside capital and outside initiative.

Compared with the prairie provinces of Canada, or with the fertile fields of Ontario or Prince Edward Island, this is not a farming country, but fishermen who till the land add greatly to their income and comfort, and those persons who follow farming exclusively near good markets earn good livelihood. Growth is very rapid, and the quality of all root and fruit crops is especially good. Near St. John's, the chief market, dairy farming is chiefly pursued, and the farmers of the Colony country, on the West Coast, have Grand Falls and Corner Brook as readily available markets. There is no market outside the Colony to which its farm products can be profitably sent, and conducted as at present the farming industry of this Colony does not hold out induc-

ments to immigrants. But we import 400,000 barrels of flour, representing 1,800,000 bushels of wheat, which could be grown in this Colony, after proper preparation, and we import cattle, sheep, pigs and poultry, which could be raised here, and butter, eggs and cheese which should be produced here. The growth of wheat and its manufacture into flour, in the Colony, would furnish by-products as food for cattle, sheep and poultry, and the making of butter and cheese as food as the most of this article now imported would be possible. Our climate is milder both in summer and winter than that of Canada, and the growing of wheat and apples, for instance, is feasible, and the keeping of sheep in winter would be easier here than in Canada. Our uncleared cultivatable land is not prairie, but woodland, chiefly, and it is not in large tracts, wherefore its preparation for farming requires capital, time, hard work and patience, but there is room and free land for farming in a moderate way by those who care to come to this Colony, bringing a reasonable amount of capital to live on while establishing their farms. The free fishing and shooting now permitted is making the Colony attractive to certain men retiring from active military or naval life and ready to farm, and their success and happiness constitute an inducement to men similarly situated. There is copper, coal and iron in the Colony, but only the iron is being mined. The British market is in Germany, some is used in Nova Scotia, but hardly any in Great Britain. The export of iron ore this year will be about one million tons, employing about 2,400 men in mining and shipping operations. Great Britain could use about three million tons of our ore as a mixture with her own. In the place of ores now imported from foreign countries, if better terminal facilities for discharging from ships were provided in British ports, and some not very expensive alterations made in British smelting processes, in other words Great Britain could, if she wished increase our iron ore output to three times its present quantity, and we could then give employment to several thousand British miners and laborers, while giving all the year round employment to our own people who work at Bell Island. The Mother Country has not been generous to this Colony at any time in this matter of emigration. The first settlement of this Colony was in spite of the law, not aided by it, and the injustice of the old days, practiced for the benefit of the old land, can now be remedied by a British policy which, while tardily aiding in the development of this Colony, will help to provide a home for those Britons who care to come to us, and at the same time help to establish a supply of iron ore within the Empire. Part of the money now spent in maintaining the unemployed might more wisely and profitably, perhaps, be aiding in establishing here those suitable persons ready and willing to earn the healthy and happy life that this country affords to the industrious.

The kernel of the whole situation seems to be that we have population enough in the Colony for things as they are, and that until more development of the natural resources of the Colony has taken place, the immigrant must bring his welcome with him, or must be preceded or create the conditions which require him. More money, more work, will require more men, and when more men are required, they can come from abroad, but until then it would not be good for them, or for the present population of this Colony, that place. When immigration does take place, it must be selected; the immigrants must be fit for the occupations at hand at the time for them to engage in; we want no unemployed class; we want no foreign population, and the people who will be welcome when we are ready for them must spring from the stocks which have populated this Island: English, Scotch and Irish, or by birth or descent, and English, Scotch and Irish will always be welcome when we have room or occupation for them. There is little admixture of foreign blood here, and we have no ambition to be a melting pot. The Colony prefers to remain a link, as it were, between the British Isles and the North American Continent, and to develop along the lines which have made it what it is, the humble, but safe and happy home of descendants of a British people splendidly cemented. We have here no racial, sectarian or class problems to divide and distract our people. We are loyal to the flag, proud of our place in the Empire, and we shall aim to continue as we have been and are, a blend of the best, we hope, in the Irish, Scotch and English races.

OTHER SPEAKERS.
Then followed a frank and interesting discussion to which the various speakers made valuable contributions. There was considerable divergence of opinion and of view, but the note struck throughout, was love of Empire, or, as some preferred to term it, of the great Commonwealth of British Nations.

Dr. Hayden Sweet, M.P. had listened with interest and profit to the admirable survey presented by Mr. Morine, which had confirmed him in opinions originally conceived and in observations made. He spoke with

reserve, inasmuch as his impressions were necessarily based on brief acquaintances. It, however, seemed clear that, at present, there was no great opening for immigration. It might be worth while making an experiment with farming and discover just what its possibilities are in Newfoundland. The raising of sheep seemed to offer inducements. As to mining he did not see immediate prospect of it attracting labour. All of Britain, irrespective of party, were anxious for Commonwealth development. He believed strongly in the British spirit for overcoming obstacles, and in co-operation, not only for the good of our respective countries, but for the commonwealth as a whole.

Mr. J. F. Galbraith, M.P. thought that in discussing Migration and Land Settlement, it was best to get down to "brass tacks," to employ a familiar expression. What capital must a farmer have, to assure reasonable success? What are the possibilities of the soil? What kind of farming is the land best adapted to? What are the prospects of carrying on at a profit, with special reference to markets? There was much information needed before discussion could be profitable, and many enquiries which awaited answer.

Mr. W. J. Walsh, Minister of Agriculture and Mines, complimented Hon. A. B. Morine on both his address and his optimism. From the farming standpoint the height of Newfoundland's ambition, heretofore, had been to supply her own needs. In that we have failed. Ours is not a farming population. The cost of land was 30 cents an acre, but no statistics were available as to potential acreage for agriculture, and no attempt had been made to delimit that portion of our 42,000 mileage which was suitable for agriculture. It was unfortunate, but a fact. Mining conditions were not unknown to him, and he was sure that they were deplored generally. At the present it was impossible to remedy them, but the hope was growing that the worst defects might be offset by British manufacturers taking the total iron supply of Bell Island. He was sure that the interests of the miners, as far as it could be done, would be safeguarded in any new contract or contracts that might be entered into.

Mr. Ben Smith, M.P. thought that if Hon. Mr. Morine had said anything definitely it was that Newfoundland did not need men, but did need capital. The country's desire on the economic side was for capital. He regretted that British capital was not attracted to the colonies. There were happy relationships existing between the various parts of the Empire, and loyal co-operation in many directions, but there was divergence in hours of labor, and rates of pay. At present there were 12½ million acres of land lying idle in the British Isles. The question of intending emigrants ask is "in what way shall I better myself?" These would not consider a 60 hour week as an inducement. Let us frankly reveal to each other our honest thoughts and opinions, get down to consideration of the factors which invite immigration. There is much lip service to Empire, but profession is not always performance.

Hon. A. B. Morine, K.C., briefly replying pointed out that conditions varied with countries. Farmers who demanded short hours would be no acquisition. Emigrants who were unwilling to work were not wanted. There was no El Dorado in agriculture, a moderate degree of comfort there was for farmers who were willing to work. There had been emigration from Newfoundland, but not abnormally so: it amounted to 3 per cent. of the population during the last ten years. The natural desire for new experiences and wider fields of activity accounted for it. This migration he did not regard as injurious, but, rather, as healthy. Many who go send back capital; others come back with it, and with new ideas. It is true that wages were not at present high, but with the greater output, which increased markets would assure, the prices would rise. Housing conditions

in the mining areas were not good, ought to be better and doubtless would prove so in time. There was extension for building a ship in Germany, when Bell Island was confronted by competition with the mines in Lorraine. If the Mother Country provided the market for our ore, which she could do without injuring herself, the situation would speedily improve. A considerable portion of foreign imports was due to the difficulties of internal transportation. Remedy these things and the wages trouble would cure itself.

Mr. W. Lunn, M.P., had heard that Mr. Morine was an able and clever controversialist and his reply fully justified that reputation. He had said that the Mother Country never had been generous to this colony in the way of emigration. It is a power that lies at the root of development. Mr. Walsh had said that Newfoundlanders had never been able to apply themselves to farming. The speaker thought that there were great opportunities for the production of foodstuffs in this country. He saw many good farms, and successful farmers of thousands of acres. He thought there was room. Why not take advantage of the British Government's scheme, as Canada and Australia had done. The spirit of adventure still exists; but it requires more for successful colonization. Reference was made to the Empire settlement scheme which provided a grant of £3,000,000 a year for fifteen years. In the late administration he had been chairman of the Committee entrusted with the working of the scheme, and was still a member. Despite the offer only half a million was being spent annually. Britain's debt was to keep her emigrants within the Empire. Emigration had never been successful in time of extreme unemployment. There went to Canada in 1921, 100,413; in 1922, 70,423; in 1923, 137,320, and in 1924, 134,450. Yet within the same period 158,984 left the Dominion for the United States. If the policy of Empire Settlement were continued there could be no unemployment in Britain to-day? He was strongly favorable to family settlement. With children should go with the father. Even so far, the schemes had been successful in large measure. He wanted to go back and say that there were possibilities of emigration to Newfoundland. If it were possible, what better stock than British. Take advantage of the Act, he advised, and adopt it.

Hon. J. R. Bennett rejoined in Mr. Lunn's attitude. He had spoken with a sense of proportion and hopefulness. Newfoundland had been regrettably in recent years. The delegates had seen for the most part the fringe of her coast, the railway line, and barren lands, but they had seen sufficient to convince them that there were great possibilities for development. They had also seen the developments in Grand Falls and the Humber. There are markets and they await local supply.

Mr. R. G. Clarry, M.P., appreciated the point of view taken by Mr. Morine as to the necessity for capital. This was a virgin land, full of possibilities. The view at home was of a million and a quarter unemployed, and on the dole. He could not think Mr. Ben Smith serious in expecting Newfoundland to assume the same conditions as in the old land; artificial as they were, and a cause of unemployment in many industries. Would it be possible for a pamphlet to be compiled for capitalists, detailing the possibilities of the colony. It might prove a preliminary step towards desirable immigrants. He suggested that some practical steps be taken in this direction.

Hon. W. J. Higgins said that Newfoundland was engaged in an ambitious attempt to attract isocomers from a tourist standpoint. This could not be accomplished in a hurry. Newfoundland wanted capital, more than man power. Our own people look at the fishery. As the country develops it will require people to supply it with foodstuffs. Actual farmers were few in number. No land was being cleared to-day. The best of the

land was the result of the toll and courage of our forefathers. Capt. H. D. King, M.P., expressed his pleasure and interest in listening to the speeches. They had met together to discuss a question perhaps more important to the Old Country than to Newfoundland. The object was to see how each could help the other. Unemployment figures were now 1,350,000. British shipyards and steel industries were working short time. Newfoundland had natural resources—mineral and forest wealth and apparently agricultural possibilities. Now she was becoming absorbed in industrial development. The number of people for this was, he believed, available within her own boundaries. It was not quite fair that the lack of capital should be shouldered on the Old Country. The capital of the Empire and Paper Companies was largely derived from Britain. He was intrigued in the Rotterdam shipments; that was a matter for business men. Mr. Bennett in England has stated that steel rails were made of billets which Britain got from Germany. It was an extraordinary fact that despite Newfoundland's proximity to Besco could buy Belgian bars cheaper in Sydney than she could manufacture them. The matter of finding a market in Britain for Bell Island ore was not so simple a one as it looked. We are independent. We must strive to get together and trade together.

Mr. W. J. Browne, M.H.A., said it was obvious that Newfoundland did not need an influx of industrial workers, unless these could be of real assistance. He disagreed with the statement of Hon. Mr. Higgins that no new land was being developed now. It is true that it was not to such an extent as in earlier years, but he has been pleased to see new tracts of land developed in the west end of St. John's even this year. Sheep raising he regarded as both possible and profitable. The French Canadian was, par excellence, the best settler, and these would materially promote advance in farming. What was needed was not

the immigration of unskilled labor, but assistance on scientific lines. Mr. Smith-Carrington, M.P., stated that industrialists were from the fishing industry. It was probable that there was an advance in that direction, and it should be organized so as to help them. Britain's conditions were applicable here. Were there facilities in the canned-fish States as to agriculture? These should be in a more definite form. Essential, and estimates not cost of uncleared land, known, but of clearing it for purposes. Send over agricultural advisers who could give British ideas an idea of existing conditions such as would be worthy of both here and in Britain. Brief discussion on routing followed until today at 11, when the subject—partially and recently discussed yesterday—be "Newfoundland's external trade" to be introduced by the Minister.

At noon Mr. W. Lunn, M.P., delivered an address before the Trade.

Personal

We were pleased yesterday to visit from Mr. W. S. Harkins, popular Theatrical Manager, looking as well as any young Mr. Harkins celebrated his 30th day in Halifax recently when given a tremendous reception. Harkins has been bringing this city for 44 years, and a successful engagement opens in the Casino shortly.

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