

Correspondence

The Late Contest in New Brunswick

To the Editor of the Union Advocate:

DEAR SIR:—At the late election Mr. Mitchell and Adams elected Mitchell a majority over Robinson and Adams of 37. In the late contest we gave him a majority of 33 over Robinson with seven ballots wrongly marked for Mitchell the X being on his name instead of in the circle. The result was a marked right we would have given him a majority of 60 as it was we gave Mr. Mitchell the largest majority of any polling district in the county. Allow me, Mr. Editor, to draw the attention of the public to a few facts which will be sufficient reason why Mr. Mitchell goes on increasing the Liberal majority at each election. Leaving out the trade question, which we all know heavily on the fishermen, we will give a few local reasons why we oppose the present government.

Two years ago, on the recommendation of Ernest Kemp, an Englishman who was imported here as an oyster expert, and who knew as much about the oysters in this country as the oysters did about him, a tax of one dollar a boat was levied on all boats engaged in the oyster fishery. Fishermen outside of the county who come here each autumn to fish, and there are hundreds of them do so, all have large boats and from three to six fish out of the craft. These outsiders who in one craft only have to pay \$1.00, take in an average they do not pay more than 25 cts. per man, while our own people all fish in a small boat or canoe, one in craft, and they have to pay the \$1.00.

This does not seem exactly right, that one fisherman has to pay four times as much as another with the same privilege. The tax is wrong in principle as there is nothing given in exchange for it, it is simply a tax. In the case of the salmon or smelt net there is a protection given, other fishermen are compelled to keep a certain distance away from them. But in this oyster tax there is no pretence of any protection at all.

There is no right sense nor reason in the tax, it is simply a direct tax which no government would dare to put on the farmers of the county but feel perfectly safe in taxing a few oyster fishermen in New Brunswick.

The close season to fish Oysters is from the 1st of June until the 15th of Sept. Last summer there were three or four boats allowed to come here and fish in the close season and take oysters away to rebel in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. These strangers had a special license from the Fishery Department. Our people had to stand idly by and allow our oysters being lifted and carried away by strangers in the close season. If the department were bound to carry our oysters away to rebel and it may be in the future come in competition with ours, why was not our people given a chance to supply the oysters and partake of the benefits which they had a right to near their doors. There were men in New Brunswick who could have done the work as well as it was done by others. But it is the policy of the government to ignore the claims of the Parish: even when shingles and boards are wanted for the Esquimaux Light house they are brought from Picton, N. S., while we have a mill in New Brunswick that could have supplied lumber of as good a quality as the Nova Scotia lumber and as cheap, and the New Brunswick manufacturer is and always has been a supporter of the Conservative party.

Another tax that was put on last season for the first time is the tax on the lobster packers.

Before a packer can engage in the lobster business he has to take out a license for his boat. This is not a fair way of taxing and the tax, like the oyster tax, is unjust and oppressive, taxing people who take thousands of dollars in a very uncertain business and which gives employment in our Parish to hundreds of people, men, women, and children.

These fishermen are taxed while another class of fishermen, notably the cod fishermen, get a bounty from the government, and they do not get quarter as much employment according to the number of boats employed as the lobster factories do.

Before this season when an extension of the smelt fishery was wanted the shippers and fishermen had to circulate petitions and forward to the department asking for the extension, this year two days before the election the Overseer gave notice to the fishermen of an extension without being asked for. I may say just here that the little scheme did not work as the fishermen knew it was granted and not a vote was changed by the dodge. Some years the extension was granted other years it was not, last year the extension was not granted but fishermen were advised to hold down their heads and saw wood and they would not be interfered with; for doing this some of the Miramichi fishermen were made to pay a fine exacted by the fishery department. The fruits of this extension this year is that the price of smelts have fallen from 25 cts to 15 cts. This is on account of the large quantity on hand and low prices in the American markets. The shippers knew that if there was

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In one of those bold attitudes so well known to the people of York, the Attorney General rose this afternoon shortly after the house had been called to order, and with the air of one who thinks he has a soft snap immediately launched out. He related what Mr. Blair had stated on Friday last and then went on to say that he had telegraphed to Prof. Robertson asking that gentleman if the dominion government had given a bonus of \$500 to the Kingsclaire dairy.

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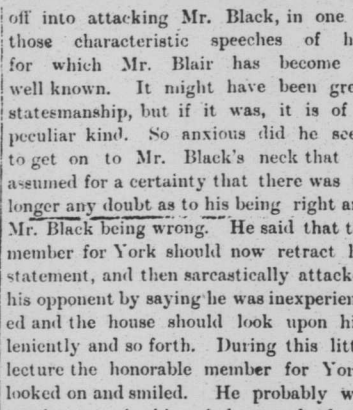
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Mr. Hill, from the standing rules committee, and Mr. Mott, from the contingent committee, submitted reports.

FEBRUARY 18.—To-day proved of much more interest in the house than it was expected; it was thought that the house would simply meet at three o'clock and then adjourn over until tomorrow when supply would be taken up. Such, however, was not the case and for a few minutes things were quite lively. It was the dairy business and Mr. Blair again took up the statement made by Mr. Blair on Friday last to the effect that the Kingsclaire dairy had received financial aid from the government.

In one of those bold attitudes so well known to the people of York, the Attorney General rose this afternoon shortly after the house had been called to order, and with the air of one who thinks he has a soft snap immediately launched out. He related what Mr. Blair had stated on Friday last and then went on to say that he had telegraphed to Prof. Robertson asking that gentleman if the dominion government had given a bonus of \$500 to the Kingsclaire dairy.

Mr. Robertson in answer said the dominion did not give a bonus of \$500 as he knew. If Mr. Blair had been so bold, but to show how strongly he felt in the matter and apparently not to give the dominion government credit, he branched

off into attacking Mr. Blair in one of those characteristic speeches of his for which Mr. Blair has become so well known. It might have been great statesmanship, but if it was, it is of a peculiar kind. So anxious did he seem to get on to Mr. Blair's neck that he assumed for a certainty that there was no longer any doubt as to his being right and Mr. Blair being wrong. He said that the member for York should now retract his statement, and then sarcastically attacked his opponent by saying he was inexperienced and the house should look upon him leniently and so forth. During this little lecture the honorable member for York looked on and smiled. He probably was turning over in his mind several of the Attorney General's former speeches and which has never on any former occasion done Mr. Blair or his friends very much harm. He was probably even thinking just then of some of the speeches delivered by Mr. Blair in the last York campaign and for which Mr. Blair must feel extremely sorry that he is now retracting the opinion that had Mr. Blair stated out of York, the opposition majority would not have been so large as it was.

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