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THE IMPERIAL VALUE OF THE NEWFOUNDLAND FISHERIES

By H. C. THOMPSON

Paper read at a Meeting of the Royal Colonial Institute, London, on April 18, 1917.

(Continued)

THE merchants hesitate somewhat, but the leading firms say that there is no reason to suppose that a fresh-fish trade will interfere materially with the salt-cod industry. What it will do is to give greater steadiness to that in salt cod, to prevent excessive fluctuations in price, and, in any case, they say they are prepared to assist, if it is a question of food supply for the Empire at this time of crisis.

Newfoundland is ready to do her part; it rests with this country to provide suitable sea-transport for the getting of the fish across.

What are the chief kinds of fish? Dr. Hugh Smith, the Commissioner of Fisheries at Washington, one of the greatest living authorities on the fisheries of the Western North Atlantic, writing to me on the subject in 1911, said: "The fishing grounds on the coasts of Newfoundland and Labrador, and those of Greenland and Iceland, constitute the most productive waters for certain kinds of fish on the western side of the Atlantic Ocean, and the supply is more or less constant. Each important species is, of course, not obtainable throughout the year, but there is no month in which some kind of commercial fish may not be obtained in large quantities. In addition to cod, which is the staple fish of this region, and halibut, which is caught chiefly by American fishermen; there is an enormous supply of herring and a fairly good supply of salmon, trout, and lobster, together with caplin and squid, which are in big demand for bait. There are also various kinds of flat fish which are not now utilised to any large extent, together with cusk, hake, and other deep-sea fishes. The tuna, or horse-mackerel, is also present in considerable numbers, and ought to meet with ready sale in the large markets, although the Newfoundland fishermen at the present time do not make any use of this species. I would call particular attention to the abundance of halibut on the West Coast of Newfoundland, where the Americans have been carrying on a profitable fishery for many years in in-shore waters. The enormous bodies of herring which resort to the bays on the West Coast in winter support a large fishery that is conducted primarily by Canadian and American vessels. These fish are taken in a frozen and salted condition to the home port, and meet a ready demand."

The above statements have since been confirmed in the fullest way in a detailed report by Mr. Walter Duff, of the Scottish Fishery Board, who made an interesting inspection of the fisheries on behalf of the Newfoundland Government in 1914. I may mention that I was privileged to accompany Mr. Duff, and so was enabled to acquire a great deal of valuable first-hand information regarding the nature and extent of these immensely valuable and prolific fishing grounds. I will quote briefly what Mr. Duff said about the more abundant kinds of fish. It will give some idea of how varied and extensive the Newfoundland fishery is. "The cod, so much so that it overtops all other fish. Its total value last year (1913) was £1,644,700, while the value of the herrings was only £79,963. Yet from my own observations and from the information I was able to acquire there seems to be no doubt that, properly handled, the herring fishery may become almost as important and as valuable as the cod." He speaks most favorably also about the salmon, which is not the Pacific salmon, but the same as our British salmon. Mr. Duff deals briefly with many other kinds of fish—haddock, hake, halibut, the Newfoundland turbot, flatfish, skate, caplin, smelts, sea-bream, tuna or horse-mackerel, lobsters, and eels.

I would here point out that the general view is that the U. S. markets are the natural and best markets for Newfoundland fish—that is to say, fresh fish; and it is quite true, that unless steps are taken to bring these fisheries into touch with the British markets they will inevitably turn towards those of the United States, where steps are already being taken towards that end, especially now that the import duty has been taken off fish in the United States tariff. The fish are there and will be utilized: we may be sure of it. Shall it be by the United States or by ourselves? It is certain that for many years the British Isles, and through us the Continent, will be able to absorb as much fish as they can get, and it would be a thousand pities if the products of these great Imperial fisheries were allowed to be diverted to a foreign market, as they certainly will be if no effect is made to attract them here. That they are of im-

portance for the Home market, who can doubt? In the years immediately before us food is going to be more important than anything else, and the fish of Newfoundland may prove as vital to the Empire as the grain of Canada or the cattle and sheep of Australia and New Zealand; but no sowing or rearing, for a needed, they have only to be gathered in; and through all the centuries those great storehouses of the Ocean, the Banks of Newfoundland, have yielded an unfailing and practically a constant supply. Year after year the fish have been there for the taking, protected during their spawning time by the great icefields which are their sure defence, the effective safeguard against any possible depletion of these fighting grounds such as is going on in the North Sea and other grounds which can be fished all through the year. And in considering this question we must remember that the hour of need has not as yet come. The high cost of living, so far has not caused any widespread distress in this country—not certainly amongst the working class—for those who are not actually serving in the ranks are nearly all employed on high wages in Munition factories, or on other war work. The real pinch will come a year or so after the war, when all this work is at an end; when the exhaustion of the war and the tightness of money will make it difficult to start new industries, when thousands of people will be out of employment, while food will be just as dear, because of the heavy taxation and the depletion of supplies. That is what happened after the Napoleonic wars—what happens after every great war. Then, if Newfoundland is in a position to supply fish in sufficient quantity to bring the prices down to before-war rates, or even lower, she will be rendering inestimable national service. But that fish cannot be supplied unless the necessary preparations are made beforehand; the means, not only for catching, but for collection and storage. It will be too late when the war is over; the proper time for making these preparations is now. At the Imperial stock-taking at the end of the war, is the fish supply from Newfoundland, with all its vast potentialities, to be taken into account, or will want of preparation be allowed to stand in the way? Sir Walter Davidson, the Governor of Newfoundland, has given a warning again and again of the urgent necessity of looking ahead, of making ready beforehand. He has taken a keen interest in the possibility of a trade in fresh fish, and has always insisted that in all calculations, in all trade arrangements for the future, and particularly in the question of the development of the fisheries, it is wise to assume that at the end of the war we shall have to deal with entirely changed conditions, and that we must equip ourselves in advance to cope with them. He has insisted equally strongly on the necessity of building up this coming trade on stable economic foundations; that it must be a trade which will pay under normal conditions; not an emergency trade rushed into hurriedly because of the passing exigencies of the war. And if it is properly organized, with co-operation and co-ordination here and in Newfoundland, there need be no fear for the future: that the trade will not be permanent and increasing; the worst scarcity of food will ensue; the problem, so far as Newfoundland is concerned, is a perfectly simple one. Just as Australia, New Zealand, and the Argentine have enriched themselves, and have been able to build up an immense trade by transporting in a chilled or frozen state their vast supplies of meat to the teeming populations of Europe, so Newfoundland has it in her power to build up quite as great a trade, and to enrich herself, proportionately, in the same way that these countries have done. If she can but devise some means of transporting her equally vast supplies of fish, in a fresh or frozen condition, to the great markets of Europe and America, where fresh fish is every day coming more and more into demand. She has the never-failing harvest of the sea around her shores. She has the men and the means to gather it in; all she has to do is to find a way to forward it to the markets where it is needed. She can build up one of the greatest and most lucrative industries in the world, but it is an industry which in ordinary times, like the British fisheries, and like the Australian and New Zealand meat trade, would take time and patience to organize and to develop.

But in war, and in times of food urgency like these, things are done in a few months which at other times it would require years to accomplish. And it must be remembered that the development of these fisheries is an Imperial, and not merely a Newfoundland question. One word in conclusion. When the fisheries are utilized to the utmost there will be room for a much larger fishing population; more men in Newfoundland will take to fishing, and there will be many inducements for men from outside to settle there as fishermen-farmers. Very important evidence was given recently before the Dominions Royal Com-

mission on this point, as to the suitability of the country for men who could combine the occupations of fishing and of farming. Mr. Le Mesurier, C.M.G., the Deputy Minister of Customs, stated the position very clearly. "The need of settlers in this country is most apparent; the island having an area of 42,000 square miles with a population of less than 250,000. The class of settlers needed at present is chiefly those who understand sheep-farming, and these who could combine fishing and farming, such as men from the North of Scotland, West of Ireland, and Scandinavia." Mr. A. Mew, the Assistant Colonial Secretary, also stated that there is room for a large additional population, for 50 per cent. over what there is at present.

A home may be found in Newfoundland after the war for many of our men who will then be out of employment. There will be plenty of work for a free land for a homestead, good money to be made, and a comfortable living, though at times a somewhat hard one, for those who are not afraid to work, and, above all, a freedom and an independence such as one seldom finds amongst the working class in other countries; for there are no people in the world quite so free, I think, as the Newfoundland fishermen, or on the whole, so well off.

There are forty thousand fishermen in Newfoundland already. During this war they have given 1,500 men to the Navy and 5,000 men to the Army, and nobly have they played their part, soldiers and sailors alike. With an increased fishing population, and with closer Imperial union, the Newfoundland fisheries may become again as valuable a training ground for the Navy as they were in the days of old. That is a consideration which is sure to receive the most careful consideration; for one of the greatest of the lessons enforced by the present war is the paramount importance of seapower. Lord Bacon pointed it out years ago, in words the truth of which every day of the present conflict is driving home to our minds: "But this much is certain: that he that commands the sea is at great liberty, and may take as much and as

Matters For The

WHAT SOLDIERS SAY

Those who are open to the voice of reason in connexion with the political contest now raging should find food for thought in the fact that many of the men overseas are urging the home folks to support the Military Service Act. One interesting case is that of Mrs. M. Anderson, 354 Markham street, Toronto, who received from her husband, a former Toronto policeman, this cable: "Return shortly. Vote Union candidate." Needless to say, Mrs. Anderson will do as her husband advises. Another equally striking case is that of Major John Henderson, of Walkerton, Ont., recently appointed returning officer for South Bruce on the recommendation of R. E. Traux, the retiring Liberal member. Major Henderson received from his son, Lieut. Herbert Henderson, who is in England with the 16th Battalion, a wire beseeching him to vote for Mr. Traux's opponent, Mr. A. E. McNab, the Unionist candidate. The soldier did not know of his father's appointment and consequent disfranchisement, but he was so impressed with the needs of the moment that he cabled his staunch old Liberal father to forget the past. Like Major Legere and the soldier-son of Mr. Loggie, M. P., and many another Liberal overseas, these men know that this is not a time for party politics. Think over the significance of these Liberal appeals from soldiers in Europe to relatives at home. They have a greater significance than anything a Canadian at home can say, be he Liberal or Conservative.

For want of a nail the shoe was lost, for the want of a shoe the horse was lost, for the want of a horse the driver was lost, for the want of a driver the battle was lost. In this election for the want of a ballot the Empire may be lost. See to it that it is not your ballot.

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Mr. Justice Duff's first judgment rendered as Central Appeal Judge for Canada on 17th makes it quite clear that men workers are entitled to exemption on the grounds that production must be maintained in order to sustain the military power of the Allies. This judgement of the appeal judge is binding as law upon appeal tribunals and local tribunals throughout the whole country. Another judgement by Justice Duff shows that exemption is favored for men with all brothers already at the front in service.

No matter what the results of this campaign will be, the look-my family in the face will be able to look the thousands of brave Canadians who have gone from Carleton Place in the face, whenever they come back, and when the end comes, I at least will not have the burden on my shoulders that I sold my country when the enemy was at the gate."—Hon. F. B. Carvell.

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Andrews, and also of the poor transportation facilities available, it was decided, Mr. McLellan's message notwithstanding, to raise a sum of money in the town and offer it to the authorities in Halifax. It was moved and carried that the town contribute \$500. Mr. W. E. Mallory was in favor of the town contributing \$1,000, but his amendment was not carried. Mr. F. H. Grimmer, as town treasurer and town solicitor, considered \$500 an ample amount, and he advised that a meeting of the Town Council be called for the purpose of voting the money. On the motion of Mr. Frank Kennedy, seconded by Mr. G. S. Grimmer, and unanimously carried, the Mayor was authorized to appoint an executive committee to undertake the raising of a sum of money for the relief of the destitute and homeless in Halifax, which committee as it deemed necessary. The Executive Committee was comprised of the following members: Mr. F. H. Grimmer, Mr. W. F. Kennedy, Mr. T. T. Odell, Mr. Goodwill Douglas and Mr. George Babbitt. As a committee to look after the collection of subscriptions throughout the town, the following were appointed by the Executive Committee: Miss Julia O'Neill, Miss Bessie Grimmer, Miss Marie Douglas, Mrs. Goodchild, and Miss Bessie Thompson.

WHY BALLANTYNE CAME BACK "I would not be a safety first colonel if men like Hon. Mr. Lemieux, Hon. Sydney Fisher and Sir Wilfred Laurier and other leaders of that once great Liberal party had done their duty," said Hon. C. C. Ballantyne, at a meeting at Point Charles St. Ann's division, Montreal. "If they had called on their compatriots to do what they should have done for the defence of Canada and the Empire, I would not have had to take over to England 300 men, after eight months' recruiting, but would have taken 1,000 men, and would have been allowed to take them to France. "Did you order a ton of coal? "I did not. I put my request for one respectfully on file."—Washington Star.

Voluntary Food Saving SOME PRACTICAL RULES SUGGESTED BY THE FOOD CONTROLLER As practical rules which would help towards the voluntary saving of food urged by the Food Controller, the following are suggested: Do not eat bacon or ham unless you are engaged in extremely heavy manual work. Do not eat meat in any form at more than one meal per day. Do not eat both butter and jam with bread. Do not eat candy which is made principally from cane or beet sugar. There is an abundance of other delicious confection sweetened with honey, molasses and dark syrups. In place of a slice of bread, eat one extra potato every day. Use less cream and more whole milk and cheese. Eat oatmeal, barley and corn breakfast foods, and buckwheat cakes instead of wheat preparations. Waste no milk; condensed milk is needed overseas. Drink fewer sweet drinks, and omit icking from cakes in order to save sugar. Do not display the joint of meat on the table. It is an inducement to eat more than you need. "It takes a clever man to be dishonest." "Yes, and the man who is clever enough to be a crook and escape jail is clever enough not to have to be one."—Detroit Free Press.

THE HALIFAX RELIEF FUND

Definite news of the terrible explosion caused by the collision of a Belgian relief ship and an ammunition ship in Halifax harbor on Thursday morning, Dec. 6, and resulting in the destruction of half the town and a death list of over two thousand, did not reach here until Friday afternoon. Through some oversight St. Andrews was omitted from the list of the towns notified by Commissioner McLellan. As soon as the fearfulness of the calamity was realized Mayor Greenlaw called an emergency mass meeting of the citizens in the Town Hall.

The Mayor was voted into the Chair and a few minutes afterwards he was called to answer a telephone communication from Commissioner McLellan, and during his absence the Chair was taken by Mr. Goodwill Douglas. The Mayor reported that Mr. McLellan said Halifax needed clothing, blankets, and bedding, but not money. In view of the limited amount of material that could be sent from St.

Andrews, and also of the poor transportation facilities available, it was decided, Mr. McLellan's message notwithstanding, to raise a sum of money in the town and offer it to the authorities in Halifax. It was moved and carried that the town contribute \$500. Mr. W. E. Mallory was in favor of the town contributing \$1,000, but his amendment was not carried. Mr. F. H. Grimmer, as town treasurer and town solicitor, considered \$500 an ample amount, and he advised that a meeting of the Town Council be called for the purpose of voting the money.

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