

THE MORNING GUARDIAN

FRIDAY, APRIL 15, 1904.

OUR FISHERY CLAIM.

The Guardian has contended that the fishery bounties paid by the Dominion to the fishermen of the four Eastern Provinces is in effect the equivalent of the interest on the Fishery Award and that if the capital of the award should be hereafter paid to the Provinces to which it belongs the Dominion would no longer pay the bounties. This has been disputed, and The Patriot says our memory is at fault with regard to what took place in Parliament when the bounty money was first appropriated. Well, here is what Sir Leonard Tilley, then Finance Minister, who introduced the resolution providing for the payment of bounties, said at the time. We quote from the Hansard report of 1882, page 1512:

"It was considered that the interest on the \$4,500,000 awarded by the Fishery Commission should be distributed among the fishermen who under its operation had been compelled to give up the advantage of having access to the American market for their fish."

And again on page 1511 of the same volume Sir Leonard is thus reported:

"The proposition is to reimburse the fishermen of that portion of the Dominion who have had taken from them by the treaty the exclusive privileges which they formerly enjoyed. It is to compensate them for the competition which they are now meeting with from American fishermen."

We might quote Sir Charles Tupper and others to like effect. Suffice it to say that the bounties were paid in lieu of the interest of the Fishery Award. Leading statesmen of Canada then believed that the award belonged to the Dominion. We now confidently believe and assert that the money from the first belonged to

the four eastern Provinces. If our belief is correct the Dominion Parliament had no right to appropriate the award, or the interest of it in bounties or in any other way. Nevertheless what was done in that regard was done in good faith and the Maritime Province fishermen have in some sort got the benefit.

Now what is our position in regard to the Fishery Award? The Dominion Government is in possession of the money which belongs to Quebec, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. In what proportion it belongs to each of these Provinces would seem to be a matter to be determined by a Commission or some high judicial tribunal. We are satisfied that the four Provinces have a good claim collectively to the capital sum of the Award, and at least to the interest thereon during the four or five years after the Award was paid into the Dominion treasury before the bounties began to be paid in 1882. We are moreover satisfied that the bounties so far paid to Island fishermen since 1882 are altogether short of what would represent the interest of our fair share of the Award. In 21 years from 1882 to 1902 inclusive Island fishermen received but \$216,572 out of \$3,315,107 paid in bounties on account of our share of the interest of the Award—or, say one-fifteenth part.

We need not here discuss what would be our share of the Award, but we should certainly hope to do much better than recover one-fifteenth part of \$4,500,000 of capital which would be only \$300,000. Should our share be hereafter found to be one fifth, or even one tenth of the capital sum it would be clear that the bounties so far paid come very far short of our share of the interest. We do not for a moment admit that the bounties paid in the four Provinces so far constitute a legal offset to the interest which the Provinces might be disposed to exact, but morally and equitably they might be so considered, during the years in which the bounties were paid. We may not

also in conclusion that Attorney General Pugsley told the New Brunswick Legislature the other day that he hopes for a settlement of the fisheries claim of that Province in May, which is now near at hand.

FOR A LICENSE LAW.

Once more the liquor interest is rallying its forces to make an effort to secure the repeal of the Prohibitory Law and substitute a license system in its stead. Formerly the complaint was made that the Scott Act and the Prohibitory Law did not check the sale of liquor and consequently ought to be repealed. We are no more of this now. The grip of the law is severely felt, the fence is too tight, and so repeal is sought for. So the City Council is asked to request the Legislature to have a plebiscite taken, and assuming that the Council should prove responsive, and the majority at the plebiscite should favor a change, then new legislation is to be asked for. All in the interest of more and freer whiskey, which, in the minds of the promoters of the movement is Charlottetown's greatest and most pressing need!

Of course the liquor sellers who have defied the law, been mulcted in fines, sent to jail or driven to flee the country, would like to be freed from present conditions and have the shield of respectability thrown around their trade. It is natural that men engaged in a business which has proved a curse to high life, middle life and low life, should desire that the City Council, the general community and the Government and Legislature should share with them the responsibility for the traffic and its fruits. We do not for a moment believe that the movement can succeed. In the meantime the question is fairly before the Councillors, the citizens and the members of the Government and Legislature to show of what stuff they are made. The question is not however, one for the city alone. It is one which most vitally concerns the entire Province by which the Prohibitory Law stands well approved. It is a good and righteous law, and it must be maintained, or tens of thousands of electors throughout the Island will know the reason why. We shall have much more to say on the subject later.

It is not the fathers and mothers with wayward and dissipated sons who are moving to have the open bar again established in Charlottetown.

Correspondents must please be brief, especially during the session of the Legislature. We have a number of long communications on hand whose length precludes publication at present.

The loss of the Russian battleship Potemkin with Admiral Makareff and a crew of six hundred men is a terrible blow to Russia in view of her previous naval losses in the east. We feel no wonder at the consternation in court circles at St. Petersburg.

A movement is on foot in Halifax and Sydney to have that portion of the Intercolonial between those two cities made free to both the Dominion Express and the Canadian Express, so that the advantage of competition may be enjoyed and the high rates which the monopoly exact may be broken down. Between Truro and Sydney the express service is confined to the Canadian Express which operates all along the line of the Intercolonial. The Dominion express has rights on the Intercolonial only between Halifax and St. John, and utilizes the Canadian Pacific for points west of St. John. Charlottetown and the Island generally are similarly situated to Sydney and Cape Breton, one express company having a monopoly here, and charging what are thought to be pretty stiff rates. It would be worth while for our Board of Trade to take this matter up at an early day.

One lawless, disputable bar in a hotel last summer did more to dispirit and paralyze the tourist business in Prince Edward Island than all other causes combined. The remedy is not to provide more bars, but to provide more hotel accommodation of the better class conducted within the terms of the law.

In reply to the inquiry another column The Guardian is informed that Councillors Reddin, Pato, Prowse and Rogers signed the requisition to the Mayor asking him to call a special meeting of council to consider the advisability of taking steps to have a license law brought in subject to approval of a majority of citizens by a plebiscite. Some of these names excite surprise in this connection.

The Patriot has now discovered, apparently for the first time, that the fishery bounties are paid on fish caught within as well as beyond the territorial waters of the eastern Provinces. So far good. But when the Patriot editor tells us, as he did yesterday, that British Columbia has no deep sea fisheries, and that Ontario and the Pacific Province "did not apply for bounties," he displays either a momentary lapse of memory, or a remarkable ignorance of the subject.

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Fort Fairfield, Me. April 12 - Frank Dilling, arrested on the charge of burning four potato houses at Easton station, was held today for the grand jury at Hutton in the sum of \$1,000.

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