

Agricultural Estimates Are Discussed in the House

Hon. Lewis Smith Tells of the Splendid Work Being Done by His Department on Behalf of New Brunswick's Basic Industry—Apple Packing Plant to Be Located in This City—Opposition Members Compliment Minister.

The Legislature spent the greater part of yesterday afternoon discussing the estimates of the Department of Agriculture, and when adjournment for the week end came shortly after six o'clock most of the items had been disposed of. As is the usual custom one item in each department will be kept open to permit of discussion should any of the members wish to revert to it.

In the absence of Premier Baxter, Hon. A. J. Leger led the House during the greater part of the afternoon. Hon. Lewis Smith piloted the estimates of his department and although there was some discussion, no opposition developed to the various items. The Minister announced that a representative of his department, presumably Leslie Wood, poultry superintendent, would attend the World's Poultry Congress in London next summer. He also announced that the plant for the grading and packing of fruit would be located in this city near the railway tracks. The Minister announced that a field husbandman would shortly be appointed to his department.

The House will resume work at three o'clock on Tuesday and it is just possible that the prorogation may take place at the end of next week.

Assembly Chamber,
March 28th., 1930.

The House met at 3.15 p. m. The following bills were read a second time,—to vest certain lands in trust for the United Church of Canada; to provide for a Minimum Wage Board, to regulate the wages of women and girls; to amend Chapter 3 of the Revised Statutes, to change the boundaries of certain polling districts; regarding the protection of children; to amend the Schools Act; to amend an act respecting debtors; regarding British settlement in New Brunswick; to amend the Municipalities Act; to amend the Intoxicating Liquor Act; regarding the incorporation of Albert for fire and water purposes.

MR. ATKINSON submitted the report of the Municipalities Committee.

HON. MR. TILLEY submitted the report of the Corporations Committee.

MR. DOUCET gave notice of inquiry.

HON. MR. BAXTER introduced a bill to amend the Illegitimate Children's Act.

HON. MR. LEGER submitted the annual report of the schools of New Brunswick.

HON. MR. BAXTER moved for the appointment of a Committee to consider a revision of the rules of the House, said committee to consist of Hon. Mr. Speaker, Hon. Mr. Baxter, Hon. Mr. Richards, Mr. Dysart and Mr. Michaud.

House in Committee.
The House went into committee of Supply, with Mr. Atkinson in the chair. Items for the Department of Agriculture were considered and voted.

HON. MR. SMITH, on item 33, "Contingencies", \$7,750, said he would like to say a few words regarding the criticism which the member for Gloucester (Richard) had made when he said that under this government agriculture had been relegated to the background, and did not get the amount of money it should have. In answer to that, he would quote the amount given to Agriculture to 1925 up to the present. In 1925 it was \$122,784.44; in 1926, \$124,894.47; in 1927, \$165,168; in 1928, \$204,309; in 1929, \$266,249; and for the current year the appropriation was \$297,753. During the last five years under the former government, the total expenditure on agriculture was \$558,293.20; and in the five years under this government it received \$1,061,569.72, an average increase yearly of about a hundred

thousand dollars. He (Richard) also insinuated that the Department was not interested in Agriculture, and the Department got only what was left from other departments and that members of the government were not sympathetic. He (Smith) could assure the House that the whole government was most sincere and sympathetic towards the development of agriculture, with the exceptions of the hon. members for Saint John (Tilley) and for Moncton (Reilly) all members of the government represented rural constituencies.

Has Been Increased.

The opposition had quoted statistics of the value of agriculture production, and claimed that it had not increased. As all hon. members knew, neither the government nor the farmer had much to do with prices, but he would point out that last year the farmers had cropped 8,659 more acres in 1929 than they had any year during the past six years. For any success that had come to agriculture he wanted to give the fullest credit to the farmers themselves. The department was at all times willing to assist but the farmers were the men who got the results. In some lines the farmers of New Brunswick were in open competition with world markets about which this government had no power. It was up to the federal government to protect the farmers from the unfair dumping of New Zealand butter. However, his department was doing what it could to help decrease the cost of production, by placing within the farmers' reach all the latest knowledge of methods, and assistance in securing the best seed. It was also trying to improve the quality of live stock, so as to secure the cheaper production of dairy products.

Advertising Pays.

A portion of the item under discussion was spent on advertising, a new feature last year, and which would be followed this season. The various activities of the department had been advertised throughout the press, irrespective of party, last season, and there had been a great increase in the correspondence of the department in consequence. No sooner did the ads appear than inquiries began to come in, and he felt it was a wise expenditure of money. There was a lack of knowledge of the work the department was doing, not only throughout the country, but even among some hon. members. He would be indeed glad if all would familiarize themselves with the efforts of the department and advise their constituents as to how they could take advantage of the work being done.

Mr. Doucet's Views.

MR. DOUCET wished to say a word in defence of his colleague. He had noticed that The Times, a Moncton newspaper, had displayed in headlines the other day "Richard of Gloucester lauds Minister of Agriculture." If the Minister was right in criticizing Mr. Richard, then The Times must have been wrong, as he recollected, his colleague had said the Minister was doing a great deal, but with more money he could increase his usefulness. He (Doucet) was glad to see the appropriation for Agriculture increased, and considering the revenue of the province, he did not think it was yet large enough. Agriculture was the main industry of the province, and everything possible should be done for it. There was no question of scarcity of money today. The revenue was ample. Why, then, not have more for this basic industry? It was true the government could not regulate prices, but it was not a matter of prices but quantities. The market was there for increased production of eggs, butter and meats, and not enough was raised. He would suggest that further steps be taken to give practical information along lines of greater production. He



HON. LEWIS SMITH
Minister of Agriculture

wished to congratulate the Minister for what he had done, as far as he deserved it.

Some Compliments.

HON. MR. SMITH said his hon. friend (Doucet) had conveyed two compliments, first to the government for its good financing, and second, to himself, and he thanked him.

MR. DYSART said he was struck by the modesty of the Minister in giving credit to the government for congratulations only given to himself. The amount of money given to agriculture by the former government compared favorably with what was given today. This industry occupied and must continue to occupy premier place in the province. Whether by this government or the one that would soon succeed it, this department must be maintained and developed.

He thought there might be better co-operation between the Provincial and Dominion Departments of Agriculture. Scattered throughout the province there were a number of illustration farms maintained by the Federal Government, where valuable lessons could be learned, but these farms were attracting little attention. Why has not the Provincial Department held meetings or picnics at these farms and drawn the people's attention to modern methods. At the Agricultural College Farm at Guelph, Ontario, where he was a student for two years, arrangements were made to bring large excursions from every county in the province, reduced railway fares were given, and special attention devoted to the visitors when they arrived.

HON. MR. TILLEY—"What particular education would the picnics afford?"

MR. DYSART said these farms were conducted under certain definite rotations and methods, with the use of selected seed and the growing of special crops, such as alfalfa, and visitors would see the results under the conditions in their own neighborhood.

HON. MR. SMITH said that co-operation between the departments had been carried on in many directions. The particular way in which his hon. friend had suggested had been followed in connection with field days for cattle and poultry where Dominion officers were working, as well as visits to the Experimental Station at Fredericton. In no county of the province, perhaps, had there been greater co-operation than in Charlotte, where the farmers, business men and service clubs all united to push Agriculture.

The Basic Industry.

MR. MICHAUD said Agriculture was, of course, the basic industry, but it was not as profitable as was to be desired. Profits were very small. He was glad to congratulate the Minister for whatever he had done. As a practical farmer himself, he had undoubtedly given understanding attention to problems. Of course, he could not forget his party, and his remarks regarding the importation of butter showed that. Considering the increase in revenue, this government was giving about the same to Agriculture as did the former government. The great question now was to increase production of farm crops.

HON. MR. SMITH—"Irrespective of cost?"

MR. MICHAUD said no, but the producer would take care of that. The imports of New Zealand butter had been much discussed, mostly by people who thought more about making a case against the Dominion Government than of helping the dairy business. This question had been fully discussed at Ottawa, and it had been decided that to raise the duty would not help the farmer much but would increase the price to the consumer and to some of them make it prohibitive. In fact, strong Conservatives in this House, having studied the problem, admitted that but for the importation of New Zealand butter here, many people would have gone without. One of the difficulties in regard to Agricultural development was the unsuitability of the educational system. Seventy-five per cent. of the boys leaving school from the lower grades leave with an aversion to agriculture, and they reach industrial centres where, if they cannot get work, they leave the country. Conditions lately have changed greatly, and that was why Boards of Trade and other organizations were offering their co-operation. This same problem, not so acute, existed in Quebec. A few years ago delegates had been sent from that province to Denmark, who on their return reported that some fifty years ago Denmark had to face the situation the same as here today, and they started improvement by remodelling their common schools, educating the

young people in agriculture and getting their interest for farm work. He hoped the proposed Education Commission would give a large amount of attention to the agricultural problem confronting the rural schools.

Mr. Siddall

MR. SIDDALL said as a farmer he had been interested in the remarks of his opposition friends, but he could not help being amused. Their advice was to raise twice as much and the price made no difference. The New Brunswick farmer today was working from twelve to fifteen hours daily and raising all he could, but he had not kept pace with the demand for poultry and dairy products which had more than doubled in the last ten years. Under conditions as in this province the farmers are not in a position to compete in the world's markets nor in our own, when products bonused by other countries were dumped regardless of cost. He would like to ask the Minister (Smith) what had been done in regard to assistance in the marketing of cream.

HON. MR. SMITH said that eight creameries had received assistance for the gathering of cream at a distance to the extent of \$5,334.42 last year, as against \$643.70 paid for the same service in 1925.

Leader Dysart

MR. DYSART said that the hon. member from Westmorland (Siddall) had insinuated that there were no farmers among members of the opposition with particular deference to the member for Madawaska (Michaud). He (Dysart) would tell him that in his own county Mr. Michaud was one of the most extensive farmers, and was considered a good one, an excellent citizen, a fine representative, and a first class lawyer. He was told by a gentleman from Western Canada that Mr. Michaud's twenty acre field of wheat compared more than favorably with western wheat fields. He (Michaud) thrashed over three thousand bushels of grain and kept a dairy herd of twenty-two pure bred Jerseys.

On Item 34, \$5,978. "Agricultural School and Short Courses." Mr. Doucet asked as to the increase over last year.

HON. MR. SMITH said this work had been apparently very useful and well received and it was desired to extend operations. In addition to the five weeks course at Fredericton, short courses of a few days each were held at various points throughout the province. The locations were served in the order in which applications came in and if his hon. friend would like to have some such courses in his county, he might ask his constituents to let the department know what they wanted.

Cheese Factories

HON. MR. SMITH, continuing, in reference to Item 37, \$20,525. "Butter and Cheese Factories," said this item was slightly less than last year, as the obligations of the Moncton Creamery had been paid off. In regard to the growth of the dairy industry, he said that whereas in 1925 there were only 2,756 farmers supplying milk and cream to factories, last year there were 5,064. The value of

the creamery and cheese factory output in 1925 was \$905,913.57, and \$1,205,085.47 last year. The creamery output by itself had increased from six hundred and eighty thousand dollars to a million and ninety-five thousand dollars, in round figures, in the same time. The population of New Brunswick was placed at four hundred and fifteen thousand, which required 195,382,000 lbs. of milk, and the butter requirements of the population would require 272,117,449 lbs. of milk from which to make it. The cheese requirements would take 14,691,000 lbs. more, and the ice cream 760,830 lbs. This made a total of \$482,951,279 lbs. of milk. Statistics showed that there were 107,650 cows in province, with an average milk production of 4,041 lbs. This would give a supply of 435,013,850 lbs. of milk, leaving a shortage of 47,937,689 lbs. To make up the shortage would require either 11,882 more cows of the same capacity, or those cows would have to be improved, or give an average of 4,488 lbs. each. Even at that figure they would still be 1,091 lbs. milk per cow less than the average cows of British Columbia, and 379 lbs. less than those of Ontario.

MR. DYSART—"What was the debt that had to be paid at the Moncton creamery?"

HON. MR. SMITH said the original men who promoted the creamery under the late government had given notes to assist in the establishment and they claimed that it was a government undertaking and that the notes should be taken off their hands.

MR. DYSART—"How is the cream bonus given?"

HON. MR. SMITH said to enable cream to be gathered along routes where there was not enough to make the work a paying proposition, for the truck, the bonus was mostly given at the rate of about one and one-half cents per pound of butter fat collected, and he had already stated how much was paid.

MR. DYSART—"That applies only to co-operative creameries, I presume?"

(Continued on Page 2)

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