

NO MINISTER JUST NOW FOR AGRICULTURAL DEPT.

Government Rejects Proposal of Liberals Demanding a Reorganization That Would Insure Leadership—Generous Offer to Let Such a Man be Returned Unopposed

By a vote of 45 to 19, the Government just before midnight defeated a proposal of the Liberals to appoint a Minister of Agriculture to succeed the late Hon. James Duff. In a resolution offered by Nelson Parliament, Prince Edward, the Opposition urged the Government to select a man who is able to devote his whole time to the work of the department, and who by practical training and experience is able to give leadership in agricultural matters. They also advocated the appointment of a Deputy Minister, who by reason of his technical and practical knowledge of agriculture in Ontario is fitted to fill the post.

By the same vote second reading was given to the bill introduced by Sir William Hearst providing for the reorganization of the Department of Agriculture, involving chiefly the appointment of Prof. Creelman of the Ontario Agricultural College as Commissioner of Agriculture, and making legal the appointment of two Deputies and an Assistant Commissioner.

Sir William Hearst said that he will see that he would fill the position of Minister of Agriculture for the time being, but he had no intention of occupying that post permanently. If Prof. Creelman's duties proved too heavy, a new Commissioner would be chosen, or a new professor would be appointed for the Ontario Agricultural College, said the Premier.

In the course of the debate Mr. Rowell, speaking for the Opposition, offered that if Sir William Hearst would appoint the ablest man that could be secured for the position of Minister of Agriculture, the Liberals would undertake not to oppose him at the by-election that would be necessary. Sir William made no reference to this offer in his reply.

Mr. Nelson Parliament (Prince Edward) moved, seconded by Mr. J. Grieve (North Middlesex), an amendment to the Government bill "reorganizing the department," that all the words in the motion after the first word "that" be struck out and the following substituted therefor:

"In the opinion of this House, the conditions created by the war make increasingly important the demand for efficient leadership and effective administration in the Department of Agriculture, and that the present urgent need is the appointment of a Minister of Agriculture, to succeed the late Honorable Mr. Duff, who is able to devote his whole time to the work of the department, and who by practical training and experience is able to give leadership in agricultural matters, and the appointment of a Deputy Minister who by reason of his technical and practical knowledge of agriculture in this Province is fitted to fill this most important post; and that therefore the said bill be not now read the second time, but be read the second time on this day six months."

Leadership Necessary in Department of Agriculture

Dealing with the bill to reorganize the Agricultural Department, Mr. Rowell submitted that the Government was making a hydra-headed, inefficient department by the manner in which it was proposed to reorganize matters, and urged the Prime

Minister to withdraw the bill. "I believe what the Province of Ontario wants, what the farmers of Ontario want," said Mr. Rowell, "is an efficient leader in the administration of the Department of Agriculture, a practical man, who has the qualities of leadership, who will devote his whole time to the work of the department, and who will go throughout the Province, meet with the agricultural community and will be a real leader in all matters that relate to the interests of agriculture throughout the Province. The agricultural interests want associated with him, just as an article in The Farmers' Advocate very fairly pointed out, an able Deputy Minister, the most efficient that can be secured, a man with the largest practical experience and the widest vision.

Reason Given in Simcoe.

"My honorable friend the Prime Minister, in introducing the bill, suggested that his reason for taking the portfolio at the present time was in order that there may be some reorganization, some change of certain branches hitherto associated with the departments, transferring them to other departments. That is a simple matter. It is not necessary for my honorable friend to take the position of Minister of Agriculture to do that. It may be my honorable friend the Attorney-General expressed the real reason when in the West Simcoe campaign he suggested a reason had been given by The Globe why a farmer had not been appointed: that if a seat were opened it would be contested.

Liberals Will Not Oppose.

"I want to say to my honorable friend the Prime Minister and the members of the Government that if for that or any other reason they have hesitated to do what we believed the public interest demanded and what the agricultural interests demand—the appointment of the strongest and ablest practical man to this department—because of any question of opening a constituency, so vitally do we deem it to the agricultural interests of the Province at this time that the ablest possible practical man should be chosen, with the ablest available Deputy Minister that I say, speaking from this side of the House, the honorable Minister may open any constituency in this Province and may appoint the biggest man for Minister of Agriculture to be found in the Province, and we on this side of the House will not oppose an honorable member when he comes to seek re-election. So my honorable friend may be absolutely untrammelled in choosing the biggest man he can find for this important post." The leader of the Opposition suggested that the present bill be withdrawn, that a Minister be appointed and have associated with him a Deputy with scientific and practical knowledge. Under what was proposed in the reorganization bill, the two most important officers, the Minister (the Premier) and the Commissioner (Dr. Creelman) were able to give to this vital department only their spare time, and in order to supplement that and to supply the operation of the department an Assistant Commissioner is provided for with two Deputy Ministers.

Premier Too Busy.

Mr. Severin Ducharme (North Essex) said he was opposed to the bill because he thought it would lead to the running of a great department by proxy. He had a great deal of admiration for the Prime Minister, he was a good and clever lawyer, but he did not think he was able to become Minister of Agriculture at the present time for more than one reason. The principal reason was he was busy at something else and could not devote the necessary time to such an important department. The member for North Essex declared that what was proposed was leading to what he called an officer-ridden department.

Late Hon. Mr. Duff a Farmer.

Mr. A. H. Musgrove (North Huron)