

Friday-February-22nd

# FARM POLICY UPHELD IN GOVERNMENT VOTE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

Carried by Straight Party  
Split, 65 to 29—Martin  
"Winds Up"

## NEGLECT OF FARM RELIEF

With the Liberal, Progressive and U.F.O. members of the Ontario Legislature voting in a solid Opposition block, the Government late yesterday afternoon carried its Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne by a vote of 65 to 29.

Thus it expressed confidence in itself generally, and in its agricultural policy particularly, for, by a similar vote, it killed two Opposition motions which were in the nature of an amendment and a subamendment to the Address, which "condemned" the Government for "indifference and inactivity in neglecting to afford relief" to the farmers of the Province, and for its "failure" to assist in co-operative enterprises.

With the debate going on intermittently during the last three weeks, Opposition members were bombarding the Government administration in general, but especially its agricultural administration. And, while the Conservatives showed what they thought of this by their solid vote, there was another reply to this criticism.

For it was Hon. John S. Martin, Minister of Agriculture, who wound up the debate with a review of farm conditions in the Province and a picture of the undertakings of his department.

### Scores Liquor Law.

There was only one other speaker in the wind-up yesterday afternoon, that being T. K. Slack (Progressive, Dufferin). He fired some final shots for the Opposition, aiming most of them, as did his fellows, at the Agricultural Department. Then he had a round or two of criticism for the Government on the subject of the Liquor Control Act, a topic which was the basis of much of the Opposition's censure throughout the debate.

This final day of the debate was a quiet one, with none of the crossfire that marked the earlier stages. The end came peacefully. No tension. No breathless moments on how the vote would go. It was just a simple matter of 65 Conservatives being on hand to vote, and of the Opposition mustering 29.

The vote was first taken on a sub-amendment of John G. Lethbridge, Progressive Leader, to the amendment of William E. N. Sinclair, Liberal Leader. While the Sinclair amendment condemned the Government on the grounds that it neglected to give relief to farmers, the Lethbridge subamendment added to it condemnation for its "failure" to encourage co-operative enterprises.

The Opposition voted en bloc for the subamendment, and the Conservatives similarly against it. And then they all agreed to consider the same vote "taken" on Mr. Sinclair's amendment and then on the Address.

### Suggestions for North.

In his opening remarks, continuing the debate, Mr. Slack referred to developments in New Ontario. He suggested to the Government that they drain townships before there was settlement there. The charges might be made against settlers over a 20 or 30 year period. He thought it unwise to open up new sections for settlement while cleared land was not already settled on. Too often had settlers stripped the land of its timber and then moved on.

He warned the Government against a condition in the North country which might in the immediate future result in disastrous forest fires such as swept the North in 1916 and in 1923. All through the North country, he said, there was an accumulation of vegetable matter which in any dry season might be ignited into a conflagration. He suggested that the Government send men into the country early each year to burn over areas all through the North.

He marvelled at the abundant waterways of the North country that were the potential sources of great power. He believed that "there is nothing to prevent the development of that power to substitute for one-half or two-thirds of the coal that we import from the United States now. "I hope, he said, "that the Government sets machinery going to develop the water powers in Northern Ontario and throughout the Province.

### Reformatory Segregation.

Mr. Slack referred to the trip to Guelph on the previous day. He had noted in his inspection of the Ontario Reformatory that many inmates were youths of 18 or 19 years of age. And he had also noted some older men, who looked like "hard cases." And while he commended the administration of the reformatory generally, its "spick and span" interior, he suggested that the young boys, who were not hardened criminals, should at least, in their sleeping quarters, be segregated from the older inmates.

Hon. Lincoln Goldie, Provincial Secretary, stated that "You couldn't segregate them throughout the day. I'll admit that there are people there who shouldn't be there possibly. But I'm not the Magistrate or the Judge. After they come there we look after them."

Mr. Slack had another suggestion for the Government, and that was that they should do something to aid the potato growers. He observed that in his own district, which had as fine potatoes as any, "thousands of bags go begging." In fact, farmers were feeding six, seven and eight bags a day to their stock. "They can't ship to the Toronto market," said he, "because the freightage runs away with the cost." He thought that the Government should "make some arrangements with transportation companies to help us."

### Farm Depopulation.

He pictured a movement off the land instead of on to it. "We are losing thousands of our best settlers," said he. "The Government should do something about this." He pictured one area in his own section of Ontario where 10,000 acres that were being farmed and lived on in 1918 were not occupied today. Most of them were owned by large mortgage companies in Toronto.

"The farmers," said he, "don't want bonuses or doles, but something to assist them stay the day that the mortgage companies are going to foreclose on their mortgages."

Mr. Slack stirred the Premier to a characteristic response when he referred to the St. Lawrence canal project. He asked the latter if he proposed that Canada should construct this canal at its own expense, and then allow the Americans to use it. Premier Ferguson offered to answer the question at once. "I am opposed," said he, "to parting with any of the heritage of this country for a few paltry dollars."

A good deal of Mr. Slack's address was devoted to the Liquor Control Act. With the large income from this source, he declared, the Government should pay 50 per cent. in the old-age pension scheme. "Through the Liquor Control Act the Government would be responsible for many of those who, in the future, would participate in the old-age pension scheme. He advocated that the amount of liquor given to any citizen should be cut down to one quart a week. This did not refer to lighter alcoholic beverages, like beer. Serial numbers should be put on all bottles as a means of trace-back to its source liquor which had been short-circuited.

### Girls Under 18 Drunk.

In further criticism of the liquor law, he declared: "In our own municipal Town Hall the caretaker reported that at a dance held there three girls under 18 years of age had been under the influence of liquor. I assure you that will not happen in that particular hall again, as the Municipal Council has banned that element from using the hall."

He pointed out that more money was spent on liquor than is represented in the building boom of Toronto over a year's period.

Activities of the Government in promoting improvement in the quality of agricultural products and thus advancing the prosperity of farmers were outlined by Hon. J. S. Martin in an effort to refute the charge, contained in the Liberal Leader's amendment, that the Administration had neglected the farming interests. The Department of Agriculture, from the Minister down, he said, gave the greatest thought to farming industry.

In further explanation of the Government's policy of encouraging improvement in quality, Mr. Martin instanced butter, which, he said, now commanded a higher price in the Toronto market than did Danish butter in Great Britain. Cheese and live stock were also mentioned by Mr. Martin in his description of the better markets that had resulted from improved and standardized products. With regard to the latter, he mentioned that at Chicago the Ontario live stock breeders had won 58 championship prizes out of a total of 103.

### Turkeys and Tobacco.

Mr. Martin referred to failures in the Ontario tobacco industry, the cause of which was "absence of a quality product." He spoke for a moment of the turkey farm which the Government had established. It had paid \$5,000 for the farm and last year 966 turkeys had been sold for \$4,803. About \$1,000 worth of tobacco had also been grown on the farm.

Mr. Nixon wondered if the Minister had "any qualms of conscience" in marketing products which were the result of the use of taxpayers' money in competition with some of those very farmer taxpayers.

"We're showing them the way," was Mr. Martin's view. Going on to touch on other agricultural topics, the Minister observed: "We are not worrying so much about the cornborer. We are on the right track now."

In reply to Chris Gardiner (Progressive, East Kent) he stated that the Government would be glad to give any assistance possible in a bean pool undertaking. He suggested that a duty of \$1 a bushel would revolutionize the bean business.

Mr. Martin said that while some people might think that the agricultural industry "suffered" in a comparison with the mining industry in the Province, they should not forget that the latest statistics available, and compiled by the Dominion Bureau, showed that the revenue from dairy products in Ontario in 1927 was \$106,000,000, and that the total revenue from all farm products was more than \$5,000,000.

### Must Be Business Men.

"The farmers of Ontario," he next said, "must be business men. They must be able to handle their own affairs in a businesslike way, and fall in line with the spirit of the times."

The department, said he, was in sympathy with co-operative enterprises, but because of some failures in such undertakings its attitude was "to go slowly." However, it was making a study of, and was in close touch with, co-operative movements.

"In conclusion," said he, "I suggest that it is not in the interest of agriculture to paint a pessimistic picture at the present time. We have thousands and thousands of young men who are making, and going to make, their decision in choosing a career. We must show them that all is not despair in agriculture, and that as the years go on there is a better opportunity for a man to devote his life to agriculture."

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## New Farm Posts

While Hon. John S. Martin's speech in the Legislature yesterday was one of his yearly reviews of agriculture, he had something in the way of an announcement or two. He intimated that the Government would appoint, though not in the immediate future, a permanent official at London, England, to supervise the distribution of shipments of Canadian fruit to favorable markets.

He also forecast a system of grading and shipping potatoes from Ontario with a view to commanding a more favorable position in the market. The Government plans handing this work to a man qualified by knowledge and organizing ability.

He stated also that the Government was studying co-operative enterprises in various places and would soon be in a position to give the assistance that had been asked for, if it was felt that it would be in the interest of co-operative marketing.