

new Milk Act as "a most iniquitous measure," and bluntly pointing out to the House that, while he, like Mr. Sinclair, was not prepared to move an amendment to the motion before the Assembly, it was only because the present Minister of Agriculture was "a new man," and should be given a chance to find his feet.

"Otherwise," said Mr. Nixon, "I would move an amendment, and that amendment would strongly condemn the Government's administration of its Agriculture Department."

Salary Rise Condemned.

Condemnation of the Government's action of last session in raising its salaries from \$8,000 to \$10,000 per year per member, was coupled by Mr. Nixon with a demand for a retroactive 10 per cent. reduction in the same, and in the salaries of higher-priced civil servants, and an expression of his willingness, in the face of existing "hard times," to accept a similar reduction in his own sessional indemnity.

In the impending appointment of a Commission to administer the Security Frauds Act—an appointment which he had advocated last session, and which he thanked the Attorney-General for acting upon—Mr. Nixon stressed the need for a non-partisan appointee.

Such an appointment he felt to be a one-man job. Establishment of a board of administrators would, in his belief, not work satisfactorily.

Ovation for Mr. Sinclair.

Mr. Sinclair received a long and hearty ovation from both sides of the House when he rose to speak. After preliminary reference to the changes in the membership of the House and the Government, and after congratulating the new Liberal member, he referred to the fact that the party had not its Ontario Leader in his place in the House. "The members elected by the Liberal Party are here. They have honored me by permitting me to lead them," said Mr. Sinclair, amid applause. He was, he continued, Leader of the Opposition by virtue of the Legislative Assembly Act.

"As such," he said, "I have a duty to perform. I will analyze legislation and suggest improvements. My legal attainments are at the service of this House. I will also scrutinize the finances. I will try to be of assistance to the House. I hope to serve, not in a critical, captious, biased manner, but in a constructive way which will be helpful to the people. Freed from the limitations of party leadership, I hope to be able to discuss public affairs from a business and economic angle. I am free to give this Legislature my opinion as a Liberal lawyer, a Liberal farmer, and a Liberal citizen of Ontario. I hope the Government will consider suggestions I may make, for I believe I think as very many of the people of Ontario are thinking today. I will make suggestions from experience also, for there are only two members of this House who held seats here before I first came, namely, Hon. Mr. Dunlop, North Renfrew, and Hon. Dr. Godfrey, West York.

Problems of People.

"We are here to transact the business of the Province. Our duties do not stop there. We should try to help the people solve their problems. What are the chief problems? We have unemployment in our urban centres, and we have stagnation in our rural districts. The worker in the factory is working short hours because there is no one to buy the manufactured goods. The farmer is depressed because the workers in the towns cannot consume his produce. The conditions are related to each other. Primarily the problem is a Provincial one. This has been recognized by all the Provinces. The Federal Government has given aid to the Provinces to be used by the Provinces. The problem, therefore, is ours, and this Legislature should make a special effort this session to help solve it, more especially in relation to the condition of agriculture. Before discussing the matter further, or making any suggestions, let me give a few facts and present a pic-

ture of agricultural conditions in Ontario today."

Mr. Sinclair then quoted figures showing that the taxes in Ontario townships were \$28.20 per capita, and 3.8 per cent. of assessed value. Comparing figures for all municipalities as between 1919 and 1929, he said that in the ten years, while the increase in population was only 16.9 per cent., and the increase in assessment 41 per cent., the increase in taxes was 83 per cent., and the increase in debt 91 per cent. The county rate had increased greatly, due to Provincial legislation and taxation. In Ontario County the rate had increased from 1.9 mills in 1910 to 11.7 mills in 1930.

Growth of Taxes.

Claiming that farm taxes had increased tremendously, Mr. Sinclair said that the taxes on his own farm, which he said was typical of all others, had grown steadily from \$22.74 in 1894 to \$122.41 in 1930. He then quoted the price of agricultural produce.

"What had the Province done for agriculture?" asked Mr. Sinclair. He quoted figures to show that a smaller percentage of the total Provincial revenue was being spent on agriculture. In 1919 the percentage of total revenue spent on agriculture had been 6.17. The percentage in 1930 was 4.01.

Mr. Sinclair painted a vivid picture of the plight of a typical Ontario farmer today. The hypothetical instance was of a farmer with 100 acres of good land, good buildings, with machinery, 4 horses, 15 dairy cows, 2 sows, hens, and usual equipment, all paid for. Such an asset would cost at least \$12,000, said Mr. Sinclair, and he figured the farmer should make at least \$2,000, counting interest on investment, wages and profit on his business. Instead, the farmer in this situation would get only \$717.50, Mr. Sinclair said, and produced detailed figures on the management of the farm and price of produce to support this statement. The revenue, he figured, would be \$2,137.50, and the outlay \$1,420.

"This is not wages at \$2 a day," said Mr. Sinclair.

What if He Has Debts?

"This picture is not interesting, but it shows pretty well the condition of the farmer. The farmer I have chosen is the one who has no debts. I leave to the imagination the condition of the farmer with debts. And I imagine they are numerous. If the farmer with no debts is making no money, how is the farmer with debts able to carry on? We boast of agriculture being the basic industry. It sounds well in after-dinner speeches. It sounds well in good times. But how does it sound to the farmer himself today? I would like this House to get the farmer's point of view and the farmer's plight.

"This is no political question for any party to play with. Conditions are not as they are because this Government is in power. There can be some blame attached to the Government, but I am not pressing that now. It is not too late for this Government and this House to study the situation and try to work out some relief.

... always said I never offered a constructive suggestion. That was his way of dismissing what I said. I do not believe the new Premier will adopt that attitude. My suggestion today is that this session should be given over almost entirely to a study of farm conditions in Ontario. I am making the suggestion early so that it cannot be said there is no time.

Special Committee.

"Some years ago we had the Agricultural Inquiry Committee, composed of a few members of the House, who travelled in many parts of the Province seeking information on conditions. That was good so far as it went. The inquiry in the different localities where the committee went was hasty and superficial. Conditions then were not depressed and there was not a great interest shown. The recommendations were not very fully acted upon after the committee had reported.

"The Agricultural Committee is one of the standing committees of the

House. It has been a society for the entertainment and improvement of the farmer members of the Legislature. As such it has been largely useless, especially to the farmers of Ontario. I would suggest for this session that this practice be discontinued and that the committee meet as an evidence-taking committee. It should call as witnesses farmers from different parts of Ontario who are carrying on and operating their own farms. Evidence should be taken down and kept as a public record. The inquiry should be as to: (1) Existing conditions on Ontario farms; (2) the state of the industry generally; (3) causes contributing to that state; (4) suggestions of remedies; (5) what further Provincial aid and in what form.

"The scope of the inquiry should be unlimited. After the evidence has been taken the committee should make a report to the House, with a summary of the facts and the committee's recommendations. The report could then be debated in the House. The publicity from the inquiry, the report and the debate would be a great aid by itself, but I am satisfied that out of it all would come much that would be used to the advantage of the farmers and the improvement of their condition. Part of the findings might relate to matters of Federal jurisdiction. I am sure the Bennett Government would not resent receiving them from the Henry Government. The evidence and the report should certainly be forwarded to Ottawa, in any event.

To Aid Agriculture.

"To assist in this inquiry I will work with any lawyers or members of the Government, or any other group in the House. I realize the position of agriculture today. I believe we can improve it by our united effort and study. Believing this, as I do, I am urging this line of action for this Legislature at the present session.

"This is my suggestion today. I am moving no amendment to the Address. I hope the Progressives will move none. This is no time for political manoeuvring. It is a time for all to give our best thought along a common line. It is a time to try to render a real service to the people. They are looking for us to do something. I am prepared to do my part, and I believe all the Liberals will do theirs.

"I realize the Government will get the credit for what is accomplished. I cannot help that. I will be satisfied if we succeed in doing something to start an improvement in agricultural conditions. If we succeed, our towns and cities will soon feel the benefits. Poverty and distress will begin to disappear.

"To make this suggestion possible for the Government to act upon, I have declined today to criticize any of its policies or its financial record. I have not even made suggestions of agricultural policies or remedies, lest these by inference be regarded as criticism indirectly given.

"I realize conditions today and have decided that in the interests of the whole Province the suggestion I make is worthy of the support of every member of this House. I hope it will be adopted. Above all, I hope our efforts will result in the accomplishment of what I have already indicated, an improvement in agricultural conditions, and therefore an improvement in general conditions."

Too Many Departments.

At the outset of his remarks, Mr. Nixon chaffed Premier Henry for taking too great a load on his shoulders. Where his predecessor in office, Mr. Ferguson, had run the Ministry of Education in addition to acting as Prime Minister, Mr. Henry (said Mr. Nixon) was handling two additional departments—Education and Highways.

"I claim and urge," said the Progressive Leader, "that these two great departments should have the attention of individual Ministers—the best that can be picked out. Either my honorable friend is to be greatly overworked or these departments are to suffer."

Mr. Nixon derided the contents of the Speech from the Throne, saying that the document was the most barren he ever saw; that it was given over en-