

Farquhar Oliver, U.F.O., South Grey, Moves an Amendment to Address, Scoring Administration for Failing to Establish and Maintain Markets for Farm Produce

POETRY IS QUOTED BY TORY MEMBER

Agriculture had the floor again in the Ontario Legislature yesterday, but the Agriculture Department got a rude slam to one side when Farquhar Oliver, young U.F.O. member for South Grey, declining to follow the "moonlight and roses" attitude of the Liberal and Progressive Leaders in regard to the Henry Administration's handling of farm problems, moved an amendment to the Address motion that would commit the House to a disapproval of "the failure of the Government to establish and maintain markets for farm products, so that by increased selling volume the farmer could meet his high overhead cost."

The amendment was seconded by T. K. Slack, Progressive, Dufferin.

Coupled with Mr. Oliver in his debate criticism of Government policy—if far less direct and less caustic in his tone than the first-named—was A. H. Acres, Conservative, Carleton, who usually can be depended to urge a flat rate for Hydro, in defiance of Government policy; to appeal for an extended system of Agricultural Representatives; and to "barrage" the excessive taxation now burdening the rural areas, and who did not disappoint the crowded galleries of the day. A third speaker, who pushed the debate on another notch toward a wind-up, was W. W. Staples, Conservative, South Victoria, who poked a lot of fun at the allegedly strained relations between the Liberals and the Prohibitionists on the liquor question, and who recited Edgar Guest and a couple of other rhymers by the name of Poe—and was it Longfellow?—in support of his general argument against Opposition criticism of the Government and its varied objectives.

Regrets Lack of Interest.

Continuing his speech in the debate, Mr. Acres declared that it was a matter of regret that agriculture was at such a low ebb. Farmers, he said, were discouraged by reading reports of the success of banks, while no agriculturists were enjoying successful years.

"I regret," he declared, "that business men and banks are not taking a keener interest in the agricultural situation."

Coming to the question of education, Mr. Acres stated that the children of all classes of people were entitled to a public school education. "But secondary and university education should be paid for by the individual benefiting," he asserted. "Their education should be their capital investment to which they look forward for returns later on, just as a farmer who buys a farm looks forward to a return on his capital investment."

All Provincial highways should be paid for by taxes on gas, tonnage and motor licenses, and should no longer be made a charge against the rural taxpayer. "The cost of the highways should be charged to the user," he declared.

He professed to see a greater consideration of rural users of Hydro dur-

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ing the last few years, and complimented the Hydro Commission on the increases it had made in bonuses to transmission lines in rural sections. "It won't be five years until we have one flat rate for all hydro users," he predicted, amid applause from the Opposition benches. "This is an age when we want equal rights, and no special privileges."

Packing companies had merged to such an extent that that industry was one big merger under two names in Canada, he said, and the result had been a reduction of exports to the market of Great Britain from \$96,000,000 to \$21,000,000 in six years. The only remedy for live-stock breeders rested in the railways and packing companies getting back the British market. The Wheat Pool, he declared, was organized and operated for the benefit of the banks.

Scores Western Farmer.

He indulged in a vigorous criticism of Western farmers, who, he said, took little care of their fertile land, used labor only a few months, and that imported, and left Eastern farmers to look after their employees following the harvest.

There should be a reorganization of conditions from start to finish, he affirmed. Especially he suggested that agricultural district representatives should have real live assistants. The Government, he thought, should assist small fairs and exhibitions to a greater extent. To cure the present unemployment situation, he suggested that the railways should engage in the transportation of coal from one part of Canada to another. Trades unions might help in the return of prosperity. With the increased purchasing power of the dollar, the members of the building trades could accept lower rates of wages to encourage building operations. Mr. Acres said he had recently spent five days in Russia, where "118,000,000 workers are working to produce. How are you going to stop them marketing that produce? We in Canada will have to get down to some basis to offset that competition."

No Longer Able to Pay.

Reverting to the tax for roads, he declared that Carleton County had come to the point where it couldn't pay additional road taxation.

"I want to tell you," he said, "that the time has come when you can't continue this increase in taxation. There are places in Carleton County that cannot rent for the taxes, electric bill and insurance costs." The only hope of remedy that he saw was assistance for agriculture. The assistance to agriculture in meeting world competition was not sufficient at present. He criticized Toronto for paying laborers 40 to 50 cents per hour, declaring that twice the number should be employed at 20 cents per hour.

Mixed Farming Worst Off.

It was mixed farming that, in most sections of Ontario, was the worst off, argued Mr. Oliver. No prosperity was to be found in this class of agriculture except in cases of men who "specialized." Any person who had a farm, "bought and paid for," was either one who had had it left to him or a chap who through "unusual circumstances" had found himself in better shape than the "great majority of his brethren."

"Overhead charges," claimed the young South Grey member, was chiefly back of the present agricultural depression. Government services were splendid things, he added, and the farmer was glad to avail himself of them, but they also represented over-

head charges, and entered into the question of "burdening down" the farm-companies will hardly take farm risks." In view of the existing economic depression and the high rates charged by companies, farm buildings, he said, are made "very inflammable."

Crossing swords with the policy pronouncements of Hon. T. L. Kennedy, Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Oliver stated that it was not a case of the home market being too long overlooked, as the Minister had claimed, but a case of the home markets being "too long over-emphasized." He was in complete agreement, he said, with earlier debate statements of D. J. Taylor (Progressive, North Grey) that before long Western Canada hogs would be coming into this Province "to further glut up a market already overcrowded." There was no doubt, in the face of such a threat, he said, that Ontario had to look outside her own confines for markets.

All in Old Report.

In moving his amendment, Mr. Oliver referred to the report of the 1924 Agricultural Inquiry Committee, a report which he presumed had been lying in some dusty pigeonhole of the Agricultural Department for the past five years—a report which, he added, could ably tell the Government "what is wrong with agriculture" if they took the trouble to look into it. In his firm opinion the Government had not pursued the vigilance with respect to the which, nowadays, he argued, were absolutely necessary to farming—the virgin fertility having practically disappeared from the soil of Ontario—Mr. Oliver claimed there was plenty of room for an investigation into the prices which they demanded. One type of Holland fertilizer, which he had had under consideration for his own farm, could, he contended, be laid down in Toronto from Holland at \$11, while the price asked for "the same thing" by Canadian companies was \$24 and \$25.

Should Cut Hydro Rates.

Although "a strong believer in rural Hydro" and its advantages to the farmer, Mr. Oliver submitted that the Government should get the prices down, after the fashion advocated by Mr. Acres. Another matter to which the Government might well devote some attention was that of insurance.

"Today," he claimed, "insurance man "to a point where he soon won't be able to pay his taxes."

Speaking of commercial fertilizers, agricultural industry it should have. Talk of future aid and future action would not down easily, he said, in the face of the little that had been done in the past. One could not, he felt, expect much from departmental investigations now under way.

W. W. Staples (Conservative, Victoria South), severely criticized the Liberal candidates, and speakers for "wading through mud" in the last by-elections, and declared it to be to the everlasting credit of Mr. Sinclair, Liberal House Leader, that he refrained from participating in such campaigns. The results of the by-elections had vindicated the Attorney-General, he affirmed.

Mr. Staples twitted William L. P. Newman (Liberal, Victoria North) as a member of the Prohibition Union who had been reported to have said at the Liberal convention, "We have to get rid of the temperance issue." The Conservative Party, he declared, believed in moral suasion and Government control to promote temperance. He also praised the social welfare activities of the present Administration, as well as its agricultural and its public health policies.