

# Agriculture Remains Great Basic Industry, States Hon. J. S. Martin

## Minister of Agriculture Makes Vigorous Defense of Work Done by Inquiry Committee, and Stresses Value of Co-operative Farming

### ACHIEVE ECONOMY WITHOUT STINTING

A vigorous defense of the work of the Agricultural Inquiry Committee was made in the Legislature yesterday afternoon by Hon. John S. Martin, Minister of Agriculture, when, speaking in connection with the completion of agricultural estimates, he reviewed the activities of his department.

It was suggested that the department might have itself supplied the farmers of the Province with the information acquired by the committee and that the department officials might have accomplished the results brought about by the committee. Mr. Martin admitted that the department might have obtained the information given to the Commission, but maintained that the committee's work had resulted in distinct benefits to the agricultural industry in the Province, and that all expenditures in connection with its activity were fully justified.

#### An Extended Address.

Speaking for an hour and a half, the Minister dealt with the problems faced by farmers, outlined the educational work being carried on in connection with the agricultural industry, explained the advantages of co-operative marketing, and detailed research work being done by his department in connection with the fertilizing of the farm lands of Ontario. At 6 o'clock he adjourned, to complete his review today.

In his opening remarks Mr. Martin pointed out that a comparison of revenue showed that agriculture was still the great basic industry of the Province. "The revenue from dairy cows alone," said he, "equals the revenue from lands and forests, even including all lumber, paper and pulp operations. And it far exceeds the mining revenue."

In mining operations, said he, the mineral wealth of the Province was being used up. But proper agricultural operations did not use up the Province's agricultural wealth. "Last year," said he, "there was \$250,000,000 in revenue in field crops. This year we will no doubt exceed that. With proper farming, our revenues is continuous. There is no reason why in a 100 years from now we should not repeat and exceed each yearly crop, increasing the returns from the land each year."

#### Practiced Economy.

His department, he went on, had tried to practice economy without stinting. Every branch had gone ahead during the past year. Progress in certain branches had been accentuated. The total expenditures for the year were \$2,237,000, a little less than the year before. While the expenditures showed quite an increase over the expenditures of \$1,183,975 in 1923, revenue had also increased. The principal increases in expenditures, he said, had been made in the Dairy Branch, where the staff of three years ago had been doubled.

"Is there any reason," inquired L. W. Oke (U.F.O., East Lambton), "why your department couldn't have got that information and brought about the results without the efforts of the committee? It seems to me that in your department all the information should be available without the help of a committee. It seems an extraordinary expenditure. I want your candid opinion in this matter."

#### An Impartial Committee.

"Possibly we could have obtained the information that the committee obtained," replied the Minister. "But this was an impartial committee appointed by the Legislature, members of this House. Our officers haven't the prestige of members of this House, and the members of the committee received a better reception than would our officials."

"Is it not a fact," asked J. G. Lethbridge (Progressive, West Middlesex), "that there was a request from the organized farmers of the Province for a Commission?"

"Yes," said Mr. Martin, "the Commission was asked for by the U.F.O."

"The economic side of the agricultural industry," said Mr. Martin, continuing, "is of supreme importance. The farmer faces the question of making a living, of providing for a family. Not only of making a living, but having a standard of living equal to that of other people."

"To induce the boy on the farm to be a farmer," he declared, "we must be able to prove that he can make just as good a living on the farm as in the city."

Two factors in the progress of the agricultural industry, said he, were increased production and marketing. "We are doing everything we can to assist in co-operative marketing," said he.

#### Benefits of Co-Operation.

Illustrating what might be done in a co-operative movement for the marketing of apples, he referred to the Norfolk Fruit Growers' Association, which celebrated its twenty-first birthday last week. Before the association was organized apples brought a dollar a barrel. Last year the growers received from \$2.50 to \$5 a barrel, depending on the various grades and types of the apples.

The association, by campaign literature, urged the growing of high-grade apples, and gave technical advice to the growers. And the cost for having "all this work done," said Mr. Martin, was only 25 cents a barrel.

Outlining the increases in prices of farm products during the last 25 years, the Minister referred to reports of the markets in Simcoe. In 1902 chickens brought 7 cents a pound; now 40 cents a pound. In 1902 turkeys were 9 cents a pound; now 47 cents.

#### Increases in Live Stock.

"But," he said, "the big increases were in live stock." He continued to give costs for 1902 and the present, as follows: Bacon, 12 to 14 cents, 30 to 35 cents; butter, 16 to 18 cents, 45 to 50 cents; live hogs, \$4.50, \$10.50; dressed hogs, \$6.75, \$15 to \$16.

"The big money today," said he, "is not so much in planting and selling grain. That is rudimentary farming. We recommend that grain grown shall be fed on the farm and turned into whatever products you are interested in."

He felt that the agricultural courses carried on by the department did much to keep young people on the farm and interested in farming. Last year in Ontario there were 41 one-month courses, with a total attendance of 1,362, and 7 three-month courses attended by 360 boys and 460 girls.

#### Soil Surveys.

Next he dealt with the "soil surveys" being made in various parts of the Province. The demand for such surveys had really come from the tobacco industry, and in Kent and Essex, where many farmers wondered if their land was suitable for tobacco growing, the surveys had been completed. Elgin was one of the next counties to be surveyed, he said, adding: "We intend to expand, and undertake this work on a larger scale."

He referred to experiments carried on in 24 counties in connection with the fertilization of soil. The findings were just made public, describing the best methods of fertilizing. It had been found that when land had been fertilized the results did not wear out in one season, but went on year after year.

In outlining work at the Ontario Agricultural College, Mr. Martin paid high tribute to Prof. Zavitz. Dr. Zavitz, he said, had labored energetically, until now he was in poor health "He is," said the Minister, "a martyr in the service of the Province."

Just before adjourning Mr. Martin pointed out that research work had resulted in farm production that had meant some \$200,000,000 to the Province.

## GOVERNMENT DENIES BLAME FOR CALLING COMMITTEE SO LATE

### But Liberal Leader Sinclair Attributes to It All Responsibility

#### RESOLUTIONS HELD OVER

Liberal Leader William E. N. Sinclair has seven resolutions concerning the public accounts of 1925-26 which he intends moving for purposes of investigation, but he will not move them until the Public Accounts Committee of the 1928 session of the Legislature convenes.

Mr. Sinclair was unprepared to go on yesterday when the committee of this session expressed itself in unmistakable terms as ready to hear evidence and to sit as long as required for that purpose, and consequently he had to rest his case with the generosity of the committee that will be appointed next session.

Mr. Sinclair declined, when challenged by Conservative members of the committee, to divulge the identity of parties whose names are connected with resolutions, on the ground that the names might be "bandied about" during the year, with the possibility of injustice being done.

Yesterday's committee sitting—the first and only one of the present session—proved to be a pyrotechnical affair, that was "touched off" the moment Mr. Sinclair, reiterating that the Government, and it alone, was responsible for the late calling of the committee, and that it would be "impossible to conduct a probe at such a late hour," proposed in a motion, seconded by Alex. McWhinney, member for North Bruce, that the public accounts for the year ended be referred to the 1928 committee.

#### Ready to Go Home.

"We have discharged our duties as members of the Legislature," said Mr. Sinclair. "The opportunity to go into the accounts has gone by. Members have made arrangements to go back to their businesses. With the Assizes coming on at Whitby, it is practically impossible for me to stay here beyond the date at which we hope to close the House. The solution is that the public accounts be open for investigation next year. Under the strict rules, that is not possible, but if the committee says so it can be done."