

APPENDIX No. 3

made of this subject a special study, and had done a great deal in England to promote the co-operative movement there. Through the good offices of our chairman, we succeeded in obtaining the presence of His Excellency, and I venture to say that the enlightenment he has given the committee will be most useful to its members in preparing their report and also to the House of Commons itself when it comes to study the measure. I am glad to avail myself of this opportunity to state that this is not the first occasion upon which His Excellency, since he has come to Canada, has manifested the warmest interest in everything that could in any way further and advance the welfare of the people and the progress of the country. Of this he has given manifest evidence this morning again. It is indeed an admirable illustration of the grandeur and elasticity of our political institutions that we should thus have the advantage of seeing one occupying such a high position lay aside for a moment his official character and come as a private citizen to give us the benefit of his great experience of the advantages of the co-operative movement which he acquired while in England. I would like to say, Mr. Chairman, that I listened with particular interest to the suggestion made by His Excellency concerning the unlimited liability character of the Raiffeisen banks and the opinion he brought to us of Mr. Wolff, one of the most eminent experts in England, on this subject that unlimited liability is desirable. Of course, as we all know, and as His Excellency knows, there is an objection amongst Anglo-Saxon people and those whose institutions are modelled after the Anglo-Saxon plan, to unlimited liability. Nevertheless, we will, when we come to study the details of the Bill, put in practice as far as possible, the suggestion which, upon that point, has been made to us by His Excellency. Without wishing to detain any longer His Excellency or this committee, I beg to move, Sir, seconded by my hon. friend Mr. Smith:—

‘That this committee desires to place on record its indebtedness to Earl Grey, and tenders His Excellency its thanks for his attendance this morning, and for the valuable information he has given this committee, as well as for his deep interest in the cause of co-operation.’

Mr. SMITH.—As a member of the select committee appointed to consider this Bill, I have very much pleasure in seconding the motion of my honourable friend, Mr. Monk. His Excellency has been kind enough to make a personal reference to myself, as having experience of the operation of the principle of co-operation in England. I desire to say that that is so; and one of the most important influences, as I consider, in my training and experience, has emanated almost absolutely and entirely from the operation of that principle in the Motherland. I regard the principle of the co-operative movement in Canada as important from one standpoint principally, and that is in its disposal of the present condition of credit in this country. I came to Canada fifteen years ago—this may be a personal reference, but I desire to illustrate the point I am making—a poor man, having brought up a family without the expenditure of single pound on the credit system. I never once in my life purchased an article that I did not pay the money for, but when I came to Canada, I found, in British Columbia, in Vancouver Island, that the credit system was prevalent everywhere. Under this system of credit the miners of Vancouver Island had their monthly payments mortgaged before they would get them. In my opinion, Mr. Chairman, the operation of the credit system, as a business principle, in any country to such an extent is a serious detriment to the mental and moral improvement, and the elevation of its citizens. If there is one thing more than another which the co-operative principle teaches, it is that a man should be thrifty; it teaches him to economize even with his small earnings, and the importance of paying for everything he purchases. I am surprised to find that, seventy years after the enactment of a law providing for the incorporation of co-operative societies in England, we are discussing the importance of the same principle in Canada. Perhaps in the consideration of this subject by the committee I have been a little impatient, because I thought that