

Government proposed to give a grant for an agricultural exhibition or a woollen factory, it would be enough for them in the speech to allude to it in general terms. But I need not enlarge upon the subject, as I do not think that the hon. Leader of the Opposition really expects any very definite answer to his question.

Hon. LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION.—The reply of the Hon. Attorney General has certainly been very evasive. If the Government have not decided what branch of industry is to be encouraged, this part of the Address is merely a piece of buncombe.

Mr. BRECKEN.—There is one subject which may probably come before the House this session that should not be looked upon as a party question; I allude to the fisheries. It is a branch of industry next in importance to agriculture. We have all heard how necessary it is to the prosperity of a country that its exports should exceed its imports. Notwithstanding all the improvements which are being effected in the art of agriculture, it is not a very money-making business; but if we could, in addition to farm produce, export a considerable quantity of fish, we might turn the balance of trade largely in our favor. We see our neighbors sending down vessels to our coast, splendidly fitted up for fishing, and no doubt they find it remunerative, or they would not continue the business. We are surrounded by fish, and if others can come a distance and take them at a profit, we should look after the trade. I am generally of opinion that a trade should not be subsidized; but as regards the fisheries, we are at present laboring under a disadvantage. As a result of the repeal of the Reciprocity Treaty, our mackerel are subjected to a duty of two dollars a barrel on entering the United States; and as there is a probability that the American Government will soon give up their Japanese policy towards the Colonies, a little assistance for a time might prevent the trade here from wholly languishing. We know that the fishing business is generally carried on by shares—that the men employed are paid by receiving a certain proportion of the catch, and if the fish bring a low price, the fishermen realize but small wages, and consequently will refuse employment in Colonial bottoms. Unless, then, something is done, it is supposed that our young men, who have become experienced in the business, will remove to the United States. I do not say that these are my views; but I have heard them advanced by parties at public meetings. If the Government, however, intend to assist this branch of trade, they should have said so in the Address. As they purpose to develop the resources of the Colony, they ought to have stated their policy. Probably before the Session is over, we shall have petitions presented to this House, which will test their views on the question of fishery bounties.

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL.—The bounty question was before the House last year, and it is strange that the hon. member for Charlottetown did not evince the same anxiety on the matter then as he appears to do now. His party had a large majority last Session, and had been for some years in power; still they did nothing to encourage the fisheries. We have had the management of affairs for only a few weeks, and already we are called upon by the Opposition to state our policy with respect to granting a bounty to encourage the fisheries. Such a display of

patriotism on the part of hon. members on the other side of the House, regarding a question which, so late as last year, they quietly shelved, is somewhat extraordinary. I am deeply impressed with the importance of a bounty for the object referred to, and am aware that my constituents feel keenly on the subject; but the policy of the Government is not yet fully developed on the point, though it is just possible that before the close of the Session we may be able to do something for this branch of business.

Hon. Mr. LAIRD.—The Hon. Leader of the Opposition is very anxious to hear our policy. I hope whatever that policy may be, our records will not be darkened by such proceedings as some of those of the late Government. Hon. members belonging to that party cannot show much that they did to develop local industry. The only woollen factory, I believe, on the Island, is established in the district which I have the honor to represent. The enterprising owner petitioned this House that the duty might be remitted on some machinery which he was importing to improve his factory; but the late Government, I understand, threw his petition under the table, for it was never even seen by the member for that part of the district. I trust the party at present in power will never thus turn the cold shoulder to those who are endeavoring to develop our manufactures. In reference to agriculture, they have been tolerably liberal; they have spent some £4000 in establishing a stock farm, which has as yet accomplished very little for the benefit of the Island generally. The only share of the stock which has come to the County in which I reside is, I believe, a few little pigs and one lamb. (Laughter.) I fear that the farm in question has not been properly managed, for I hear that some of the young stock have been worried by the dogs of parties who were admitted on the premises. I am inclined to the opinion that it would be less expensive to import stock every year than to keep up a farm for raising pure breeds. We know that, as a general rule, the Government cannot conduct any business so economically as it can be done by private enterprise.

Hon. LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION.—As regards the petition to which the hon. member for Bedeque has referred, it was laid before the Executive under the rule which gives the government the initiation of money votes. They brought it before the members of the party in caucus; but there was not a majority in its favor, though I myself supported it, and went to the store of a gentleman, who is now a member of this House, to obtain information on the subject. If the hon. member's colleague did not see the petition it was because he would not attend meetings of caucus at that time; and if he thus neglected the interests of his constituents, the blame should rest upon him, and not upon the Government of the day. With respect to the stock farm, it was established principally to avoid the risk of importation, as on one occasion the Government nearly lost the whole of some valuable animals, purchased in Britain, on their passage out to this Island. Certain competent persons were appointed to take charge of that farm when it was established, among whom were the Hon. George Beer, Dr. Jenkins, the present Liberal member for the city—and last but not least, Hon. Alexander Laird, the father of the hon. member for Bedeque, and if they did not attend to their duty, I cannot understand why