

The New Agricultural Policy

SIR ROBERT BOND'S EXPOSURE OF THE SCHEME.

Seymour, Downey and Devereaux Pilloried Before the Bar of Public Opinion.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.
March 9th, 1911.

SIR ROBERT BOND—The question of Agriculture is a great theme; it is one that has engaged the attention of some of the greatest men the world has produced, from the time of Cato, the great Roman Censor, who was a practical and scientific farmer and wrote a treatise on Agriculture, down to my hon. friend, the Minister of Agriculture, who has introduced this bill, and impressed himself upon the future by the novelty of his proposals and the consequences of his action. Agriculture has engaged the attention of this Legislature many times in the years that have passed, many schemes had been propounded, but I regret to say, without any material success until the year 1908, when the movement approved by all progressive countries for the promotion of Agriculture was adopted almost unanimously by both branches of the Legislature. The present Government has destroyed the effect of that movement, as I shall presently show. I did not have the privilege of listening to the whole of the remarks of the Minister of Agriculture when he introduced this bill on Friday last, but from what I did hear him say, and after perusing his report on the work of the Agricultural Board for the year ending 31st December, 1910, I am led to the conclusion that the "New Agricultural Policy" of the present Government which was heralded with such a flourish of trumpets on the part of newspapers supporting the Government, consist—

1. In finding something to do for their supporters in this House;
2. In prescribing what those hon. members shall do, as a sort of justification for their appointment; and
3. In destroying the foundation that was laid by the late Government upon which it might reasonably be hoped that an Agricultural population might be built up from native material.

Agriculture, the great Lord Beaconsfield declared, was "the invention of the gods and the employment of heroes." Agriculture, the Minister in charge of this Bill has declared, is the invention of the People's Party, and the employment of needy porters. I do not use the word needlessly, but by conveying the idea of men who have no profession or business of their own and who must needs have employment at the hands of the Government if they are to devote time to the business of this House. Last session an Act was passed by the Legislature which instructed this "New Agricultural Policy" at the tail end of which was inserted a clause that "the provisions of Chapter 4 of the Consolidated Statutes (second series) shall not apply to any person who may be appointed members of the said Board of Agriculture."

"I was not in this House when the Act was under discussion, but the wording was so adroit and apparently so innocent that those who sit on this side of the House permitted it to pass without question or comment. It was never supposed of course, it could not have been contemplated, that there was wrapped up in that section an element destructive of the very first principle of the independence of Parliament.

This Tail-End Section was the kernel of the Act, the other Sections, as we now know, were but the shell in which the kernel was concealed and protected.

Sir, if it had not been for the passing of that section Messrs. Seymour, Downey and Devereaux, members elect for Harbor Grace, St. George's and Placentia Districts, could not have retained their seats in this House, for having accepted offices of profit under the Crown, in accordance with our Legislative Disabilities Act their seats must have become vacant. The Legislative Disabilities Act was passed to secure the independence of this House, the great Mother of Parliaments—the British Parliament—has ever recognized that in order to maintain the honor of the nation it is essential that Parliament which is the source of law, authority and power, shall be composed of free men, wholly independent of Government support or emolument. This ideal has been embodied in its legislation for hundreds of years, and as been adopted and carried out in all the legislatures of the world that have taken the British Parliament as their model. The British Parliament has declared that "if any members accept any office of profit from the Crown during such time as he shall continue a member, his election shall be and is hereby declared void, and a new writ shall issue for each new election as if such person was naturally dead." Our Legislative Disabilities Act, to which I have referred, is based on the Imperial law, and provides "Whenever any member of the House of Assembly of this Colony shall—

1. Accept any office, place or appointment or emolument from or under the Crown, or the Government; or
2. From any Board or Public Body, the members whereof are nominated by the Government . . . he shall by writing under his hand tender to the Governor the resignation of his seat in the said House of Assembly, or his seat shall thereupon become vacant."

There are sections in our Legislative Disabilities Act defining offences that may be held without violating the law, but they do not apply to the cases I have under review, and hence arose the necessity for what I have termed the "tail-end" clause of the Agricultural Act.

tural Act of last session; a clause that at once destroyed the independence of the members I have referred to; that deprived the respective districts they represent of that free and independent representation that they believed at the period of election they had secured; that has violated the compact of honor and trust between the electors and the elected; and that has brought discredit and I think dishonor upon this House. It was, I submit never contemplated by this House when it passed the Agricultural Act of last session that such a disgraceful condition of things could or would ensue. These three members who today support the Government are their paid servants, and their very existence as officials and the emoluments they enjoy are subject not to the will of this Legislature but to the favor of the Government that appointed them. Sir, these members by continuing to hold office of profit have a direct personal pecuniary interest in the legislation that is now under discussion, and it cannot but be clear to the House that their continuing to hold a seat is a breach of trust contrary to public policy, incompatible with the spirit of our Parliamentary Constitution, and with that independence and freedom which lie at the very basis of representative government. Follow this matter to its logical conclusion. If a Government, in the manner I have described, appoint three of its supporters in this House to positions of emolument, it may appoint twenty-three, and thus we might witness a corrupt Government sustained in office for four years by the purchased support of a majority of this House. The three members, to whom I have most respectfully allude, according to the Public Accounts, the drawing salaries at the rate of eighteen hundred dollars per year. This in itself is disgraceful when we have regard to the services rendered. There is no departmental officer in the Colony, taking into consideration the responsibilities of office, who is so well paid as these three men. But the question is a minor consideration, and apart from the all important one with which I have dealt, we have to ask ourselves what are they doing, what work of public utility are they performing? Agriculture is a science. Will any one contend that any of these hon. members possesses a theoretical or practical knowledge of that science? A theoretical knowledge can only be obtained by close study, and a practical knowledge by employment. The hon. members themselves will scarcely have the hardihood to advance either qualification as a justification for their appointment. If they were scientific men, learned in the science of Agriculture, or practical men engaged in the pursuit of Agriculture, the Government might set up a plea on behalf of their appointment.

But, seeing that they are neither Scientific or Practical, We are Forced to Arrive at the Conclusion that the Government Appointed Them Simply and Solely in Order to Provide Them With Jobs at the Public Expense.

Now, in the second place we have to consider what it is that the Act defining the "New Agricultural Policy" prescribes as the duties of these three members, who with the Minister of Agriculture and Mines and a secretary constitute "The Agricultural Board." They have to compile "Agricultural or farm notes," whatever that means, for the local press; "to deliver lectures on Agriculture throughout the Colony," in "compile an Agricultural Primer for schools," and "to superintend the formation of Agricultural Societies in all the electoral districts." In this twentieth century, when knowledge runs to and fro and is ever increased, and every intelligent man is heir of all the ages, in respect that the knowledge accumulated by scientific and practical men in all ages and in all parts of the world is readily obtainable through books and pamphlets, does it not appear as the highest folly to pay three men at the rate of eighteen hundred dollars per year each to "compile farm notes," and "an Agricultural Primer" for one hundred dollars we might obtain a supply of such literature sufficient to meet our present requirements, a hundred thousand times over. As regards "the formation of Agricultural Societies in the Electoral Districts," could not any intelligent man in those Districts superintend the formation of Agricultural Societies without the assistance of three unscientific and non practical men from this House? They have done so before, so presumably they can do so now. But of what practical use is the "formation of Agricultural Societies" where there are no farmers? In every country in the civilized world there are Agricultural Societies, but they consist of farmers; they are formed the world over for stimulating agricultural effort amongst farmers; they are associations of farmers who meet to exchange ideas and to profit by the experience of their respective experiments. That is precisely what Dr. Robertson told you. In his most admirable address, a copy of which has been tabled as a report, he said: "We have found in Canada that Agricultural Societies are an effective means of attaining the improvement of farming methods and of awakening further interest in further improvements." Mark what he says, "for the improvement of farming methods." That means that where farming is an industrial occupation Agricultural Societies are an effective means of attaining the improvement of the methods employed in the cultivation of the soil. It does not mean that by such Societies you are going to make farmers out of fishermen for they do not know anything about "farming methods"; nor can they know until they are taught. Outside of this city suburb, and two or three other small localities you have no farmers. Then what is the use of Agricultural Societies, and employing an enormous wage three able-bodied men to go around this country proclaiming such nonsense as "New Agricultural Policy"? It is a willful waste, as I said the other day, of the public funds. If you want to distribute a few garden seeds or animals amongst the poor fishermen it can be done with greater satisfaction to them by forwarding direct to their address.

In the third place, What was the foundation laid by the late Government upon which it might reasonably be hoped that an agricultural population might be built up from native material, and that this "New Agricultural Policy" is designed to destroy? It was outlined in a speech delivered by me in this House on the 5th of February, 1908, when introducing Resolutions for the establishment of a Model Farm and Experimental Station in this Colony. I cannot refer you to the original records for information on this point because I find on reference to them that the report of what I said was been deliberately cut out. However, I have a copy of the official report before me which I happened to have amongst my private papers. On the occasion referred to I ventured to express the opinion that the mistake which ran through the whole of the so-called agricultural policies of preceding Governments was the attempt to create farmers out of fishermen, and to blend the two industries of fishing and farming. I endeavored to prove from the history of past efforts that a man could not possibly succeed if he tried to combine these two distinct occupations, for each occupation required the whole time and attention of the man who would be successful. That

While it was Commendable to Encourage.

HONEST CONFESSION.

A Doctor's Talk on Food.

There are no fairer set of men on earth than the doctors, and when they find they have been in error they are usually apt to make honest and manly admission of the fact.

A case in point is that of a practitioner, one of the good old school, who lives in Texas. His plain, unvarnished tale needs no dressing up: "I had always had an intense prejudice, which I can now see was unwarrantable and unreasonable, against all much advertised foods. Hence, I never read a line of the many 'ads' of Grape-Nuts, nor tested the food till last winter. "While in Corpus Christi for my health, and visiting my youngest son, who has four of the ruddiest, healthiest little boys I ever saw, I ate my first dish of Grape-Nuts food for supper with my little grandsons. "I became exceedingly fond of it and have eaten a package of it every week since, and find it delicious, refreshing and strengthening food, having no ill effects whatever, causing no eruptions (with which I was formerly much troubled), no sense of fullness, nausea, nor distress of stomach in any way. "There is no other food that agrees with me so well, or sits as lightly or pleasantly upon my stomach as this does. "I am stronger and more active since I began the use of Grape-Nuts than I have been for 10 years, and am no longer troubled with nausea and indigestion." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

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are the Fishermen to raise such Vegetable Products as were necessary for his own use, to lay down the principle that the Fisherman could at the same time become a Successful Farmer was Entirely a Mistaken Idea.

Surely there is no necessity to labor the point, that a fisherman cannot be made a farmer any more than a farmer a fisherman except by devoting his whole energy and attention to the particular industry. I then proceeded to point out that if this country is to be successful in keeping within its bounds the large sums of money that are now sent abroad for agricultural products, it can only be accomplished in two ways, the first was a **Speedy Process**, the second a **Slower Process**. To accomplish the end desired by the **Speedy Process** it would be necessary to hold out liberal inducements to practical farmers in other countries to come to this Colony and settle; the **Slower Process** would be to educate the youth of this country in the science of agriculture. 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