

Starving Agriculture

(By The Guide Special Correspondent)
Press Gallery, Ottawa, March 31.

The ridiculously small expenditures which have been made by the government of Canada for the advancement of agriculture, compared with the lavish outpouring of public money for other purposes, was brought to the attention of parliament on Wednesday by Arthur Gilbert, the nationalist member for Drummond and Athabasca. Mr. Gilbert, who had prepared for his speech by directing a number of questions to the government as to the expenditures made for different purposes since confederation in 1867, quoted the answers which had been given showing that the government had given 607 million dollars in subsidies to railways, had spent 83 million dollars on the militia, over 17 million dollars in bounties on iron and steel, and only \$14,454,935.48 in forty-four years for arts, agriculture, statistics, civil government and quarantine, which he considered most deplorable. Mr. Gilbert pointed out the great importance of agriculture being carried on under the most advanced methods, and moved a resolution expressing the opinion that at least one-tenth of the national revenues should be expended for the advancement of agriculture, advocating a more effective diffusion of agricultural science among the farming classes, the drainage of land which could be made profitable for cultivation, the foundation and aiding of co-operative agricultural societies, the assistance of abattoirs and cold storage depots established by such societies, and the publication of an agricultural journal for free distribution among the members of these societies. Mr. Gilbert received support from the conservative side of the house, Andrew Broder, Dundas; J. W. Edwards, Frontenac; J. D. Reid, Grenville; E. Paquet, L'Islet; J. E. Armstrong, East Lambton; Joseph Girard, Chicoutimi and Saguenay, and J. D. Monk, Jacques Cartier, speaking in favor of the motion.

Agricultural Representation Small

Mr. Monk warmly complimented Mr. Gilbert on his speech, and remarked that while a fair sprinkling of lawyers was essential in the house he thought there was not a sufficient representation from among the agricultural classes. He referred to an address delivered at the recent convention of the conservation commission by Mr. James, deputy minister of agriculture for the province of Ontario, in which that gentleman presented the idea that while he had experimental farms and stations and agricultural colleges, yet the last word in agricultural science, as the experience of the most advanced countries in the world had proved, was to send to an agricultural district an expert who would live with the people, who would find out the crops most suitable to a particular locality, and who would then teach them how best to farm these crops. One of the principle means of reviving interest in agriculture was the foundation and encouragement of co-operative societies. For years he had endeavored to secure legislation which would permit of the incorporation of co-operative societies, and he asked why it was that during the five or six years this subject had been before the house they had not been able to secure the passage of a law such as was in force in almost every other country in the world, permitting the country people to meet together, work together and combine together, as all other classes of society did, to advance their interests. These attempts, as everyone knew, had failed through the action of the Retail Dealers' Association, a powerful association which had vowed and determined that the farmers and workmen of this country should not have the privilege granted everywhere else, and to all other classes, to organize their modest efforts together. While they themselves obtained legislation to organize and co-operate, they would not allow the agricultural and working classes to enjoy the same privilege. He hoped that as the result of this discussion the two bills in favor of co-operation now before the house would receive the encouragement of the government and be carried into law.

R. Lanctot, Laprairie-Napierville, J. P. Turcotte, Quebec County, and Hon. Sidney Fisher, minister of agriculture, spoke against the motion. Mr. Turcotte finding fault with Mr. Gilbert's proposals on "constitutional grounds."

Hon. Sidney Fisher did not attempt to reply in detail to the speeches from the

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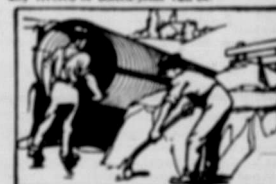
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opposition side, but following the usual practice with regard to motions coming from that quarter endeavored to lay the blame on the conservatives, quoting from the speeches of Sir Charles Tupper

and others to show that they were opposed to large expenditures on agriculture. He said, however, that he was always willing to receive suggestions from members of the house, and pointed

out that there were now thirteen experimental farms maintained by the Dominion government, of which eight had been established in the last five years. Mr. Gilbert's motion was lost without a division.