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That Agricultural Report

(From Morning Advocate July 2, 1917)

WE notice that the Report of the Newfoundland Agricultural Board places the total value of our agricultural products for 1916 at \$7,000,000.00, against \$5,136,732.59 for 1915. If we accept those figures we find an increase of 1 1/4 million dollars in the value of our agricultural products during 1916.

We would hail with much pleasure such an encouraging report did we think it contained anything like reliable information. Unfortunately we cannot accept it even as a basis on which to form some intelligent idea of the value of our crops. We have always regarded this system of agricultural reports the most unreliable, misleading and even ridiculous of any phase of the agricultural policy. It is really pitiful to see those random and highly erroneous statements being accepted as an official and bona fide report, and all calculations bearing on so important an industry being based thereon.

We have on former occasions shown that the report of the various agricultural societies were merely a matter of guess work by men who did not have the means of acquiring sufficient knowledge of the matter they were asked to deal with to enable them to give anything like an intelligent report.

Any person possessing the remotest knowledge of farming in this country and the conditions surrounding it, will realize at once the sheer ridiculousness of some of the statements contained in that report, and will marvel at the idea of any common sense individual accepting it as an authority. We do not go so far as to say that none of those reports of societies are approximately correct, as we realize that when a man or two in some seventy-five sections indulges in even the wildest guessing, there is no knowing but that one or more of them may get near the truth, but to take the agricultural report, compiled in this manner, as a whole to represent the amount of crops grown, is sheer folly.

We do not blame the secretaries of those branches for the reports which are sent in, as those men have no means of securing reliable data. They are supposed to forward a report to the Agricultural Department each year, and as their jurisdiction often cover from ten to fifteen miles in which the majority who operates small farms are personally unknown to them, it is simply absurd to count upon their random report of crops and live stock as anything like reliable.

We have known many cases where we could vouch that the report was ridiculously erroneous. There is, however, a noticeable tendency to over-estimate the crops, as well as the stock kept. In looking over the 1916 report there are many items which would be amusing if it were not for the fact that we are dealing with one of our chief industries, and we cannot afford to treat the matter as a cheap joke.

The whole Agricultural Report could be condemned on the conflicting nature of its compilation, but it is hardly necessary to labour the point, as the average person looks upon the matter as a huge farce. We note that the 1916 potato crop was supposed to be a 5 per cent increase over 1915. At the same time we read in the report of the Kelligrews branch, which section claims to have raised 25,000 barrels, that there was an increase of from 30 to 50 per cent. It seems very clear that if we accept this report as approximately correct that there must be a general falling off in the other sections.

As we have formerly stated, if the Government was desirous of getting anything like a reliable report of the agricultural products of the country there is only one way of procuring it, and that is to make it compulsory for each farmer to send an annual return to the Department, giving a reliable statement of the amount of crops raised, as well as the number of live stock owned by him, the same to be forwarded not later than Dec. 31st. It would then be an easy matter to arrive at the value of the product, and we would have something that could be accepted as a basis to judge our agricultural progress by.

It is time that this misleading farce was discontinued, and a more sane and businesslike method of securing information substituted. Our agricultural problems are too important, especially at the present time, to be treated as a joke. Let us get in earnest.

SOLD HIS SCHOONER

NORTH SYDNEY, June 20.—Falling to obtain the necessary help in order to permit him to continue his voyage to Barbados, Capt. Daniel Hamilton, of this town, was obliged to sell the crack schooner Latooka to parties in St. John's, Nfld., several days ago, and return home by train and steamer. Several weeks ago Captain Hamilton, after fitting the vessel up in first-class condition, secured a charter to carry coal from here to St. John's, and a cargo of fish from the latter place to Barbados with a return freight of molasses, a charter that stood to net him about \$2,000. Before leaving here he was handicapped on account of the shortage of men to man the vessel, and after considerable delay and expense he finally cleared for the Newfoundland Capital, in the hope that conditions would improve when he reached St. John's. However, it seemed to be from bad to worse, and one day he ended the trouble by accepting a fairly good offer for the vessel. The Latooka was built for the South Sea sailing business, and made her maiden voyage in command of Captain

FROM THE MUSTY PAST

By JAMES MURPHY

(Continued.)

I wish to remark that my mother was very friendly with the Rev. Mr. Hutchinson; she had for upwards of forty years crossed the Straits of Bell Isle to Battle Hill, where my grandfather did a thriving fishing trade. She also was acquainted with the late Parson Botwood and Parson Disney; both of them used to visit the house of my grandfather. The Rev. Mr. Hutchinson was the father of the estimable wife of Chief Justice Horwood. My mother had not seen the Rev. Mr. Botwood for nearly thirty years until the arrival of Miss Journeaux, the lady who was picked up in 1886 in a boat in the English Channel. She was brought to St. John's from the westward in the steamer "Curlew," and the Rev. Mr. Botwood looked after her while here. One evening my mother called on the Rev. Gentleman, at the time that Miss Journeaux was staying with him, and it is not necessary to assure the readers that Mr. Botwood gave her a right royal welcome for the sake of old times.

In the early days of the House of Assembly in Newfoundland there was a very eccentric person representing Trinity District, named Thomas Fitzgibbon Moore; the Hon. John Kent nicknamed him the "Ram Partridge," later of Dildo. On one occasion Mr. Moore replied to Mr. Kent in the following language: "The sun sets at 4 o'clock and we have no time to spare, so I have a few words to say on the subject before the chair. The Hon. Mr. Kent talked of baby houses, yes, there was a good many baby houses of the Lawyer's Act; there was the baby house of the clerk of the court's salary; there was the baby house of the stone building bill; all these were baby houses and the present question was endeavoured to be made a baby house, but I will never support such baby houses. I'm a free man sent into the house by a free constituency and I'd like all others to be sent in the same way. I was not elected as the Fortune Bay member was, who was proposed in the Counting House, by Mr. Newman's book-keeper and seconded by his clerk (Laughter.) The editor of the Public Ledger, Henry Wintter, whose ears were mutilated on Saddle Hill for his fearless utterances in the press, sparing neither the clerk nor the lawyer, said of Mr. Moore: "For a specimen of the sort of characters which commonly figure in our House of Assembly, what benefit does certainly remain to be seen." In justice to Mr. Moore we have seen in our own time in the House of Assembly men who were best fitted for another position. Mr. Moore wasn't the only "misfit."

The story of the seizure of Mr. Lott, printer in the employ of Mr. Wintter, is a thrilling one, and I will repeat it for the information of the many intelligent readers of *The Advocate*. One night between the hours of ten and eleven o'clock Mr. Lott left the Ledger Office with the intention of taking a walk; he went west and as he was turning the corner of Queen Street, he heard his name called by some person. On the latter drawing near to Lott he said: "Come, Mr. Lott with me as far as the Orphan Asylum, young Wintter is up there very tipsy and will not come home. Lott went off with the man; before they went many yards they were joined by another party and as they were proceeding up Theatre Hill they pinioned Lott's arms behind his back; they took from him his handkerchief and bound it around his eyes. After walking for a quarter of an hour they brought him into a house, where they removed the handkerchief from his eyes, but they still kept his arms pinioned. The walls of the room were covered with white calico; two persons sat at a small table near the fire place disguised in black; they had on gowns similar to those worn by clergymen, their heads and faces were also covered with a close black skull cap, on the table stood pen, ink and paper; one of the men then began to put questions to Lott, two of the questions being in relation to Dr. Kielly. The latter was a most skillful physician;

Matthew Ryan, of this town, who made several successful voyages in her. It is understood Captain Hamilton sacrificed her for a sum in the vicinity of \$4000.00, a snap considering the fancy prices obtained for vessels nowadays.

he was doctor to Mr. Wintter, also to Judge Boulton and to the Governor of that period. He was the first President of the Native Society, and was arrested at the instance of Hon. John Kent for insulting that gentleman, and was brought before the bar of the House of Assembly; a report of which may be found in Newfoundland history. The Doctor in the end came off triumphant. Who is there who has not heard the lines: "Did you ever see Dr. Kielly, Oh! With his boots and spurs stily, Oh! With his three cocked hat and double bow knot, Oh! 'tis he could please the ladies, Oh! The men asked Lott if Mr. Wintter didn't secretly shelter Dr. Kielly at the time the officers of the House of Assembly were in search of him, and also if he wasn't aware that Dr. Kielly left Mr. Wintter's house that night about 12 o'clock, accompanied by some of Mr. Wintter's men and went to his cottage at Riverhead. After questioning him for some time longer they took him out of the House and unbound his arms and let him at liberty. Now should not we who dwell in those quiet times be very thankful; I imagine that we should. The old days were very boisterous and though we love to recall the bravery of the men and the beauty of the women, yet we would feel more happy if such scenes as had often taken place had not done so.

The animosity shown to the natives of Newfoundland by those who dwell among them from other climes was very strong. "Copper Coloured Natives" was the stigma used against them, some of the ablest natives banded together and formed a society called the "Native's Society." Among its ranks were members of all creeds. In many cases the natives were used for political purposes, and when they had served the purpose of the politicians they were forgotten. The Hon. James Tobin said in his place in the Assembly in relation to the Natives: "My friend, the hon. member for Fortune Bay mentioned his having four copper colours at home. In reply I would tell that gentleman that I have one copper colour, and when I go home this night I will take to my embrace that boy and tell him with pride that my first Act of Legislation in his native country was to advocate the rights of his native countrymen and support the claim for office of the natives of the land which had given him birth and his father's blood."

Those were noble sentiments, while we do not object (because it would not be right) to outsiders holding positions in our land, yet now as well as then we find that some of those outsiders are not fit to tie the shoe strings of the native born. When first House of Assembly was opened it was held in a House owned by one Mary Travers. For non-payment of rent we find her putting upon auction contents of the Chamber in which the members assembled. She advertised the sale of the furniture, the Speaker's chair, the cocked hat of the Sergeant of Arms, and a number of other things.

Before concluding, I wish to remind my readers that there is a sufficient lot of racy items of the past if placed in a book would interest any true Newfoundlander. It is a work which I would like to engage at, and it is a great pity that such a work does not receive that appreciation which it ought.

Hope that what I have written may interest my readers, and that they have imbued from its pages something that may add to their privilege of the land that gave them birth. I will now conclude, but ere long I may give them some more reminiscences from the Musty Past.

TOBACCO GOOD FOR THE HUNGARY

(London Daily Chronicle.)
"Eat less and smoke more"—the latest tribute to the charms of Lady Nicotine which comes from the House of Commons, is in a double sense an economic plea. For the more we smoke (and swell the revenue) the less we are likely to eat, as many a struggling scribe could attest. A pipe of tobacco has before now saved a starving man from death, and it is by no means uncommon thing for workmen to go without breakfast and spend the half-hour smoking. They are unconscious believers in the dictum of Charles Lamb—that for the sake of tobacco they would do anything but die.

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