

farm practices that they could and should. The proportion of such farmers to the total number, however, is much less, we believe, than Mr. Flavelle seems to think. It is our opinion also, that the minister of agriculture, Hon. Mr. Duff, thus far has failed to show the "leadership, grasp, vision, enterprise and all that is involved in being the chief of agriculture" that the farmers of Ontario and the public at large have a right to expect. Beyond the performance of the merest routine work, he has not accomplished anything of importance. Instead, he has stood on public platforms all over the province, and announced repeatedly that owing to the heavy expenditures of the government, we need not expect to see any material increase in the appropriations for agricultural work. In an effort, apparently, to strengthen his position he has frequently claimed in public, that the expenditures of his department exceeded those of the Dominion Department of Agriculture, when had he made but the slightest attempt to verify the accuracy of his statement he would have found it to be utterly incorrect.

Never before were the farmers of Ontario thirsting and seeking for information in regard to improved agricultural practices as they are to-day. So far, instead of seeking for opportunities to supply this demand, Hon. Mr. Duff has shown an apparent inclination to do no more than conditions compelled. Instead of leading reforms, the minister of agriculture has been content to wait until the public demanded them. In some cases he has even refused, so far, to comply with the demands.

Five years ago, Hon. Mr. Monteith appointed a commission which investigated the condition of the horse interests of the province. The members of this commission performed their work thoroughly. They reported that our farmers were being imposed upon by breeders who were travelling thousands of unsound stallions. Definite recommendations in regard to desired legislation were made. Those recommendations were approved at every meeting of farmers held throughout the province at which they were discussed, including largely attended meetings held in connection with the Guelph and Ottawa Winter Fairs. Although the matter has now been before the government for several years, the Minister of Agriculture, so far, has ignored the whole situation.

There is need for a complete reorganization of the work of our agricultural societies. Instead of expending upwards of \$100,000 in holding a needlessly large number of fall exhibitions, fully one-half of that money might be diverted to establishing more branches of the department of agriculture in the different counties of the province, to encourage an extension of the field crop competitions, to promoting breeding circles, and for other similar work.

The orchard demonstrations that are being conducted so successfully in Simcoe county might be extended in many other counties of the province to great advantage. There is need in Ontario

for a law which will provide for the appointment of provincial, not local, inspectors, whose duty it would be to prevent the seeding of noxious weeds, like the thistle. The department of agriculture has frequently been requested to enact legislation of this nature and similar to that which is proving so successful in the western provinces. So far nothing has been done.

Officials are needed in connection with the Department of Agriculture, who will be able to assist the farmers of the province in organizing co-operative enterprises. An evidence of what might be done in this connection is furnished by the fact that with but a little assistance from the department, co-operative egg circles, such as are already proving so successful in the vicinity of Peterboro, might readily be introduced all through the province.

While the minister of agriculture cannot be blamed for not having prevented emigration from Ontario to the west, much more might have been done than has been attempted in the matter of attracting immigrants to this province and in settling New Ontario. Were Ontario to deal with the emigration problem in the same energetic manner that the western provinces have followed so successfully, we might, ere long, expect to see our rural population increase instead of decrease. In fact, there is so much that the department of agriculture might do, space does not permit of its enumeration.

As Mr. Flavelle points out, the officials of the department of agriculture are capable and aggressive. We venture to say that if the minister of agriculture would afford them greater opportunities for work the value of his department would soon be immensely increased.

The leader of the Ontario Opposition, has frequently expressed in the Legislature a willingness to approve of greatly increased expenditures by the department of agriculture. As Hon. Mr. Duff has not succeeded, if he has tried, in securing the needed appropriations, it is fair to assume that he has not been able to carry his cabinet with him. A stranger man in the cabinet would have done so. We feel that Mr. Flavelle is right when he states that it is of little importance whether the sum expended annually to assist agriculture is \$750,000 or twice \$750,000, if back of the expenditure there is the character of effort which produces results.

We believe that the Ontario government will readily consent to increasing its appropriations for agriculture greatly when shown the need that exists for such action. The responsibility for guiding the government in this matter rests with the minister of agriculture, Hon. Mr. Duff. It is not too late yet for him to prove himself equal to his opportunities. In the meantime, the thanks of the public are due to Mr. Flavelle for his courage in pointing out to the Government, of which he is a supporter, the imperative need that exists for a greater development of the agricultural resources of the province.



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