

MR. KENT'S SPEECH

(Continued from page 4)

everywhere in the markets at that time were such that the Colonial Governments were not getting loans at 3½ per cent., and as soon as the Premier went to London he found that that was the case, and he had to make temporary arrangements to provide for the railway work during last summer. The correspondence in relation to this was tabled. There is a letter here from Sir Edward Morris, the Prime Minister, to the financial agents of the Colony, dealing with the possibility of obtaining the loan on the terms of the Act which was passed here, and stating that at the next session of the Legislature the Act would be amended by increasing the rate of interest to 4 per cent.; and he asked that in the meantime, and until this was done, the sum of two hundred and fifty thousand pounds be advanced. And now, sir, we do not find that any provision is being made for the balance of the loan of \$2,000,000. There is provision made in connection with the temporary loan from Glyn, Mills and Currie, but for the permanent loan which is to replace it, there is no provision made in the Estimates which are before us at the present time. That, of course, means that we will have to have Supplementary Supply or additional estimates.

MR. KENT.—It will have to be voted again this year. It was voted at 4 per cent. You will have to provide for the difference.

HON. MINISTER OF FINANCE.—It is in the Estimates.

MR. KENT.—Where is it?

HON. MINISTER OF FINANCE.—On page 4.

MR. KENT.—That is only one million. That shows the need of a clear statement of how the public debt stands. Here you have a general statement of the figures.

HON. MINISTER OF FINANCE.—It is provided for.

MR. KENT.—Yes, but it requires an explanation to find it. Now, sir, I think if the Government had acted upon the opinion which we expressed here last year, they would not have found themselves in the position in which they are to-day in reference to that loan. Conditions have very materially altered in relation to raising money ever since then in consequence of the war, and the effect that these conditions will have is evidenced by the case of the Dominion of Canada,

which is now placing a loan of 4½ per cent., an increase of another half per cent. If the advice which we gave here last year had been taken in this matter a 4 per cent. loan authorized this additional half per cent., or whatever other interest will ultimately be demanded, would have been saved.

Then, that brings us back to the original source of all this trouble, namely, the terms of the Railway Contract, which provided for the payment of the contractor in gold instead of bonds as every previous contract provided. It shows how difficult it is to measure the obligations, not only on outlay, but on interest, which the Colony was undertaking when it entered into the railway contract of 1910.

Then, there is no provision here, sir, for any loan or other means of paying the large deficit which has been foreshadowed at the close of the present financial year. The deficit last year was \$301,000, and it is anticipated that the deficit at the end of the present year will be still larger. We are told that the reserve fund of \$500,000 which has been to the credit of the Colony for some years, will be available for the payment of this deficit. Well, sir, in the first place, you have got \$300,000 of that reserve of \$500,000 already appropriated, or about to be appropriated to meet the deficit of last year, and judging from the statement of bank balances which the Minister has furnished for the half year to the end of December and for the quarter ending the 31st March, that means that there will be very little, if any, of that reserve fund available to pay the deficit which you will have at the end of the present financial year. On the 31st March the ordinary exchequer account, according to the statements which have been furnished, was \$360,000 in debt. There are other amounts, up to in the neighbourhood of \$700,000. Now, as against that you have got about \$50,000 of loan accounts, and you have got the balance of the Reserve, after taking out of it \$300,000 for last year's accounts. I think, sir, in view of all these facts, that it will be necessary in order to close your financial accounts for this year, to make some provision other than that providing for the use of the Reserve Fund. The expenditures during the year that I am talking about, namely, 1913-14, have not shown any signs of decrease. On the contrary, they are about \$120,000 more than they were the previous year on the ordinary appropriation accounts. I asked the Minister for a statement for six months, and that statement does not show that there has been any decrease in the expenditure; on the contrary, the expenditure has been greater; and while the taxes that the people are paying are increasing almost to the breaking point, still when we ask to have a statement of the Colony's financial position placed before us, we meet with a point-blank refusal. It is correct that it has not been the custom, sir, to give a financial statement until the Minister made his Budget Speech, but I think that in view of the extraordinary circumstances, it would have been reasonable and proper to comply with the request and furnish the statement which was asked for. The information ought to have been in the Minister's knowledge before he began to prepare his Estimates, it ought to have been in his knowledge before the Governor's Speech from the Throne was delivered two or three weeks ago, and there can be no justification or excuse for not taking the House at this stage into the Government's confidence by making a general statement, at least, of the financial affairs of the Colony.

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HOW GERMANY IS MEETING THE GREAT NATIONAL PROBLEM

Of Feeding Her Population During War Time—A Great Lesson in Thrift and Thoroughness

Some who have studied the war situation in Europe have predicted that Germany will finally be forced to capitulate on account of the exhaustion of her food supplies, but while it is true that food materials, from the outside world are largely cut off, account must be taken of the Germans' remarkable resourcefulness and efficiency and their methodical way of doing things. With the thoroughness and characterizes all German actions, plans for promoting agriculture and gardening on a enlarged scale have been carefully formulated and now the whole country is described as one big truck garden. Instruction in practical agriculture has been given to women, children and old men and provisions have been made for the cultivation of almost every available bit of ground. A measure which is to remain in force until the end of the war excuses school children from attendance at school in order that they may be employed in farm work.

In all parts of the country workers are to be seen in the fields, driving oxen and even milch cows—most of the horses are in use in the army—plowing, planting and tilling the soil. Ordinarily there is little ground left uncultivated in Germany but this year intensive cultivation is more in evidence than ever. In some cases the ground has been plowed for miles and miles right up to their railroad tracks and garden plants are even to be seen growing between the rails. Tennis grounds have been broken up and those who formerly repaired to them for recreation now spend their spare time at work on them, planting and cultivating crops which will help to augment the nation's supply of food-stuffs. Wellers in the cities hurry to the suburbs as soon as their work in office, shop or store is ended for the day and devote every spare moment to working in truck gardens.

Even the Belgian territory over which the German government has assumed control is being converted to the uses of agriculture. The German soldiers there are diligently planting and cultivating crops. The illustration shows German army officers operating a motor plow in Belgium and similar scenes are common all over the war-swept sections of Europe which are under German control. Although gasoline, or "petrol" as it is called in Europe, is widely used in military operations and therefore

highly valuable, motor plows are quite generally used because the supply of fuel is less limited than the supply of horses.

Some months ago the government issued a set of rules ordering that all waste must be eliminated in households and that the exportations of food materials must be reduced. The people are instructed to reduce their consumption of meat, to feed domestic animals no material that can be used as human food, to restrict the use of butter, to use no starch in laundering, to preserve all surplus fruits as jams and jellies and to reduce the number of pigs and cattle in the country. The sowing of beans, peas, beets and corn is especially recommended as they supply valuable and nutritious food materials. Even before these rules were in effect many Germans had pledged themselves to abstain from eating meat or at least to eat much less than the usual amount and the school children had bound themselves to place a strict limit on the amount of food carried to school.

A notable example of German thrift, minute organization and careful foresight is to be found in Berlin where public wagons pass through the tenement districts with loads of kindling wood which is exchanged with the poor people for potato parings and similar refuse from their kitchens. The parings are used for making alcohol which is used as a substitute for gasoline.

There is a greater lack of bread-stuffs than of any other material. Several months ago the government issued an order confiscating all grain and flour to be distributed among the people and providing severe penalties for violations. Various substitutes are now being used for wheat flour. Among these are potatoes, barley and rice flour. A German chemist has even succeeded in making a palatable bread from straw but there is naturally some question as to the nutritive value of the product.

It is now proposed to take out the supply of butter by manufacturing margarin from sunflower seeds. The government has ordered stationmasters of the railroads to plant sunflowers about the depote in order that a supply of the seeds, rich in fatty materials, may be available for the manufacture of butter substitutes.

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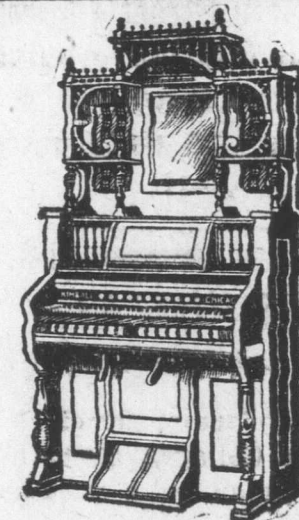
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