

Arthur Balfour, late Premier of the British parliament, was elected as member of the Commons for the city of London by a majority of 11,340 votes over his Liberal Free Trade opponent, Thomas G. Bowles.

Alberta Farmers Active.

The Agricola Alberta Farmers' Association recently held a meeting which drafted resolutions to be presented to the Alberta government, as follows:

1. Resolved.—That the prevailing rates of interest are extortionate, and in view thereof we ask the Legislature to adopt the plan in force in New Zealand whereby the government of that country, loans money to settlers at 4½ per cent. on good security, by which means extortionate usuary such as now prevails here, was utterly abolished.
 2. Where powerful monopolists are in control of our local markets for farm produce as is the case here with beef and pork, we ask that the government take such steps as may be necessary, to obtain markets at points beyond the influence of such local monopolists, by handling the produce of the farm as is being done by the Dominion government regarding creameries.
- The president of the Association, Mr. T. G. Pearce, writing us on these subjects says: "There is a combine existing here in the cattle and hog markets which is slowly but surely strangling the business of raising both cattle and hogs, to the great detriment of the Province. The very best of beef cattle have been sold at 2 and 2½c. live weight and hogs at 4½ and 5c. Such prices are not warranted by actual market conditions."

Notes from Ireland.

We have just emerged from the upset and excitement of the general election, and, as all the world knows, the affairs of the State are now under the control of the Liberal party, the heads of all the Government Departments and Boards being persons drawn from its ranks. There is one exception, and, from the Irish farmer's standpoint, a very notable exception, and that is the Vice Presidency of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction. The nominal President of this body is the Chief Secretary for Ireland but, in reality, the administration falls on the Vice President, and in that office no change, up to the time of writing, has taken place. Consequently, Sir Horace Plunkett who has been Vice President since the Department started five years ago under the Tory regime, still fills the post under the Liberal Government. Of course it is to be anticipated that a change will sooner or later occur, and speculation is rife as to the likely successor. At the same time there are many who advocate that the position should be made a permanent one, and independent of party changes.

Lord Aberdeen, our new Viceroy, announced a day or so ago, the likelihood of some kind of governmental inquiry as to the result of the working of the Department, not to imply any dissatisfaction or misgiving as to the methods and procedure of those responsible for its work, but because, that, while recognizing the value of the work already done, it was felt that the experience gained might suggest certain modifications or extension of operations in certain directions,—a kind of stock-taking, in fact.

Sir Horace, and his work have been severely criticised, and perhaps with unwarranted severity, but principally by people who, because Irish agriculture has not been entirely restored to its once flourishing condition, hasten to condemn right and left the Department and the man responsible for its control during its brief career of five or six years. In spite of all this adverse criticism, however, those who are competent to judge admire the way in which Sir Horace has discharged the responsibilities of his office. He played a prominent part in the movement that called the Department into being, and, during his tenure of office as its first Vice President, his wide experience of agricultural conditions both in Ireland and in competing countries, has been devoted without reserve to laying the foundation of the work which the Department hoped to accomplish. Under his guidance, the administrative ground-work necessary for the discharge of the Department's functions has been established, schemes have been formulated, initiated, and carried into effect, often in face of opposition from an unenlightened community, and in short, more onerous duties have fallen to his lot than are likely to confront his successor in office. When he retires from his post, it will be as one who deserves the respectful thanks of all who recognize the great part he has taken in the reformation of the country's staple industry.

SELECTING "PREMIUM" BULLS.

An event of considerable importance to Irish cattle breeding interests took place recently at the Royal Dublin Society's exhibition grounds at Ballsbridge, Dublin, when the annual show and sale of pure-bred bulls was held. This fixture among a few others, has been selected by the Department of Agriculture for the award of premiums to suitable sires under the Cattle Improvement Scheme. These subsidies amount to £15 each, and this sum is provisionally allowed to the purchaser of each animal selected and approved by the Department's inspectors. The ticketed bulls are then taken home to different parts of the country, and "stand" for the season in their respective districts, during which they must serve fifty cows at a nominal fee of 1 shilling, the premium being given when this condition has been complied with. It is in this way that high-class bulls are introduced and used in the various counties. At the Dublin Show, above mentioned, Mr. C. M. Cameron of Balnakyle, Scotland, judged the Shorthorns, Mr. W. Wilson of Coynachie, Scotland, the Aberdeen Angus, and Mr. C. Williams of Holmer, England, the Herefords, all three experts in their favorite breed of cattle.

The great bulk of the animals exhibited were of the Shorthorn breed, the red, white and roans numbering seventy-six out of a total of 128. Taken all round they were a great improvement on previous years, the animals being of a more uniformly blocky stamp, and displayed better substance. It is to the use of bulls of this stamp that may be traced the increased number of "deep and close to ground" animals now in evidence over Ireland, and the gradual disappearance of the lanky and weedy beasts that were at one time so largely kept. Of the seventy-six Shorthorns, close on forty were provisionally chosen for premiums, and at the sale most of these sold at prices ranging from 35 guineas to 57 guineas.

The comely Aberdeen Angus did not show up to such prominence as their more cosmopolitan rivals, the Shorthorns, but the winning exhibits were of a good sort and a number of them made over 40 guineas, which was not a bad price. Nine premiums were awarded the twenty-eight animals of this breed present.

The third variety represented were the picturesque white faces of Herefordshire, which mustered eighteen, of which the good proportion of seven were chosen for the coveted premium. The younger animals of this breed were a nice even lot, but the seniors did not fill the bill quite so well. The top figure realized by this breed was 45 guineas.

Dublin, Ireland.

EMERALD ISLE.

Our Scottish Letter.

The elections are over, and Great Britain and Ireland have got their political masters for another term. My opinion is that we have got them for a prolonged term, and unless the government of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman meddles with some such thorny subject as "Home Rule," by which I mean a separate and independent Parliament for Ireland, I expect the Liberals will remain in office for a good dozen years at least, or let us say for the natural term of three Parliaments. How the agricultural interests will fare under such circumstances is a hard question. At any rate nothing will be heard of what is called Tariff Reform. Whatever the late election did not do, it certainly gave the quietus to Mr. Chamberlain's scheme for amending our fiscal system. True, he held his ground much better than Mr. Balfour, whose half-and-half policy is of no use to anybody, but the verdict of the country at large is an emphatic negative to Mr. Chamberlain's proposals. The future of agriculture in this country is for better or worse, allied with the maintenance of the statue quo so far as open ports are concerned. The British farmer can survive only by finding ways and means of living in consistency with competition in his own markets from all parts of the world.

The hope of many is, that the new government may by-and-by be able to grapple with the land question so as to give Great Britain the same kind of option as Ireland at present enjoys. In other words many hope the time is coming when the tenant will have the option of purchase by means of loans guaranteed by, and repayable to the State. Under this system, in a very few years, Ireland has rapidly recuperated itself, and there is a return to tillage methods as distinguished from grazing. There is no idea of confiscating the landlord's property. The landlord

is free to sell or not to sell as he pleases, but under the favorable conditions guaranteed in the Act most of them elect to part with the land and invest in other securities. In this way, many large estates are being broken up; the tenant becomes the owner, and the farmer has absolute security that all improvements effected by him are guaranteed to himself. This is a method of procedure fair to the landlord who gets value for his land, and it paves the way for the creation of an occupying ownership which must conduce to the settlement of the people on the land. At present in some cases we are face to face in this country with a determination to clear the people off the land. Whole country sides are being converted into sporting runs; cottages, when they become vacant are allowed to lapse into decay; and no one is encouraged to follow a rural occupation or educate his family for a rural calling. The outcome of a policy of that kind is not doubtful. The people stand it for a while, and then they begin to speak out. Goldsmith's lines are hackneyed, but they are perennially true.

"Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey;
When wealth accumulates, and men decay."

The new Minister of Agriculture, Earl Carrington, is an extensive landowner in Lincolnshire and Buckingham. He has made extensive alterations in the occupancy of his estates, and has somewhere about 3000 allotment holders on them. The policy of converting large farms into these allotments has proved an unqualified success on his estates, and if he is able, no doubt he will endeavor to embody ideas in legislation which will encourage others to follow his example.

Cheesemakers here are considerably perturbed by the results of the trade in 1905. Better home cheese was put upon the market than in some preceding years, but the testimony of at least one great firm is that while the top prices last year were made by the home cheese, the average price for Canadian cheese was higher than for home cheese. The position is being eagerly canvassed, and possibly an improvement may be made which will enable the home-producer to keep in front. Conferences are being held, at which expert makers give their experience, and hints for the benefit of their neighbors, while the merchant endeavors to let the maker know what the consumer wants. So far our makers easily excel in finishing their cheese. For a window show a lot of Scots Cheddars can easily beat a lot of Canadians, but the outside of the cheese is after all of secondary moment. The main thing is to produce a cheese such as the public desire to eat. An old cheese may be a fine thing for the connoisseur, but the number of such customers is limited, and the masses of the people want a soft, meaty cheese, of good flavor and close texture. Badly colored cheese are not wanted from anywhere, and the prejudice against white, or uncolored cheese is not nearly so strong as it used to be. The present discussion rages around the question of starter or no starter. It would appear as if choice cheese was made either way, the principal thing is not the method, but the maker. The starter is a good servant, but a very bad master, and many are using it who know nothing of the dangers attending its reckless application.

Glasgow.

SCOTLAND YET.

Buried the Hatchet.

Dear Sirs:

I had a little tiff with you about two years ago, and left off taking the Farmer's Advocate for one year and took another farm paper, but I am very glad to tell you I was obliged to come and subscribe for your paper again. I take seven different papers, and the Advocate is the best and most scientific of them all, from a farmer's point of view. I have taken it for sixteen years.

Coombe Farm, Glenora, Man.

WM. MACHLIN.

It's a Good Idea.

EDITOR FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

I saw an article in your February 7th issue which advised farmers to build pork-packing factories. This is what is needed but before we build these we should build flour mills where we could get our grain ground and could buy the mill feeds at about half the price we pay now. Not until we do this can we raise hogs profitably. We farmers should get together and discuss the whole business in detail then form joint-stock companies to operate mills, which would also act as elevators. This organization could be managed by an executive composed of one representative from each branch.

Alta.

GENERAL FARMER.