

*Agricultural Conditions*

only reduce the cost of production by increased production, but we must reduce the actual expenses which the farmer has to incur in the cultivation of the land. And although it is contended that there is no difference in policy between the party opposite and the party on this side, I have no hesitation in saying that the one thing in the policy of the last administration that appealed to me was the consistent emphasis they laid upon reduction in duties, and consequently in the prices of the implements that are used in the primary industries of the country. I would commend that to the Minister of Agriculture as something that would go much further than what he proposes here in reducing the cost of production.

Thirdly, we have the proposal of sowing the land to crops best suited. That is absolutely sound, of course; but if anyone can see anything new in it I should like to know what it is. It, also, is as old as agriculture.

Next is research work to discover a fertilizer required for different soils. Very good as far as it goes, but it does not meet the emergency. Then we have the proposal of an immediate survey with respect to seed grain, seed vegetables and fodder crops. That, too, is commendable. Then the creation of bull clubs, the revival of an old policy to which we take no objection. Also the immediate improvement in the quality of swine. No one can take any objection to that, but we would not think of putting it forward as a startling innovation. Next is the eradication of disease among poultry—very good too; and research work on feeds. Well, this is exactly the work that is being done at the present time. It has been going on without any let-up; the agricultural colleges and the experimental farms are doing it and will continue to do it, no matter what government is in power. For that reason, therefore, it is not worth emphasizing. Then we have a proposal for eliminating parasites. I think one might commend to the house the observation made by the hon. member for Southeast Grey (Miss Macphail). Then we have the transformation of experimental farms into local educational centres, which, of course, they have always been. Next is a request for cooperation on the part of the provincial governments in the carrying out of the policy. I do not take serious exception to any of these things—no person can; but the idea of stating that the collective weight and power of the Dominion is being placed behind agriculture is a pure farce. What would be thought of a doctor who would prescribe a bread and milk poultice for a broken leg? There are one or two things

[Mr. Brown.]

to which I intend to refer that might be considered to be of a more constructive nature.

Unfortunately the house has been given a certain impression, not from anything said here but from what has been published in the press. The following sentence indicates that certain members on this side of the house have been giving serious consideration to a certain phase of this question: It reads:

From Ottawa comes the news that the office of agricultural representative in Great Britain is to be abandoned, or rather that expenditure on it is to be reduced to \$2,500, and the agricultural representative, W. A. Wilson, B.S.A. is to be superannuated with a small retiring allowance.

I think it was the hon. member for New Westminster (Mr. Reid) who asked a question along these lines the other day. We thought we would receive an answer, but evidently the Prime Minister gave an intimation to the hon. Minister of Agriculture that he should not answer it. We are not at the present moment perfectly informed as to what the policy of the department is in that connection and we can only go on the supposition that the newspaper report is correct. I desire to protest against any economy in that particular direction. Those who are acquainted with and have taken any account of what Mr. Wilson has done overseas must admit that that work was a good work; he performed it efficiently and brought Canadian products to the notice of the British people in a way never before accomplished through the advice which he gave with regard to the grading and the raising of the quality of our products. He has been of untold service to the cause of agriculture, and in my judgment this is not the time to dispense with that kind of service. Indeed, if the ideals of the Minister of Agriculture are to be realized and the quality of our products is to be increased, there is need more than ever for a man such as Mr. Wilson to keep these matters persistently before the people of Great Britain.

There is another question which is very seriously concerning the minds of our people at the present time, that of internal freight rates. If the cause of agriculture would be helped it seems to me some consideration must be given before long to this question. I know it is not the general policy of this house definitely to establish freight rates, although an exception was made to that general rule when it dealt with the Crowsnest pass rates. I do not desire to advocate rates that are not profitable to the railway companies, although I do not believe there was any foundation to the claims made on previous occasions by the railway companies that they