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## Hon. Mr. Lea Defends Policy of His Department

The following statement in the policies of his department has been received for publication from Hon. W. M. Lea, Minister of Agriculture, whose serious illness during the Legislature session prevented him from taking part in the debates:—

During the budget debate a representative of the farmers is reported as stating "he never could see that the country got value for all the money expended in the Department of Agriculture." The money expended by this Province for Agriculture in 1928 was some \$36,000.00. This is the entire sum that we expended for the promotion of an industry that produces probably \$20,000,000 annually, and could easily be made to produce a much greater amount, the industry that largely provides the very much greater costs of education and transportation in this Province.

That the grants provided for Agriculture both in the Federal and Provincial Departments for promotion of quantity and improvement of quality of agricultural products have been largely responsible for the gratifying improvement shown in recent years no "intelligent" man will deny. The Co-operating marketing Societies alone by means of which our farmers are enabled to secure the services of expert salesmen and which were organized, and in many instances financed by the Agricultural grants, are worth to this Province many times the entire cost of the agricultural expenditures, as well as many indirect benefits too numerous to here enumerate, but which are recognized by all thinking men in every Province in the Dominion, who evidently can see the great direct and indirect benefits accruing to such expenditures. So convinced are the farmers of Denmark of the value of Agricultural education and co-operative marketing that they carry on much of their agricultural instruction without direct Governmental assistance. Denmark's agricultural prominence is admittedly due to her modern system of education and co-operative marketing, standardization and grading that have been adopted by all progressive agricultural countries in the world. The suggestion was also made that the Minister of Agriculture or one of his officials should go to Newfoundland to see what could be done to broaden our Market in this Dominion. With common beef selling at from 8 cents per pound on the hoof to 13 cents, hogs worth 10 to 12 cents live weight, butter 40 to 45 cents at the factory door, and eggs from 35 to 50 cents during most of the winter, if a number of our farmers are not prospering, it is because they are not producing enough or not the right class of farm animals, and their products, rather than because there is not a satisfactory market for these commodities and the Agricultural Department has been concentrating their best efforts on increasing production and improving the quality of all farm products as such commodities always command fair prices. In this respect I do not wish to take all credit to any particular party, as I realize that several beneficial and progressive policies were adopted by several previous Governments, the results of which are shown in the increased production of all animals and their products from the years 1921 to 1928 as shown in the following table taken from our 1928 Agricultural Report.

### DAIRY PRODUCTION

Potatoes	Turnips	All Grains	Butter	Cheese	Swine	Poultry
Acres	Acres	Acres	lbs.	lbs.		
1921	36,021	9,961	249,595	1,109,546	1,681,779	42,447
1928	51,890	11,422	221,730	2,300,000	1,800,000	52,653
Gain or Loss	+ 14,869	+ 1,461	+ 72,765	+ 1,200,454	+ 118,221	+ 9,106
% Gain or Loss	+ 40.54	+ 14.66	+ 11.6	+ 107.0	+ 7	+ 24.04

The above table of 1921 which is taken from the Bureau of Statistics, Ottawa, when the last census was taken clearly shows, that notwithstanding the great attraction of five years high potato prices, the production of animals and their products have made a wonderful increase. Calculating the increased production of butter at 38 cents per pound, the average for the past year, the ten thousand gain of hogs at current prices, eggs and poultry, lambs and wool at the values of these commodities. The gain in value of animals and their products during this period is at least one million five hundred thousand dollars. Does any intelligent man believe that this gratifying result would have been realized without the assistance of Departmental leadership? Is it reasonable to believe that the hog population would have increased ten thousand in number and 50% higher in value had the assistance of better breeding stock grading regulation and selling organizations not been established by the Agricultural Departments. Would the butter production have increased over one mil-

lion dollars and improved in quality without the assistance of the Dairy Superintendent and dairy graders, and many other forms of assistance and encouragement given dairymen, or would the egg and poultry production have increased six hundred thousand dollars without the many forms of educational assistance and for standardizing grading and co-operating marketing that has been afforded this profitable industry.

The very greatly improved quality of all these commodities with consequent increased prices may be taken as fairly conclusive evidence that the instruction and leadership given by the Agricultural Departments both Federal and Local were in some measure bearing fruit.

There is an all too prevalent idea existing in the country that the potato industry has been alone responsible for the more general prosperity of our farmers during the past few years. Without attempting to dispense the importance of this popular cash crop I wish to point out that although the estimated increased yield of the 15,000 acres of potatoes was worth at 75 cents per bushel probably \$1,500,000 increased value in the year 1928 over 1921, the increased value of animals and their products during the same period was at least an equal amount. It is gratifying to know that such is the case, and that in the past few years when potato production has been receiving more than ordinary attention, our live stock industry has made advances of equal value. The live stock industry is undoubtedly of greater value and importance to this Province than the potato industry, and should receive the attention and development that a fundamental branch of production in a mixed farming programme merits, a truth repeatedly emphasized by all officers of the Department of Agriculture, including the Deputy Minister, on every occasion on which they discussed the potato industry ever since the organization of the Potato Growers Association.

Considerable criticism was indulged in during the Session on the estimates of the Agricultural Departments, of the use and abuse of Government owned cars by officers of this Department, the Live Stock Superintendent has frequently been subject to a full measure of unjust censure. This official's duties covers a wide range from a careful oversight of the Falconwood Farm and herd to the many Boys and Girls Calf Clubs, Pig Clubs, and pure bred Heifer Clubs through the Province. The attending and addressing of many meetings at the request of Farmers Institutions and other such organizations, executing many orders for pure bred stock from foreign buyers by means of which a profitable market is found for young surplus male breeding animals, for which work a car is a necessity, as he does the work formerly divided between three men. If he is allowed the requisite of this office of the use of a car for private purposes it is granted him in lieu of \$500.00 additional salary paid several of his predecessors and which would be necessary to retain him without these privileges, that he is in this manner fully paying for. I have personal knowledge he has been offered the above by other Provincial Departments as well as tempting of

ested men in other districts will support such a weak compromising policy. Before the introduction of School Fairs there may have been a need at least of one Fair in each County, but when we remember that by reason of the high freight charges and of necessarily the small prices offered, no live stock is shipped by rail, and consequently the County Fair being held on the coast only serves a limited district, and since the management of the Charlottetown Exhibition at the Department's request have agreed to pay the extra freight on stock from both Prince and King's Counties, I cannot see any good reason for holding "two" Exhibitions in each of the outlying Counties. If Mont Carmel and Alberton are entitled to an Exhibition grant why is not O'Leary, Tignish, Kensington, and other districts in Prince County entitled to an equal grant at which problems of this nature are discussed by experienced men, and should know something of the value of such expenditures. I have carefully noted the class of stock shown at our small County Exhibitions since 1920, and I cannot see any marked improvement that can be traced or credited to the holding of such Exhibitions, or that the stock in their immediate vicinity is superior to that of other districts in the County. The majority of cattle and horses are shown without any preparation previous to the morning shown. I never could see what benefit you were doing the man (clear of the five dollars awarded) who received first prize for showing an undersized unfitted animal, because there was nothing of better type or better fitted in the ring. In fact I rather think you are doing him and his neighbors a positive injury in leading them to believe that such an animal should be classed as a first prize individual. Unless sufficient money can be afforded to encourage or compel exhibitors through the keen competition so stimulated, to breed, feed and fit their animals, little benefit can arise. On the other hand I am convinced that Charlottetown and other Inter-Provincial Exhibitions have been the chief means of the splendid improvement that has certainly been made in many of our herds of cattle, sheep and swine. The competition created chiefly through the many generous prizes here offered has encouraged or in fact compelled breeders to purchase the best sires obtainable and feed and develop their young stock continuously. The young sires from such herds invariably proved valuable breeding animals and are available to Institutes and other like organizations, and such sires are responsible for the improvement that has been secured in recent years in our cattle, hogs and sheep in this Province. Some of the highest priced females that have for the past few years been realizing such satisfactory prices from foreign buyers were sired by animals bred in the herds of our regular exhibitors at the Charlottetown Exhibition, by men who are frequently classed as Professional Exhibitors, most of whom are well known farmers who have worked themselves from humble beginners to the position of prominent live stock breeders and exhibitors they now occupy.

Another argument frequently advanced is to the effect that it is impossible for farmers east and west of our county lines to compete with those in the Central County is equally unreasonable and unsound, as we have many examples in the past of Prince County exhibitors not only holding their own at the Charlottetown exhibition but able to successfully compete over the entire Maritime Circuit. Even last fall a young farmer from Freetown won the important special for four best calves owned and bred by exhibitor, one of which later being made Junior Champion over the Maritime Circuit and winning first at the class at the Canadian Royal. With the \$2,500.00 saved by cancelling the grants to the three Exhibitions formerly held twenty good pure bred bulls were purchased by the Department last year and loaned to districts, financially unable to purchase these animals under a policy known as the Controlled Breeding Policy, as farmers after once selecting a breed would be required to use further animals of this class so that good grades of one breed would soon be found in a district. By reason of this policy six hundred to eight hundred better heifer calves will probably be raised in the Province this season. If the latter number are worth \$25.00 each more than the scrub heifer that otherwise would have been kept we feel they will be at maturity, this would mean an increased value of \$1,500.00 in a year. These sires are still worth at least their cost and their value should be deducted from our last year's expenditure. If we could follow this policy for four years or better, one hundred bull would be owned and would be available in the Province at the rate of six to each electoral District. A policy that I am firmly convinced would prove of much greater financial benefit than if this sum were spent



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## ENAMELED WARE

in a number of small shows, however if the representatives of the people insist that every little show once started must be continued, we must have more money voted for this purpose or discontinue our policy of live stock improvement. The answer however to a Questionnaire sent each Club or Institute last season brought out 90 per cent in favor of the sire loaning policy.

I have a vision (as our friends of the clergy would say) of a still greater increase in our agricultural production not based on any visionary theory of what has been accomplished in Denmark or other progressive Agriculture Country, but upon what has already been accom-

plished on many farms and several districts in this Province. If the improved methods there practiced were adopted on all farms possible, we could easily increase our production fifty per cent in ten years or as many additional million dollars.

If the business men of this Province in the towns and villages largely dependent on the earnings from our soil and the many energetic Commercial Clubs could be seized of the importance of subsidizing our various agricultural organizations that our production of wealth might be increased to an extent commensurate with our opportunities; we could not hear men presumably representing farming and stock raising

districts criticize the expenditure of \$36,000. (one third of which is expended on Exhibitions) as an expenditure from which we do not receive any value.

As I was unable due to illness to outline the policy of my Department during the discussion on the various estimates voted I take this opportunity of explaining or if necessary defending the work of the officers of this Department. I wish also to express my deep appreciation to the Members of the Legislature on both sides of the House for the consideration that with one exception, was invariably shown in dealing with the administration of an absent associate and comrade.

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