

HON. J. H. MYERS REVIEWS YEAR'S WORK

(Continued from Page 1)

Our careers, both public and private, with honor and integrity, that we may prove to be worthy successors to these men who have gone on before.

Market Conditions in the Maritimes.

Reference has been made in the speech to conditions in the neighboring provinces and it appears that this is a matter which has not been dealt with in a very satisfactory manner. The Leader of the Opposition told us that conditions in the Maritime Provinces today are the same as they always were.

MR. SAUNDERS: So far as our markets are concerned.

HON. MR. MYERS: I inferred from what he said that our opportunities in these Provinces, along with those which were in previous years. My hon. friend, I am sorry to say, must be absolutely ignorant of the facts to make such an assertion. Conditions in Maritime Provinces are not nearly so good as they were some years ago. I had occasion to pay a visit to Nova Scotia during the past summer, and when you go among the people themselves then you get an opportunity of finding out the conditions as they really are. While I visited one village (in Nova Scotia last summer) where they told me that a few years ago they had eleven hundred people, and last summer there were just over a hundred people there; the rest had gone to Western Canada or the United States. What is true of that village, I presume, is equally true of a number of towns and villages throughout Nova Scotia.

Public speakers have advanced various causes and reasons for this condition. I think I would be safe in saying that among the several opinions expressed by different public men of the Maritime Provinces, nine out of every ten blame the high freight rates. I am not going to venture an opinion of my own because I always like to play safe, but I was just wondering if it is not the low freight rates that is the matter. Take trade conditions with Nova Scotia at the present time. A few years ago our cattle dealers on the island, if they wanted a market for their beef, went to Trenton, New Glasgow, Yarmouth, Pictou and other Nova Scotia towns. Today when they attempt to get their beef to market with Nova Scotia they are met by Western beef that can be put on the books in the stalls in Nova Scotia for seven or eight cents a pound. I wonder if it is high freight rates or low rates that is the matter there. What is the matter with eggs, and especially true of horses, on the island as well as in Nova Scotia. Not only has the marketing of this industry been destroyed but the very breeding and raising of horses on the island have been destroyed beyond repair. Within the last few days two carloads of horses arrived from the States and were sold in Charlottetown. Does my hon. friend know that?

A Suggested Remedy.

What is the remedy? I think I know what it is, but it may not be acceptable. It seems to me that the remedy for the present condition lies in the industrial life of these Provinces, which we all know, has been destroyed. A few years ago the industrial towns of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, buzzed with their mines and factories. What is the matter with us now that we are talking about a great deal of trouble, talking about immigration and wondering what steps we can take. To my mind the best immigrants that we can have on the island or the Maritime Provinces are the boys and girls that we raise here. But you know the industrial conditions at the present time are such that every single thing we use on the farm or in the household is manufactured outside of these Provinces; brought down from Western Canada—freight rates again—or from the United States. We have put ourselves in this position—that instead of being an industrial people we are completely dependent on the Central and Western Provinces, and upon the United States for our necessities.

It was not always thus. Previous to Confederation we had a busy industrial life in the Maritime Provinces that provided labour and also markets for the produce of our farmers. We are not going into a discussion of the merits of Confederation, but I will venture to say that things through Confederation that can only be regained by co-operation.

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Department;—You might go back to the year 567 B. C., when we are told that no less a person than Confucius, before he turned philosopher and religious leader of his people, was Minister of Agriculture in China.

My hon. friend for Summerside was almost tempted to question whether the Department has been functioning at all during the past year, his chief reason for doubting it being the fact that he has not seen any letters in the public press over my name. My reply is that he will see very few letters in the press from me. I have no desire for publicity, and I know, some men are very fond of seeing their names in print and various means are employed from time to time in order to secure this publicity. One man took a trip to the Old Country, in order to get his name in the papers, I even heard of an Irishman who hangs himself, to get his name published.

Dairy Production.

There is a paragraph in the Speech that has called forth more than the usual amount of debate, and that is the following: "While the price of dairy products and potatoes was somewhat lower than that of last year, it was more than offset by the higher prices for pork, poultry and seed grain." That has been called in question by the members of the Opposition they deny the veracity of the statement. It is my purpose to correct them along the line. In the first place, I wonder if the Opposition really know what the deficiencies in the dairy production for the past year have been, and how much leeway had to be made up by the increase in the prices of pork, poultry and seed grain. I have here some figures that might throw light on the question. (I am glad to notice that my hon. friend for Summerside has come back to bear us company.)

So far as dairying is concerned, the record for the past two years is not nearly so dark as the hon. members opposite seem to believe. In the year 1923 the cheese factories made 1,811,535 pounds of cheese, the value of which was \$346,399. In 1924, we increased that to 2,047,124 pounds, valued at \$320,433; an increase in the quantity of cheese of 235,588 pounds. The price of cheese was a little lower.

We made 1,516,301 pounds of butter in 1923 valued at \$646,874. In 1924 we increased our make of butter to 1,636,497 pounds, valued at \$572,779.

Comparing the two years, we find that this great deficiency, that has been so held up to us, amounts to the modest sum of exactly sixty-one dollars; that is to say, in the dairying industry, the each receipts were sixty one dollar less in the year 1924 than in 1923.

Now, Mr. Speaker, taking into consideration the prices of pork, poultry and seed grain, I would say the Opposition if it has not more than made up this deficiency of sixty-one dollars? That is the answer to that criticism. The paragraph has a perfect right to appear in the Speech and it is absolutely correct.

MR. DENNIS: My I ask a question?

HON. MR. MYERS: Yes.

MR. DENNIS: My statement was in regard to the quality of the products, only. Was my statement correct?

HON. MR. MYERS: If the gentleman will possess his soul in patience I will come to that; but I hate to be rushed. I can assure the hon. member that among my voluminous notes that point is not forgotten and it will be covered. I would like first to say a few words with respect to technical education in this Province, and that will open the subject to which the hon. member from O'Leary has referred. During the last campaign, in fact for almost the whole term of the late Bell Government, a great deal of adverse criticism was levelled at Technical School which had been created by my predecessor in office, in the city of Charlottetown. So far as I was concerned myself, during the campaign of 1923 I was very careful what I said about that institution on because where education is concerned I find me ever ready, not without criticism but with a helping hand. To bear out my statement along that line I have only to mention the fact that when I took charge of the Department, when the Stewart Government came into power on the 5th of September 1923, I made no interruption in the work of the Technical School or in any matter affecting technical education. I looked the situation over, I told the Principal that he was free to go ahead for the coming winter, to do just what he had been doing before. I assured him that the resources of the Department were behind him so far as advertisements were concerned and that I wanted him to make the biggest success of the Technical School during that winter that it was possible to do. I further told him that the future of that School would depend upon the work that I saw carried on during the winter, I watched the institution very carefully. Scarcely a week passed but I made a couple of visits, and I saw that good work was being done. But I also saw that the expense of that institution was certainly out of all proportion to the results obtained. For instance, they had a Principal employed on a yearly salary. They also had attempted to establish a herd of cattle on their premises, a very unlikely place, as you gentlemen know, none better than the member from O'Leary. They had a herdman employed by the year, looking after those three cows. They had a janitor looking after the place, also employed by the year; three men on yearly salaries. I made up my mind that it would be beyond our resources to carry on as they were then doing. The School was closed down at the end of March, but I noted that good work was being done along some lines and I was unwilling to see it entirely broken off.

You know Mr. Speaker the conditions in the Province so far as our young people are concerned, at the present time. You know that some years ago at every crossroads throughout the Province you would find a number of industries; blacksmith shop, car-

and blacksmithing, and we had the Federal Government taken over the Women's Institutes of the Province and pay half the cost of these, and the short courses conducted therein. (Applause.)

We were also able to succeed in having a commercial course put on in Prince of Wales College. That might require a word or two in explanation. We have in Prince of Wales College one of the finest institutions of learning in Eastern Canada, presided over by a very able staff, yet it did not seem to be filling the requirements of the Province, altogether. When young men entered the College, it did not make any difference whether they were looking ahead to a professional life, a business life or an agricultural life; they all had to go through the one mill. The same course was open to the young man who wanted to go back to the store or to the farm, as was open to a young man who was preparing to enter a professional career. We did not consider that was right. We consulted Dr. Robertson, principal of the College. This was when we were negotiating with Mr. Crawford, and I want to say that our success along that line was largely due to the aid we received from Dr. Robertson and Mr. H. H. Shaw.

A few words about the cheese and butter industry in our province. I spoke to Mr. Morrow the present Inspector and grader tonight a man who has done good work, but it is pretty hard for anyone to fill two positions. He did as well as any one man could do, but it is a two man job, looking after the grading and inspecting as well. Mr. Morrow tells me tonight that our record has been very good during the past season. So far as No. 1 and special grades are concerned, we led every Province in Canada. (Applause.) Our record in the matter of cheese has not been nearly so fortunate. I may say that one of the best factories is situated right under the eyes of the hon. member from O'Leary; it is one of the best and most up-to-date plants to be found in East of Canada. But our record on quality of cheese this season is not good, due largely to the fact that a number of new factories came to enter into the grade this year. They were among the poorest factories of the Province, the most inferior; and as a result we find that the grade of cheese on the island was only fifty-one percent of No. 1, while in Quebec they were able to make seventy-six percent of No. 1. Notwithstanding this, we had one factory on the island that succeeded in grading up ninety-two percent of No. 1 during the past season. (Applause.) What was done in one factory could be done in every factory in the Province, under proper direction. I might further inform the House that one island factory succeeded in carrying off several prizes for butter at the Royal Fair in Toronto.

MR. SAUNDERS: What factory?

HON. MR. MYERS: Kensington, in the glorious old Fourth District. The relation of our Department with the people of the Province has been very happy indeed during the past year. We had, a short time ago, a great many farmers in Charlottetown, during Farmers' Week. Many meetings were held and there was a great deal of discussion along many lines. The last day of that meeting I happened to be walking down the street with a very pronounced Liberal, a man in the front rank of the Liberal party but a mighty good farmer and a good fellow all through.

MR. SAUNDERS: They are all like that.

HON. MR. MYERS: Present company always excepted. (Laughter.) This gentleman told me this. "There is one thing I noticed, Mr. Myers. I have attended all these farmers' conventions ever since there was a Farmers' Week in Charlottetown and at almost every meeting there would be some resolution of criticism aimed at the Department of Agriculture, and since you took charge there has not been one single resolution passed during Farmers' Week levelling any criticism at the Department of Agriculture." (Applause.)

Further than that, the relations between our Department and the Department at Ottawa have been very happy indeed. We have in our city Mr. Clark, the worthy superintendent of the Experimental Farm; Mr. Peterson, our swine promoter, and Messrs. Clay and Davison of the poultry division. With these gentlemen we get along very well, and if we want them at any time to address a meeting in the country, all we have to do is call upon them. In return, the Department works with them, and we have been lending them every assistance we could in the different lines along which they are engaged.

Fishermen's Union

I was talking during Farmers' Week with a number of fishermen

from the eastern part of the Province and they made the remark that the Government should protect the fisheries of the island. "We always look to the Government to do everything for us." That is a characteristic, I believe, of Islanders. I asked them, "Why don't you do it yourselves? Who is in a better position to protect your own industry than those who know the industry best? We farmers do not ask the Government to protect us against ourselves; we do not require Government officials to come around to our farms and tell us that we must only plough up a certain amount of our land every year, and devote a certain acreage to pasture, and we could crop our farm out in two or three years, but we would be all through." This is just what the fishermen have been doing for years. The lobster fishing industry of the island is among the best of Eastern Canada and it is a shame for the fishermen to absolutely waste this industry, as they are doing year by year. Who is in a better position to know how that can be stopped and the industry protected than the fishermen themselves? But it requires a campaign to educate them as to what they should do and what they should not do, and I believe that through the Fishermen's Union they will wake up to the fact that they themselves must protect this industry which is fast slipping away from them. There is another matter which has not yet been touched upon by anyone who took part in the debate, and to my mind it is one of the most important things that could engage the Department of Agriculture or the Government of the Province at the present time. That is the Disease Free Area plan for Prince Edward Island. Mr. Speaker, that the work in co-operative marketing of eggs and the betterment of the industry had to start from the farmers themselves. Before that time the only education we received from the merchant was when he took him a dozen of eggs. If they were good he cut the price the next time. Our farmers took that matter upon themselves. They educated themselves to produce a better quality of eggs, to put them on the market on a graded basis, and the result has been an abundant return to the farmers from the egg industry of the Province. What we did in that line, I believe, if we went at it in a proper way, we would be able to do along the line of fruit growing. It seems to me that it would be well for us to have a Fruit Growers' Association organized in a business like way to market fruit products of this Province. We might go on and perhaps it would not be beyond the bounds of possibility to realise eventually what was suggested by my hon. friend from Belfast (Mr. Shaw McMillan)—a fruit canning industry of a large scale operating in the island.

These organizations do good. I was pleased during the last session of the House when the Fishermen's Union bill went through the Legislature. I look for great results from that Union and I hope the time is not far distant when the fishermen throughout the Province will be organized; when they will have their own educational union in order to protect their own industry; and goodness knows it is badly in need of protection.

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HON. J. H. MYERS Minister of Agriculture.

BRINGING UP FATHER—



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Co-operative Marketing.

And now about co-operative marketing. We are trying to show the country that we have been doing something during the past year, and here was a matter which we felt might be very materially assisted. The grading of wool has been going on for a number of years, in a more or less careless way. "Bring it in and we will take it" seemed to be the attitude adopted towards the farmers, and no very strong inducement was given them. We put on an active campaign to induce the farmers to market their wool on the co-operative basis because we knew we were able to secure for them a much better price than they could secure in the local stores. We circled the sheep breeders of the Province and the result was that during 1924 we took in 36,158 pounds of wool as against 32,000 in 1923, an increase of 4,158 pounds in the season. That was marketed co-operatively. It was all graded and the farmers received the highest market price for it.

I would like to say a word in respect to fruit growing in this Province. This is a matter which for years has been sadly neglected. It is no very favorable commentary on our farmers or on our business men either, to see the store windows of Charlottetown filled with apples from British Columbia. That is not a very good sign of the time. We can grow in this island just as good, and I think better apples, than they can grow in British Columbia. Who is at fault? I do not know, but it seems to me that the fruit situation is very much in the same rut at the present time as our egg industry was a number of years ago, before the egg circles were inaugurated and the co-operative marketing of eggs and the betterment of the industry had to start from the farmers themselves. Before that time the only education we received from the merchant was when he took him a dozen of eggs. If they were good he cut the price the next time. Our farmers took that matter upon themselves. They educated themselves to produce a better quality of eggs, to put them on the market on a graded basis, and the result has been an abundant return to the farmers from the egg industry of the Province.

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—By GEORGE MCMANUS

