

The Examiner.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL OF POLITICS, LITERATURE AND NEWS.

EDWARD WHELAN]

This is true Liberty, when Free-born Men, having to advise the Public, may speak free.—EURIPIDES.

[EDITOR AND PUBLISHER.

Vol. VII.

CHARLOTTETOWN, PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND, MONDAY, MARCH 29, 1858.

No. 38.

Colonial Legislature.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

WEDNESDAY, February 24th, 1858.
MODEL FARM.

House in Committee on the Memorial of the Committee of the Royal Agricultural Society. Mr. McDonald in the Chair.

The Chairman read the Memorial which sets forth, that, in consequence of the great losses sustained in the stock imported for their farm, and the great cost of the stock, the farm had become seriously involved; and that, to meet its liabilities, a sum larger than they could hope to obtain from the House, would be necessary; that, in consequence of the large amount of money voted by the House, they did not think it proper to sell the stock, crop, &c., to liquidate their liabilities, until the matter had received the sanction of the House; that £1,500 will be required to pay the debt, replace the stock lost, and carry on the farm; and praying the House to take the matter into consideration, so that, if the necessary funds for carrying it on be not granted, the Committee may take measures for closing the concern at an early day.

Mr. H. HAVILAND, on rising to address the Chairman, thought it necessary to explain how the Memorial happened to be put into his hands for presentation to the honorable House. I was, said the hon. and learned member, the only member in the House, when the Officers of the Society entered it, for the purpose of placing their Memorial in the hands of some member of the House for presentation; and so, for that purpose, it happened to fall into mine. At the time, continued the hon. and learned member, when the Model Farm was about to be undertaken, we were almost all in favor of it; for then it was confidently asserted, and generally believed, that the concern would prove a self-sustaining one; but now the accounts of the managers, like those of some other public concerns, show a balance on the wrong side. It rests with the House to say, on consideration of their Memorial, their accounts and inventory valuation of stock, crop and implements on their farm, whether they shall receive such assistance out of the public purse, as will enable them to carry on the farm; or whether it shall be recommended to them to sell off their stock, crop and implements, to liquidate their liabilities, and close the concern. If the House is of opinion that the country receives little or no benefit from the Model Farm, the sooner the Society shall sell off the better. That is the question to be decided to-night. And should the House determine to grant the Society no further assistance, on account of their farm, there will arise another question, which this House, I think, should also decide: and that is, whether the whole of the stock, which is a most valuable one indeed, shall be sold off upon the farm; or whether it shall be sold equally and fairly divided into three parts; one third to be sold on the farm, one-third at Georgetown, and one-third at St. Eleanor's. I would myself say that the fairest way would be to assign one-third, for sale, in each of the Counties; but I would not confine the sales, in each County, to residents of the County. The object will be to secure as large a return as possible; and, therefore, the greater the competition at the sales, the better.

Hon. Mr. WIGHTMAN.—I very much regret that after this House has manifested, by the liberality of its grants, so strong a desire for the establishment and success of the Model Farm, that, in two years, it should have incurred debts and losses to so serious an amount as £1,500. This is certainly enough to disgust the Legislature, and to raise an outcry throughout the country, against the public support of a concern, from which the people derive no adequate return or benefit. It certainly could not have been expected that the farm would, in one or two years, become self-sustaining; and, had not the concern incurred so large a debt, in so short a time, there would, in all likelihood, have existed, in the House, a disposition so favorable to the experiment, as would have induced the continuance of legislative aid, for a year or two longer, with a view to the ensuring of its final success. Its early involvement, it ought not, however, to be forgotten, is, by no means, attributable to any neglect or mismanagement on the part of the directors of the concern, or of those to whom the details of its management were more immediately entrusted; but, wholly and solely, to unavoidable losses of stock, sustained at sea; and to the fact that greater expenses were, at the beginning, incurred in the working of the farm, than, in the previous estimate thereof, had been calculated upon. It is also very clear that, before the expiration of two or three years, there could not be stock raised upon the farm, for distribution throughout the country; but now, in consequence of the apparently irretrievable involvement of the concern, to such eventual advantage, we can no longer look forward; and the undertaking must, I think, be at once abandoned; for certainly this House would not be justified in granting to the Society, after the large amount formerly granted to them, such further aid—no less than £1,500—as would relieve them from their present embarrassments. I went out, to-day, with other members of the Legislature, to look at the stock upon the farm; and I venture to say of it, that I do not think a finer stock, whether of sheep, horned cattle, or horses, can be found upon any one farm in any country. I believe that if the stock were to be kept upon the farm and duly advertised to be sold thereon, after the opening of the navigation, many individuals would come over from Nova Scotia, with the intention of becoming purchasers of some of the choice animals of which it is composed; and, by thus extending the sale to the agriculturists of the neighbouring provinces, a much larger sum might be realized by it, than if it were confined to the Island. But certainly it would be much wiser, much better to confine it to the Island; for then, what might be lost in one way, would be gained in another; less money might be realized by the sales, but the animals of superior breed which have been imported, for the benefit of the Colony, would be preserved to it. As for dividing the stock into three equal parts, one to be sold in each of the counties, I think that would not answer the purpose of those most immediately concerned, who, no doubt, naturally wish to raise as much by the sale of it as possible; for we all very well know, that, if sold on the farm, or in Charlottetown, all the animals—the more desirable ones especially—would bring much larger prices, than if they were distributed, for sale, at different places. Wherever it is certain there can be ensured the greatest competition amongst purchasers, that certainly ought to be the place of sale; and we must all agree, that that place is Charlottetown. The desire of some, anxious to become purchasers, would, doubtless, be to keep down the prices, with a view to their own individual benefit; but if the whole stock be sold at one place and time, all anxious to purchase, and having means to do so, will attend there and then; and, through a fair and open spirit of competition the highest prices will be realized. Said, however, even in Charlottetown, where the interests of the Society certainly require that it should be sold, the stock, at this time of general pecuniary embarrassment, when money is so very scarce, will not, in my opinion, bring, in all, more than about £500 or £600; no doubt, would be realized by its sale; for it is, unquestionably, a most valuable stock, in all respects. The mare is certainly a splendid animal; she may be a little too large for this country; but, by crossing the breed, many very fine and suitable horses may be derived from her. And, as for the pigs, they are exactly the kind we ought to have here; easy to be fed and brought to market. I, for one, certainly do not wish that the experiment of the farm should be continued; and I think the best thing that can now be done with the concern, is to sell off every thing, and close it immediately. In this expressing myself, I speak not only my own sentiments, but also those of my constituents, who have instructed me to oppose any further grants to the Model Farm, should any be proposed.

Mr. MURHEAD.—I think it would be unfair to confine the

sales of the stock, to the farm or Charlottetown. The people in and about Charlottetown, engaged in agricultural pursuits, have had too many similar advantages extended to them, at the expense of the other parts of the Island. The stock upon the farm is, strictly speaking, the property of the people; for it has been purchased with the people's money; and, therefore, no disposal of it could be just, unless it were equally divided, for sale, among the three counties.

Hon. Mr. WHELAN.—I was also, at first, inclined to think that the fairest way of disposing of the stock, would be to allot equal shares of it, for sale, to each of the counties; but, on reflection, it now appears to me that that would not be the best way; for the chief object, under the inauspicious circumstances which necessitate the sale of the stock, must be the realizing of as much money by it as possible; and, judging from our experience of the past, we must be well aware that the sending of any of the animals, into King's County, or Prince County, for sale, would cause a diminution in price. If the stock is to be disposed of to the best advantage, that is, for the highest prices which can be obtained, it must be sold in Charlottetown; and, in order to secure the very highest prices, I think it would be well so to order the sale, that an opportunity might be afforded to some of the moneyed, practical, and enterprising agriculturists of Nova Scotia, to compete for the purchase of some of the animals, with the like class of our Island farmers.

Mr. PERRY.—Hon. members have taken up the question as to the most advisable way of selling the stock, before they have determined that it shall be sold. The first question, I think, which we have to decide, is, shall the stock be sold, or will this House agree to relieve the Society from its pecuniary embarrassments, by granting them such a sum as would be sufficient to enable them, at least, to pay off their debts. If we decide that we will not grant them such relief, and that, therefore, the stock must be sold; it will then, perhaps, be proper for us to enquire in what way it will be most advisable to sell it.

Mr. CLARK.—The stock, in my opinion, cannot be disposed of for its real value, unless it be sold in Charlottetown; and, therefore, under present circumstances, when it is so desirable that as much as possible should be realized by the sale of it, I think it would be wrong to allot any part of it, for sale, to any other part of the country. The persons, wherever they reside, who really want to purchase any part of it, will attend the sale, wherever it may take place; and certainly it ought to be sold where it will bring the most. The concern is a losing one, and the sooner we have done with it the better; but, at the same time, it is our duty to see that as much as possible shall be made out of it at all close. Whilst on my legs, I will take leave to say, that I have always been opposed to bounties, on the principle that if a concern or business, when properly managed, is not found to be remunerative it ought at once to be abandoned; and the Model Farm is a case in point. I have, it is true, sometimes been induced to forego my own judgment, and to swerve from this principle, through deference to the opinions of others; but, with respect to all such cases, the results have proved to me, that I would have done right, had I acted in accordance with my own unbiased judgment.

Hon. the SPEAKER.—We are certainly with undue haste, jumping to a conclusion at once; forgetting that, before we take up the consideration, whether we ought to sanction, or recommend, to the Royal Agricultural Society, any particular mode of sale, when the stock on their farm shall come to be disposed of, we are called upon to decide in the first place, whether we will consent, by a further legislative pecuniary grant, to help them out of their present embarrassment, or not. For my own part, I am fully prepared to oppose the making of any further grant, to the Society, for the support of the Model Farm. The experiment has, unfortunately, proved a failure; and should we agree to make any further pecuniary grants for its support, we would, I believe, in doing so, be actually contravening the declared wishes of our constituents. I, therefore, think that few, if any of the members of this House, will be inclined to take any other view of that primary question, than that which I entertain myself, which is simply, that, whether we regard the ill success, in which all the laudable efforts of the Society and of this House to render the experiment prosperous, have terminated, or bear in mind the provision which we are bound to make out of the revenue, for more legitimate objects of public service; or consider it to be our duty to conform to the wishes or instructions of our constituents, we cannot feel that we should be justified in making any further appropriation of moneys, at this time, for the purpose of sustaining the Model Farm. Besides, the Society themselves, whilst acknowledging the past liberality of this House, towards them, say that they cannot, at this time, reasonably expect any further legislative aid to be extended to them, with a view to enabling them to carry on the Model Farm. The deciding of this question cannot, then, I think, be a subject of much difficulty. Having disposed of it, we may, in the next place, consider how far it is our duty to sanction or direct any particular mode of the sale of the stock, which must ensue after the refusal of any further legislative aid shall have been communicated to the Society. Anticipating that sale, I cannot, however, even whilst recognizing the necessity of securing the largest returns which can prudently be realized by it, agree with the hon. member for King's County, (Hon. E. Whelan), that, for the sake of enhancing the prices, it would be well to afford an opportunity to the enterprising agriculturists of Nova Scotia, to become purchasers of some of the fine animals constituting the live stock upon the Model Farm. I agree with that hon. member, that, were such an opportunity to be afforded, it is very likely that some of the moneyed, enterprising, and scientific agriculturists of Nova Scotia, might become competitors at the sale, and, most probably, purchasers, at high prices, of a portion of the stock; but I submit, that to allow strangers from other Colonies to purchase, even at the very highest prices, and carry out of the Island some of the best, or perhaps the very best, of the fine animals which have, with so much care, been selected in the old country, and, at so great an outlay, purchased and imported by us, would be very bad policy indeed. Let us, on no account, consent that any of these animals shall be taken out of the Island; the enhanced prices which might be received for them, would be prodigiously overbalanced by the loss, which, by their exportation, would be sustained by our immediate agricultural interests. And neither do I think that any of the male animals, purchased into one county, should be allowed to pass from it into another county. Some restrictive obligations to this effect, should be enforced upon purchasers at the general sale; that the closing of the concern may be made to impart and secure to the country as much certain and direct benefit, as can possibly be derived from it. It is certainly very much to be regretted that so complete a failure should be experienced in an undertaking, from which we were all most willing to expect results most beneficial to the country. I am very far from intending to cast condemnatory reflections, upon any who have had, either the direction, or the immediate management, of the concerns of the Model Farm; but it certainly seems as if some fatality had attended its progress, from its very commencement; and, really, when we consider that no such losses at sea, in the importation of stock, as we have twice, of late, sustained, has been experienced by the

people of Nova Scotia, or occurred formerly, with respect to stock imported by Mr. Yeo; and, when we take into account the time and pains, the fostering care, bestowed upon the Model Farm, by its founder—(I need not, through an affectation of delicacy, refrain from naming him; for it is well known that Judge Peters was the founder of the Farm)—and, I say, when we take into account the time and pains bestowed upon the concern, by that gentleman, himself, not only a scientific, but a practical agriculturist, as well as similar well directed exertions, on the part of other members of the Royal Agricultural Society, to ensure its success; that the results should be so unsatisfactory and discouraging, as to demand that it shall be immediately discontinued, is truly astonishing. I agree with the hon. member for King's County (Hon. E. Whelan) and also with the hon. member for Prince County (Mr. Clark) that if the stock be distributed for sale, amongst the three counties,—one third to each,—it will not realize one third as much as if sold on the farm, or in Charlottetown; for there is not, generally speaking, money enough amongst the farmers in the country, to enable them to give the full value for animals of superior breeds. I would, therefore, say let the stock be sold here. Our refusing to make a further grant in aid of the Model Farm, does not, I need scarcely say, shut out the Royal Agricultural Society, from our usual favorable consideration, with respect to its more general objects; but that will be determined upon when the House shall be in Committee on Supplies.

Hon. Mr. MOONEY.—It is very well known that I have never been favorable to the large grants which have been annually made to the Agricultural Society; for I have always thought and maintained that the benefits thereby conferred upon the country, were but very partially experienced; and that the general good effected by them, but very inadequately compensated the people for the large appropriations of their money to that Society; and as for the Model Farm, I was, from the first, disposed, like the hon. member for Prince County, (Mr. Clark) to sing its requiem; and now, the result of the experiment fully verifies my prediction concerning it. I agree with those hon. members who have spoken against our allowing any of the stock imported by the Agricultural Society, to be taken out of the country, that such obligations should be imposed upon purchasers, of any and every part of such stock, as would provide for its being kept in the country. For the moneys which we have, from time to time, so largely granted for the encouragement of agriculture, we have had but very inadequate returns made to us, through the operations of the Agricultural Society, I, therefore, think it will be wise in us to keep what valuable animals we have got, by their importations, and not allow them to be taken away, either to any of the neighbouring provinces, or to the United States.

Hon. COLONIAL TREASURER.—I quite agree with the Hon. the Speaker, that we cannot, with any show of propriety, agree to make any further grant in aid of the Model Farm; and that, as it has no resources within itself, whereby its present pecuniary embarrassments can be got rid of, and its future progress ensured, we must, however reluctantly, abandon the concern to its fate; and acquiesce in the propriety of closing it immediately, as suggested to us by the committee of the Society, in their Memorial now before us. And I also, further, agree, with the Hon. the Speaker, that, if the stock be apportioned for sale, one third to each of the counties, a very serious loss will be consequent on the sale of such animals as may be sold in Prince and King's Counties; and, in the correctness of this opinion, my own individual experience fully bears me out. I certainly would be very glad if such a partition and apportioning of the stock amongst the counties, as has been spoken of, could be prudently and warrantably made; but, as we all know that it would greatly depreciate the sales, I cannot think that it will be seriously insisted upon in this House. However, I do not conceive that, if we take a right view of the subject, we shall find that we have any right to dictate to the Society, where, or in what way, they shall dispose of the stock now on their farm. That stock, it is true, was purchased with money granted by this House; but the stock, nevertheless, is theirs, and not ours. They applied to us for a grant of money to enable them to carry out certain purposes; and, with a view to the ultimate benefit of the country, we thought proper to accede to their application; the grant was made for the specified purpose; and certain stock was purchased with it, and placed upon their farm; and that stock is positively the property of the Society; and, although they have very properly considered that, as this House granted them the money to buy their stock, they were bound, at the least, to consult us about the selling of it, their having done so does not, as I apprehend it, place the stock entirely at our disposal. We may, however, with great propriety, consider, and determine, how the stock may be disposed of to the best advantage; and, having done so, our views on that subject, communicated to them, will, doubtless, mainly, if not wholly, influence them with respect to the sale thereof. Now that the giving up of the Model Farm and the abandonment of the public benefits which were expected ultimately to be realized by its operation, in the rearing of animals of the best and most valued breeds, seems inevitable, the main object is the distribution throughout the country, of the valuable stock; and if that could be properly effected, even by giving the animals away, it would confer a most important and lasting benefit upon the Colony.

Hon. Mr. MOONEY.—I perfectly agree with the Hon. the Col. Treasurer, that the stock in question is positively the property of the Agricultural Society, notwithstanding the fact that the money with which they purchased it, was granted to them by this House; and that, therefore, it is not within our province to compel them to dispose of it, either in one way or another. But, I think, it would be proper for the committee of the Agricultural Society to draw up a resolution or plan for regulating the sale of the live stock, grain, and other effects, belonging to them, now upon the Model Farm; and to submit it to us, for our revision and concurrence. So much, from the Society, is, I think, due to this House; but, in my opinion, we can have no right authoritatively to dictate to them, how they are to dispose of what is positively their own property.

Mr. YEO.—I am indeed very sorry that the experiment of the Model Farm has proved a failure. I have always supported, by my vote, in this House, every proposition, the carrying of which would, in my opinion, prove beneficial to our agriculture; and, under the impression that the Model Farm would, not only prove a nursery for the raising of young animals of the best and most approved breeds, for the general supply of our farmers, but also become an agricultural school, for the diffusion through the influence of example, of the principles of practical scientific farming throughout the Island, I heartily concurred in the opinion, generally entertained in this House, of the propriety of making such a grant to the Agricultural Society as would enable them to carry out their views, in those respects, for the general good. For my ready concurrence in the views generally entertained in this House, I was censured by my constituents; and I am truly sorry to be obliged to admit, that results of the

most discouraging kind have proved that their anticipations, concerning the working of the experiment, were much nearer the truth than mine. It has been said that, although this House gave, to the Agricultural Society, the money with which they purchased the stock now on their farm, the stock is positively theirs, and we have nothing to do with it, and can have no right to dictate to them how they are to dispose of it. If we decline to give any more money in aid of the Model Farm, we certainly, in such case, have done with it altogether; and we cannot then have any right to control the society touching the sale of their stock thereon; yet still, as the concern was undertaken with public money, for the public good, I am certainly of opinion that even the closing of it should be conducted in such a way as will be most likely generally and equally to benefit farmers throughout the whole extent of the Island; and, as respects the sale of the stock, this, I think, can be effected in no other way, than by allotting to each county, for sale therein, one third of it. Than myself, no one can be more sincerely anxious for the general good of our farmers; and I would freely go as far as any one, to promote any reasonable scheme, having for its objects the general advancement of our agricultural interests; but, as regards the Model Farm, we must, I am afraid, after the very unfortunate trial which we have had of it, allow it to go down; for its tendency, like those of too many of our Island concerns, at this time, seems to be hopelessly downwards.

Hon. the SPEAKER.—I have drawn up a resolution, with the intention of submitting it to the committee, and I will now read it. The Hon. the Speaker then read his resolution as follows:—

Resolved, That it is inexpedient to make a further grant of money for the support or management of the Model Agricultural Farm; and that the stock, &c., be disposed of in such a manner as the committee of the Royal Agricultural Society shall deem most advantageous.

Mr. PERRY.—If we adopt that Resolution, we shall bind ourselves to make good any deficiency. If the amount, realized by the sale of their stock, fall short of the liabilities of the Society, on account of their Farm, as no doubt it will, and very considerably too; that Resolution, if we agree to it, will bind us to make good such deficiency whatever may be its amount.

Hon. the SPEAKER.—If we look at the Memorial of the Society, it will be apparent that they look upon all the stock, grain, and implements upon the Farm, as public property; and they do so very properly, I think; for it was all purchased with public money. I attended a late meeting of the committee of the Society, when the business under their consideration was the pecuniary involvement of the Farm; and, when the necessity which they conceived this involvement had then under of selling their stock was declared, as they could hope for no adequate means of relief from the Legislature; I said, that, as all their stock must be accounted public property, it was my opinion that they could not, with propriety, proceed to a sale of it, without having previously obtained the sanction of the Assembly to such a proceeding; and to that end, they would do well, I thought, to memorialize this House.

Mr. PERRY.—The only meaning which I particularly see in the Resolution, is, that, if the Agricultural Society, undertake the sale of their stock, under the sanction or authority of this House, then, whatever may be their deficiency of means to pay their debts, this House will be bound to make it good.

Mr. YEO.—Since seemingly we are resolved not to assist them out of their pecuniary difficulties, I think our wisest course will be to allow them to make the most they can of their stock, in whatever way they themselves may deem it most advisable to sell it.

Mr. POPE.—I shall go against granting anything more in aid of the Model Farm, with a view to its continuance; but I think it is a public institution, having been established under the auspices of this House, and by pecuniary means voted by this House; and that, therefore, on the winding up of its affairs, consequent upon its insolvency, this House will be bound to make good whatever may be the deficiency of means for the payment of the debts, incurred by its operation. The concern belongs to the whole Island, and the three Counties have each an equal share in it; and, as the sale of the stock seems to be inevitable, it is for us, the representatives of the whole Island, to say whether the stock shall be sold here, in Charlottetown, for, as it might seem, the especial benefit of Queen's County, or whether it shall be, as I maintain it ought to be, duly apportioned for sale amongst the three Counties, so that no one County shall have better opportunities to make more desirable and advantageous purchases, than the other two. The hon. member from Darnley (Mr. Clark) has said that, in consenting to the granting of means, by this House, for the establishment of the Model Farm, he surrendered his judgment to others; perhaps he did, as that would not be anything new for him; for I think he has very often, for reasons best known to himself, surrendered both himself and his judgment to the guidance of others. But, whether the institution originated in a general mistake in judgment, both on the part of the leading members of the Agricultural Society, and the members of this House, I will not presume to say. That the undertaking has been eminently unfortunate, is, however, beyond all doubt; and all that now remains for us to do, is to make the most we can out of the untucky concern. I am very far indeed from wishing to impute the losses which have been sustained to any neglect or mismanagement, on the part of any upon whom responsibility has immediately rested, in the concern; for I believe those losses were quite accidental, and altogether unavoidable; and the state of the farm, and the condition of the animals upon it, speak largely and most satisfactorily for the skillful and careful management of the whole. What I am now inclined to say, with respect to it, is this: let the whole stock be sold, and let each County have its full share of it. We ought not to make the sale a matter of mere pounds, shillings and pence; but liberally direct it, with an equal view to the good of all the agriculturists in the Island. In Prince County the farmers, generally speaking, are not so well able to make purchases, as they of Queen's County are; but it ought to be remembered that Queen's County is now very well supplied with animals of the best and most approved breeds; and due consideration for the supply of the wants, in that respect, of the less fortunate Prince and Queen's Counties, should be manifested, by the House, when an occasion, such as the present, enables them to do so.

Mr. DINGWELL.—I perfectly agree with all that has been said by the hon. member, Mr. Pope, concerning the prospective sale of the live stock now on the Model Farm. That stock is, most unquestionably, public property; the property of the whole people of the Island, and each of the three Counties has an equal claim to it. Any distribution of that stock, therefore, whether by sale or otherwise, which should give to the people of any one County greater opportunities of advantage than were extended to the other two, would be manifest injustice. In Queen's County, in the neighbourhood of Charlottetown, in particular, the farmers have had every opportunity afforded them, by the sales of the finest animals and the most improved implements of husbandry, in Charlottetown, to supply themselves with the most choice of such animals and the best of such implements; and, generally speaking, they have very wisely availed themselves of such opportunities to better their condition, both with respect to their live stock and their farming utensils; and are, consequently, greatly in advance of many of their less favored brother agriculturists of King's and Prince Counties. Such, so long and so uniformly, have been the superior advantages, in these respects, enjoyed by the agriculturists of Queen's County, especially of those immediately around Charlottetown, whether they have arisen from the mere accident of locality, or been secured by covert and skilful manoeuvring, that I am almost inclined to hope that parties, directly concerned therein,—how much more so ever they might be likely to be benefited by the sale of the Society's stock,

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