

Patriotism and Production

The following address was delivered by Hon. Martin Burrell, Minister of Agriculture, in Toronto, on the evening of the fourth instant, at a great dinner held by the combined agricultural and live stock association interests of the Dominion. The epoch-making event took place in the banquet hall of the King Edward hotel, and Mr. Burrell's speech was the feature of the evening. It was an eloquent and timely address and a fitting send off to the Dominion-wide campaign inaugurated by the Federal government, the keynote of which is "Patriotism and Production."

The speech is well worth careful reading.

Your Honor, Mr. Mayor, and Gentlemen: I appreciate very much your invitation to be present at the annual dinner of the representatives of Canadian Agriculture and the Live Stock Industry, especially at a time when, from patriotic as well as economic motives, we have decided to undertake a series of conferences throughout Canada, with two purposes in view: One is that of dealing generally with our conditions and duties at a time when the empire is fighting for its life, and the other for dealing specifically with the problems which relate to the food supplies of ourselves and of the millions with whom we are associated in battling to save and perpetuate our common liberties and civilization.

A Time for Action.

It is perhaps impossible to say anything new in regard to matters which have been in all our thoughts for months past, and in these fateful days when our countrymen, our kinsmen and our allies are occupied with deeds it is not a time for many words. Notwithstanding, as a member of a government which is entrusted with unusual and grave responsibility at this hour, and particularly as head of a department concerned so largely with food production, you will, I know, bear with me for a few minutes while I touch on some of the matters which are of interest to us all.

There are with us tonight many men representing: not agriculture, but other great departments of our national life—the press, transportation, finance, manufactures. That they are here means, what? Means that they realize that every great interest in the country is directly, or indirectly, vitally concerned with the status of the farmer in Canada. We welcome the presence of these gentlemen and the thousands they represent, and I say deliberately that the keenness of their desire to place agriculture on a permanently sound footing is one of the most hopeful and cheering signs of the times.

The Duty of the Press.

We recognize the assistance the press can give to any great movement and in this special appeal to any great movement, and in this special appeal we propose to enlist their active co-operation. Never in our history did we require from the press of Canada such clarity of thought, such force of expression, as we require now on all matters of national importance, and although the financial strain is as hard for those great interests as for many others, we shall not look in vain for a high response.

In referring to all to a campaign of increased production I am not unaware of the difficulties one is faced with and the objections which are sometimes raised. They are difficulties and objections incidental, in some measure, to the geographical character of our country—its enormous area—its comparatively scant settlement, and the resultant cost and difficulty involved in transportation and distribution of product. Some attention has been paid to these things. More will have to be paid.

War and Agriculture.

The war has dislocated and disorganized the business of the world; hasty specific remedies and readjustments are impossible. In view of the undoubted future shortage of food production in Europe, we urge greater production and are told that customers are buying less of many farm commodities; that with the mounting prices of grains, of bran, of rough forages, the conversion of these things into the manufactured articles of meats, butter, eggs, milk, etc., is unprofitable in many parts of our country, and added to this comes, again owing to the war, the extra cost and scarcity of adequate ocean transport.

It is not, therefore, only greater production, but better production and cheaper production, more accurate knowledge of markets, and better facilities for reaching them. All these things are tied up together, and it is to these things that not only farmers, but governments, bankers and transportation men have to address themselves.

Markets Our Work.

Cheap transportation, always a vital factor in our commerce and agriculture, is more necessary than ever at the present time. The men at the head of our various railway companies are certainly not insensible to the situation. In the case of our own department, I can cordially acknowledge the most ready assistance in cheaper and special rates in assisting work of a productive character.

It is, of course, easier to talk of cheaper transportation than to obtain it under such conditions as give a fair return to those thousands of people who have invested their money in transportation companies. I know that the gentlemen representing the big companies that are present here tonight will not criticize me when I urge them to go even farther than they have ever gone, and to use their strongest influence in the solution of this phase of agricultural problems.

The Financial Aspect.

Then as to finance. In some mys-

terious way a great many people seem to think that the Dominion government can turn out unlimited quantities of money in order to remedy the minister of finance has on several occasions lately dealt with this unfortunate conditions in the country, matter with great ability and great sympathy. He has a much larger and more anxious responsibility than most of us, and few appreciate the difficulties of meeting our national obligations and maintaining the credit of Canada in such frightfully trying times—a task which is essential to the future prosperity of this country.

In so far as he can assist in the solution of the problems which I have touched on, he may be counted on to do so.

I may also say a word in reference to our friends, the bankers and loan companies, who have come in for a very large and widespread share of criticism. A bank manager or bank president owes a duty to the public from whose activities he draws the wherewithal to operate his institution, but it will not be disputed, nor should it be forgotten, that he owes his depositors and shareholders the duty of not unnecessarily risking their money, or shaking their confidence. I am quite sure that in many cases a broad and generous attitude has been shown. It may not be so in others. In any case, at such a time as this no effort should be spared to maintain the integrity of our financial institutions. The idea of big dividends should however be relegated to a secondary place and an attitude of generosity maintained to the honest borrower, even to the point where prudence is strained.

An Encouraging Outlook.

As to the special campaign which we are inaugurating—"Patriotism and Production"—we have the most encouraging outlook in regard to the prospects of the heaviest grain crop in 1915 that we have yet witnessed in Canada. It may not be generally known how tragic a failure there was during the last season in the drought-stricken districts in two of our great Western provinces. The government has been faced with the task of providing an enormous amount of seed grain in order that the thousands of settlers in that country may pull through a disastrous time. It is gratifying to know that soil and moisture conditions in that country are more favorable at the present time than they have been for years. It is not

there is a greater recognition of the importance of giving more thorough attention to the preparation of the soil, in order to achieve successful results.

We have heard much talk of mixed farming for the West, but when a man learns how to handle his soil in such a way as to obtain good yields of grain he is putting himself in a position to deal successfully with a more varied system of agriculture.

The Live Stock Industry.

I come now to the question of the live stock industry, with which most of you are associated, and which is the great basis for a prosperous agriculture. How far governments can wisely assist the individual in his own business—whether it be agriculture or anything else—is a debatable question. Certainly if justification for direct assistance exists in any industry it exists in regard to that one which is of paramount importance to the nation.

I have, however, long believed that work which may broadly be called "educational" is the most important and most justifiable of all assistance; that the knowledge which has been acquired by scientific and expert workers along all lines of research ought to be made available in the quickest and cheapest form to the practical man who is dealing with the soil at first hand. In short, the helping of people to help themselves, rather than a paternalism which would take the form of handing out doles.

I have not time, nor do I know that it would be the place, to relate the story of what we have tried to do during the past few years. I am certain, however, that in our department, as in the various provincial departments and agricultural institutions, there has been an immense forward step taken, which has led to better methods and increased and cheaper production.

What Has Been Done.

In the live stock branch, during the past year, our work connected with the sheep industry has secured to the consumer of wool far greater profits, through educational work along the lines of grading and classification. In the distribution of pure-bred sires, both in rams and boars, as well as cattle and horses, in spite of any criticism which may rightly be made, much has been done to strengthen the character of our flocks and herds.

Work of an equally stimulative kind has been done in regard to the poultry industry, and I am quite sure that the egg and wool exhibits of the live stock branch, which were shown at nearly all our large fairs, were of immense value to a very large number of people, and I cordially acknowledge the excellent work that has been done in all these directions by the live stock commissioner and the officers of that branch.

In other directions there has also been a gratifying co-operation amongst all agricultural workers and departments through the country during the past year.

No man needs to be told that at a time when the finances of this country are strained beyond precedent a minister cannot expect to have increases of expenditure without the strongest justification, and, indeed,

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many great departments have necessarily had to curtail estimates.

Still Further Assistance.

But in view of the conditions on this continent and in Europe, every possible encouragement should be given to strengthen the live stock industry of our country, and I felt warranted in placing before the finance minister and my colleagues the reasons for still further assistance to this industry.

I know, of course, that we are told that already there is over-production and a flattened market in some districts, and that it is useless to urge people to produce more. The market question is, undoubtedly, tremendously important, and I may assure you that the government expect, during the coming year, to look more closely into this question, and to move in the direction of remedying some of the unfortunate features that may have obtained in the past. With all that can be said, I still believe that it is the duty, and will be the profitable duty in the future, of the farmers of this country to pay even greater attention than ever to the maintenance of their flocks and herds, and to the bringing of them up to the highest requirements.

Agricultural War Book.

As some of you may know, we have just published in connection with this campaign an "Agricultural War Book." The officers of the department and a great many gentlemen outside of the department have contributed of their best to this handbook. I refer to those who are interested in the subject I am speaking on now to the excellent article on the live stock situation by the assistant live stock commissioner. It contains not only valuable statistical data in regard to the industry, but, I think, a thoughtful and accurate summing up of the situation generally, and I was glad to find that in common with all the officers of that branch, the writer is sanguine as to the future, and persuaded of the need of sparing no effort in regard to strengthening this phase of our agricultural activities.

I have taken up with Mr. Bright the question of live stock work for next year. We intend, of course, to continue aggressively our assistance in regard to pure-bred animals, but the new assistance to which I referred just now, and in which I am glad to say my colleagues concurred, touches the live stock sections of our great exhibitions.

Exhibitions Do Good.

I know that some of the exhibitions in the country have labored under difficulties in the past, not only the summer and fall exhibitions, but the winter live stock shows. I also know that the competition amongst breeders at these various shows has done an immense amount of good in stimulating efforts along all lines, inspiring men to do better things by showing them which are the best and most profitable types, and generally strengthening the character of the herds of our country. To attend any of these exhibitions, however, is often a matter of some difficulty, and a good deal of expense, and prizes offered must be such as to give inducement enough to men to undertake the risk and expenditure involved.

I am glad, therefore, to say to you that our live stock appropriation will be increased by a sum sufficiently substantial to enable us to assist the larger fair associations whose shows are open in all classes of live stock to the whole of Canada. I do not know that it is necessary to go into details, which, indeed, will have to be worked out yet, but these will be supplied by the live stock commissioner, and I need only, at the present moment, say that the assistance, in my opinion, will not only be justified by results, but that it will be

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sufficient to give great encouragement to those associations which have been and are making live stock a prominent or the sole feature of their work.

The Larger Phase.

Well, Your Honor, and Gentlemen: I said that this was a time for deeds and not words, and I fear I am already transgressing, but there is a patriotic as well as an economic side to the questions I have touched on, and I am sure you will forgive a word, in closing on what one may call the larger phase. We cannot ignore the difficulties and hardships that have faced and are facing many of the people of our country at the present time, not only amongst our rural communities, but in the great centres where thousands of people need assistance if they are to live at all, and where many thousands, who, in their old age, or in sickness, had a modest income upon which to live, have found their means swept out of existence by the blow to many industries which has been given by the ruthless hand of war. In our moments of despondency we might well, however, consider the infinitely greater calamities to which millions of people are subjected without a fault of their own. It is estimated that in rural Belgium alone three hundred million dollars would scarcely cover the financial losses represented by burned homesteads and a ravaged and devastated countryside. In Antwerp a thousand women, ill clad, shiver daily in the cold, waiting for the hour of the free, but scanty or frugal meal. In all the towns of that beautiful country the poor, and those who were rich, stand side by side patiently waiting for that dole of food by which life has got to be sustained. Nor is the tragic misery less in unhappy Poland, where similar horrors are taking place.

Our Soil is Free.

We have at least to thank God that our soil is free from the invaders; step, that our people are united to a degree unparalleled in our history. In our gratitude we must not forget that this is in very truth our war. Our countrymen and our kinsmen are in the rain-soaked trenches enduring bitter cold and often hunger, in their tortured ears the incessant roar of guns, the endless shriek of shells; facing continually mutilation and death; and for what? That your liberties and mine may be preserved. We need no argument, no controversy as to the causes of the war, or as to where the proportion of blame should be allotted. One great outstanding fact confronts us. It is a war for the triumph or defeat of government of the people by the people and for the people. Democracy is literally on trial. The issue will decide as to whether militarism and brute force are to be the dominating fac-

tor in our modern life, or whether the civil power and the law are still to hold supreme sway and authority. It is not the farmers, the business men and the workers of Germany who forced the war, but those who control the great military machine of that country and impose the iron rule of Prussia on the popular will. In that black hour, as in the past, self-government was a name and not a reality.

Liberty of Britain.

Down through the centuries has come the widening reign of liberty and law, and however bitter the cost, and however long the struggle, there is no man in this room that can doubt the final result. We have sent and are sending our sons and brothers, but we cannot all be in that fierce battle line. It remains for us, who are left behind, to broaden our sympathies, to bear each other's burdens, and to direct our efforts to sustain those who are bearing the brunt of the fight. We cannot do it better than by ensuring a full measure of the necessities of life to those who are in the front. It is our duty, not less than Britain's, to see that not a sailor in the fleet or a man in the trenches shall lack a single one of those things which he so sorely needs. Russia, that great-producing country, must necessarily yield less with its millions drafted to the war; Belgium as a producing factor is obliterated from the map; Britain, always unable to sustain itself, will have stronger needs; that beautiful section of France, where a little more than a year ago I saw the countless stocks of golden grain, is now scarred with the deep dug trenches. Surely, surely there is need for all we can do. On the lower grounds I urge again that it will pay the producers of this country to extend their work, but on the higher grounds I make the still stronger appeal that, even if it were an open question as to whether a man, by producing more from his farm, could make a profit thereby, or not, yet if there be the faintest doubt as to an ample food supply for those millions who are heroically doing our work, then in Heaven's name, let us remove the doubt and do our full share in retaining for ourselves and our children the institutions, liberties and civilization whose blessings we share today.

LAST BROTHER ENLISTS.

London, nt., Feb. 16.—Declaring that he has a family debt to pay to the Kaiser and his men; and that he is out to see that it is paid in full, T. A. Cresswell, an Englishman, 33 yrs. old, who has had three brothers in action in the present war, has given up a good position as traveller for the John J. O'Keefe Company, of New York, to join the local army service corps squad of the second contingent. Two other brothers of Cresswell fell in South Africa, and he is the last of the family. He himself is a veteran of the South African war.