

RURAL INDUSTRIES

(By Harry Thomson)

Other things being equal, it is often more amusing to tell the truth, which is perhaps one reason why politicians have such a hard, humorless life. The remark is prompted by the recent appointment in this State of a Rural Industries Commission, ostensibly to enquire into the decay of rural industries. It might almost as well be termed "a commission for enquiring into the reason why large scale efficiency produces more economically than small scale inefficiency."

The motive behind the appointment is, of course, the motive behind the decentralisation cry generally, and is in part responsible for the almost panicky legislation recently passed to protect the less prosperous primary industries.

For the reason that economic theory is generally a decade or two behind industrial and commercial fact—a tendency must be established before it can be recognised—many of the current economic slogans are woefully out of date.

"The farmer is the backbone of the country," "Decentralisation," "A million farms for a million farmers"—all these crystallise but half a truth. And half a truth is often more dangerous than none at all, for it dies a much more lingering death than a whole-hearted lie.

Wool and Wheat

And it is half a truth that Australia is carried wholly on a fleece and an ear of corn. It is not a sure and certain sign of approaching dissolution that 50 per cent. of the population of this State is in the metropolitan area. It might conceivably be an illustration of the prosperity of the State. Actually, of course, the truth lies halfway between.

As far as I know, the exact figures have never been worked out, but even a superficial examination of the budget of the ordinary "man in the street" shows a surprisingly small proportion of money devoted to primary products. Assuming his weekly income at £5 a week it is doubtful if more than 35/ is spent either directly or indirectly on primary products.

Meat amounts perhaps to 25/, but a great deal of this is cost of dressing and distributing. Bread is perhaps next in importance, though much of this is milling, cooking, and distributing, which is all work done as well in the town as in the country. In clothing the proportion of the primary product used is even smaller. It is a remarkable suit that has as much as one pound of pure wool in it, worth perhaps 3/. The largest item, rent, absorbs from 25 to 30 per cent. of the total. Again, that is not a primary industry or connected any more with the country than the town.

Town and Country

All the manufactured things eaten and all the manufactured things worn, books, and amusements belong far more in preparation, if not exclusively, to town than to country. Figures are not available, but it is well within the truth to say that the average citizen in this State spends at least two-thirds of his income on things which have been provided, made, or worked up in towns as distinct from country.

Not one-third of the expense of the average citizen is expense that finds its way back to the country in return for primary products. With the well-to-do citizen the proportion is even more marked. He does not eat much more meat or wheat or wear much more wool, but his surplus money goes in luxuries which are almost solely the products of towns.

This rather surprising result is due to the fact that in Australia we enjoy a high standard of living. The lower the standard the greater the proportion of income that is spent on sheer living necessities, particularly food. Given a high standard of living and at the same time an avowed protectionist policy it is not at all surprising that there should be a continued drift to the town, but it is sheer logical necessity. If Protection aims at anything it aims at a country being self-supporting and, as far as possible, producing all the manufactures it requires.

Australian Protection

The Australian brand of Protection has always aimed at keeping up a high standard of living at the same time. It is surely simply a matter of logic that if Mr. Average Citizen spends twice as much on town-made as on country produced things the town must in the aggregate produce twice as much as the country. It is not therefore astonishing to learn that there are more people in the towns than in the country. Nor is it surprising to learn that the total value of the primary products of Australia is only about £250,000,000 compared with about £350,000,000 produced by industry.

The figures would be even more striking but for the large volume of imports which are almost exclusively manufactures, whereas the exports are almost wholly raw materials. If the raw materials retained in Australia are compared with the manufactures retained and imported it will be found that the figures are much what we would expect when we were considering the private budget of Mr. Average Citizen.

The net result is this. The Royal Commission on Rural Industries can write the first and most important paragraph of its report without calling any evidence or moving out of its room. Whatever other recommendations it makes will be about as effective in stopping the effect of the high standard of living and the protectionist policy of Australia as the famous lady who attempted to sweep back the Atlantic with a broom. Those two causes and the effect of motor traffic making transport from the nearest town so easy are the whole answer to the riddle. Rural production deserves every encouragement, but rural industry is a dead dog that looks like remaining a long time dead.

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ADMISSIONS TO THE BAR.

PRIVILEGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

The Civil Court presented an unusual appearance on Monday morning, when every available seat in the building was occupied, and a number of persons had to stand. The occasion was the admission of eleven new members of the bar. Although this is not a record for one day—there were 13 on the last day of the final term in 1921—was considerably in excess of the average. The last day of the term would have been observed on Saturday but for the Anzac holiday. Those admitted on Monday were Misses Thelma Evelyn Bleby and Edna Lucy Holmes, Messrs. Cecil Austin Hewitt, Kenneth Norman Innes, Patrick Joseph Kelly, James Crimie Ellery McCarthy, Vivian Rhodes Millhouse, John Coleaso Naylor, Lancelot Julian Nesbit, Lancelot Townsend Gun, and John Rubery Williamson.

On the bench were the Acting-Chief Justice (Mr. Justice Poole), Mr. Justice Angus Parsons, Mr. Justice Napier, and Mr. Acting-Justice Richards.

Mr. Paris Nesbit, K.C., moved for the admission of Mr. Nesbit, Mr. A. W. Piper, K.C., for the admission of Mr. Hewitt, Mr. T. S. O'Halloran, K.C., for the admission of Mr. Innes, Mr. C. Johns for the admission of Miss Bleby, Mr. R. Ingleby for the admission of Mr. McCarthy, Mr. F. Kelly for the admission of Mr. Kelly, Mr. H. Thomson for the admission of Miss Holmes, Mr. Eric Millhouse for the admission of Mr. Millhouse, Mr. F. G. Hicks for the admission of Mr. Naylor, and Mr. J. W. Nelligan for the admission of Mr. Gun. In the case of Mr. Williamson, Mr. G. McEwin moved that his client be exempted from compliance with the Supreme Court rule No. 4, which provided that an article clerk should not be engaged in any other occupation during the course of his articles. He mentioned that Mr. Williamson was librarian at the Woodville Institute when he entered on his articles, and that for some time he continued to occupy the post, which entailed night duties only.

Mr. Justice Angus Parsons said as Mr. Williamson had originally been article clerk to him he thought it better that he should not take any part in connection with the application. Mr. Justice Napier, who prior to his appointment as a judge had been a member of the same firm of solicitors, said he would not take part in the application.

Mr. O'Halloran said he had been instructed by the Law Society to intimate that that body did not oppose the application.

In stating that the application was granted, the Acting Chief Justice said it was desirable that any application for exemption from the rules of the court should be made to the Full Court on some day prior to that of the admission. Sometimes such applications gave rise to a lengthy argument, which it was thought undesirable, should take place at the sittings at which admissions to the Bar were recorded.

Mr. McEwin then moved for the admission of Mr. Williamson, which was granted.

The new barristers took the usual oaths and signed the roll of practitioners of the Supreme Court.

Address by the Acting Chief Justice.

The Acting Chief Justice, on behalf of himself and his colleagues on the bench, said the profession to which they now belonged was one which had privileges, but those were granted to it not for its own advantage, but for the benefit of the community, and would remain with the profession only so long as they were rightly used. With those privileges there descended upon them also responsibilities. Clients would entrust them with their rights, their property, and their reputations. They had been students of the law, and their academic training should have furnished them with a foundation systematically laid, of legal learning, but the superstructure they still had to build. They must also be students of life—of men, their motives and modes of thought. The courts, it had been said, were the arena where life and logic met. The law was not a profession for the pedant or bookworm. It was said to be a hard taskmaster. He thought it was, but it was a just one. To succeed a man must rely upon his own efforts. He could not for long be able to appropriate the work of others, and himself receive the reward. It might be a difficult profession, but it was one which had room in it for many, if not all, types of intellect. Two things it demanded for continuance and success—honourable conduct and unremitting care. Those they could all give to their profession, and if they did so they might look forward to a competent knowledge of the law, and a competence in the material emoluments which would follow as an accessory.

The New Practitioners.

Miss Bleby is a daughter of the manse, her father being the Rev. Canon Bleby, incumbent of St. Paul's Church, Adelaide. She received her education at Miss Martin's private school and the Adelaide University. She served articles with Mr. G. Johns and graduated L.L.B. in 1923.

Miss Holmes is a daughter of Dr. L. S. Holmes, of Norwood. She studied at the Melbourne Church of England Grammar School, the Methodist Ladies' College, Wayville, and the Adelaide University, and took the B.A. degree in 1923 and the L.L.B. degree the following year. She served articles in the office of Messrs. Scammell and Skipper.

Mr. Gun is a son of Mr. Townsend R. Gun, of North Adelaide, and a brother of Mr. C. Townsend Gun, of the legal firm of Messrs. Nelligan & Gun. He received his education at St. Peter's College and the Adelaide University, where he graduated L.L.B. last year. He served articles with Mr. J. T. Reid, but later transferred them to Mr. Nelligan. He is a familiar figure in sports circles, and plays cricket for the University and league football for the North Adelaide Club. Last year he represented South Australia in an inter-State cricket match, and during his final college year he took part in football, cricket, tennis, and athletics. All the teams were winners of their matches.

Mr. Hewitt is a son of the late Mr. Austin Hewitt and Mrs. Hewitt, of "Highfield," Glen Osmond. He was educated at the Christian Brothers' College and the Adelaide University. He served his articles with Mr. H. B. Piper. He went to the war and served for about two years with the Australian Flying Corps. At the University he was a member of the inter-faculty rowing team.

Mr. Innes is a son of Mr. W. G. Innes, of Port Pirie. He received his education at the Port Pirie Public and High Schools, Prince Alfred College, and the Adelaide University. He served his ar-

(which is only another name for Communism), as a "noble ideal," well knowing that its ideal is the very reverse of "noble;" that instead of (as Tennyson said) "making the bounds of freedom wider yet," it restricts, enslaves, and embroiles. What a terrible comment on the Protocol itself is the recent Communist plot in Bulgaria, whereby a great Christian church is blown up and 130 innocent people are sent to eternity and 1,300 seriously injured! Yet Bulgaria is one of the nations that signed the Protocol. If that country is consulted, I venture to prophesy that she would gladly consent to the League of Nations considering the question and endeavoring to stop the growth of Communism. Because it has to be stopped, or the civilisation to which we have attained will surely go under, and the world will revert to an inconceivable degree of poverty and savagery. I believe that Mr. Bruce was right in rejecting the Protocol in the name of Australia. Discussion of it by Parliament would only have been a waste of time and money. Had it been accepted by Great Britain and the Dominions, it would have caused more wars than it could have prevented. Here is a list of the nations that up to December last had signed the Protocol:—Spain, Albania, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chili, Czechoslovakia (ratified), Estonia, France, Greece, Latvia, Paraguay, Poland, Portugal, Serb-Croat-Slovene State, Uruguay. With the exception of France and remotely Spain, not one of these nations counts for anything in the good management of the world, and its intricate and ever-varying problems. Yet had Great Britain signed this foolish document, she might at any day be called upon by a majority of these pigmy nations to engage in a war with any other Great Power, because of some breach of agreement entered into by the League of Nations. However desirable it may be to "preserve what mankind has won with tears and travail," it will not be found by the methods provided in the Protocol. I notice, too, that Russia will have nothing to do with the League of Nations or the Protocol, "because it would interfere with her 'domestic' policy." Just what one might expect from the atrocious government of that unhappy country! The Russian Government (not Russia) wants to be at liberty to force its abominable system, reeking with murder, loot, corruption, and destruction of religion, upon every other country, and its agents are all over the globe now with that terrible purpose constantly in view. They are here in our fair land of Australia, undermining our free institutions, and meeting with more success than it is at all comfortable to contemplate. In that fell purpose they are aided and abetted by local Communists, who look upon every blow given to the anti-Labor Party as "steps towards the socialisation of industry." That is why I resented the unwarrantable blows given to Mr. Bruce by Professor Dainton Naylor, and while I would not for a moment think him guilty of being in league with the Communists, I am justified in saying that his drastic criticism of Mr. Bruce is likely to influence

votes against the Prime Minister and the party he is leading. Whatever faults that party may have, it at least has the merit of standing for a peace-loving, unaggressive British Commonwealth of Nations, and it is the strength and unity of this nation of nations that will do more to ensure the peace of the world than anything else on earth. Bitterly though we may deplore war, it is sometimes unavoidable, and we shall not prevent it by arming ourselves with pot sticks, while our enemies of the future are manufacturing 15-inch guns. As a last word in this controversy, so far as I am concerned, it is some comfort to quote the words of Pisanio in "Cymbeline":—"All other doubts, by time let them be clear'd; Fortune brings in some boats that are not steered."

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THE JOSEPH FISHER LECTURE.

On Wednesday evening, May 6, in the Victoria Hall, Gawler-place, Sir Henry Braddon, K.B.E., M.L.C., will deliver a lecture, entitled "A survey of the old guild system." Admission will be free, and tickets may be had from the University or at the Y.M.C.A. Sir Henry Braddon is well known as one of Australia's leading business men and publicists. He possesses a wide knowledge of modern conditions, and of the historical development of economic organisation. In his lecture he will compare the medieval control of industry by the guilds with the control exercised to-day by industrial legislation. The lecture will be the Joseph Fisher lecture in commerce for the current year.