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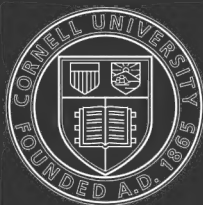
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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, VICTORIA, *Aus.*

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GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS

PROCEEDINGS OF CONFERENCE

OF

VINE-GROWERS' ASSOCIATIONS.

Held in the Board Room, Lands Department,
10th and 11th May, 1894.

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CONFERENCE OF VINE-GROWERS' ASSOCIATIONS.

HELD AT LANDS DEPARTMENT, MELBOURNE,
10TH AND 11TH MAY, 1894.

The Hon. W. T. WEBB, Minister of Agriculture, in the Chair.

Societies represented at Conference:

- Dr. Mueller, Barnawartha Association.
Mr. P. de Castella, Yarra Valley Association.
,, J. E. Pounds, Dookie Association.
,, W. Grieffenhagen, Bendigo Association.
,, H. B. Daly, Dunolly Association.
,, Jno. West, Goulburn Valley Association.
,, S. G. Thompson, Numurkah Association.
,, C. O'Grady, Rutherglen and Murray District Association.
,, Hans Irvine, Great Western Association.
,, F. de Castella, Kyabram Association.
,, J. Marfleet, Yarrowalla and Mologa Association.
,, J. Carlisle, Yarrawonga and Border Association.
,, W. Graham, Central Wine Association.
,, A. Anderson, M.P., Kara Kara Association.
,, J. W. Bear, Wodonga Association.
,, S. Trethewen, Nathalia Association.

Board of Viticulture:

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| Mr. E. Blampied, | Mr. J. Johns, |
| ,, T. Blayney, | ,, M. Kavanagh, |
| ,, F. Büsse, | ,, H. B. Daly, |
| ,, P. de Castella, | ,, J. C. Vanstavern, |
| ,, A. Caughey, | ,, J. Williams. |
| ,, C. Craike, | |

CIRCULAR OF INVITATION.

SIR,

Melbourne, 17th April, 1894.

I have the honour to inform you that a conference of representatives of Vine-growers' Associations will be held in the Board Room of the Lands Department, on Thursday, 10th prox., commencing at 11 o'clock a.m., at which the Minister of Agriculture will preside. The convention is intended for the purpose of discussing matters of interest to the vine-growing industry, and each Association is now being asked to appoint one delegate. I shall feel obliged by your furnishing me with the name and address of the delegate from your Society. It is proposed that each delegate be allowed to read a paper, which shall afterwards be discussed; and, in order that a programme may be prepared, I shall feel obliged by your informing me, as soon as possible, as to the heading of the subject which your representative proposes to bring under notice.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

D. MARTIN,

Secretary for Agriculture.

REPRESENTATIVES OF VINE-GROWERS' ASSOCIATIONS.

Papers read as follow:—

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CONFERENCE OF VINE-GROWERS.

THURSDAY, 10TH MAY, 1894.

The Hon. W. T. WEBB, M.L.A., Minister of Agriculture, in
the Chair.

The CHAIRMAN.—Gentlemen, at the suggestion of Mr. Irvine and the Great Western Association I have called you together for the purpose of exchanging ideas in regard to the position of the wine industry of this colony, which, unfortunately, up to the present has not taken up that position among our products that the colony demands. The Department of Agriculture has from time to time offered assistance in the way of bonuses and education, but, unfortunately, up to the present with no corresponding response. The Department has offered bonuses for planting in the first instance, and for wineries and distilleries in the second. Looking back, I find that in 1882-3 there were 5,732 acres of vines planted in this colony, and that they produced 516,000 gallons of wine. Ten years afterwards, in 1892-3, there were 28,000 acres under cultivation, producing 1,700,000 gallons of wine, and the bonuses offered only increased the area under vines by 12,000 acres. Since then the Department has offered bonuses to the amount of £2,000 for the erection of wineries and distilleries. If we look at the industry as it is to-day, we find that in the first place the planting has not had the attention given to it that it ought to have, and in the second case, from want of experience, from want of knowledge, which, unfortunately, even the expert to the Department has not been able to supply to the full extent, there is a large quantity of inferior wine produced, and in consequence it cannot be put down at more than half the value that it would have if it were properly treated. Most of the subjects discussed here to-day will bear upon the question of the proper planting of the vine, its proper treatment after it is planted, and the treatment of disease. The question of Phylloxera has become a very serious one in this colony; the outbreak that has taken place in Bendigo shows the full extent of its seriousness, and the difficulties that we have to contend with in stamping it out. The Department has taken all the steps within its knowledge to stamp it out, but the discussion here to-day may lead to suggestions being made that will enable the stamping out to be

done more readily and more cheaply than has hitherto been the case. In relation to the question of markets the Department has performed its share of the efforts necessary to find an outside market for our wines. We have agents now travelling in the East who report that the market there will be considerably extended when properly opened up, but that our wines are now comparatively unknown. A few vine-growers have sent over shipments and sold some wine, but they are limited in extent in comparison with the market that might be opened up, and if our discussion leads to suggestions being made that will be likely to improve our export trade and open markets in other countries, we shall have done good. In fact, the necessities of to-day are such that we must increase our production if we are going to live, and I do not think there is any one direction in which we can increase our production that will be more profitable and more lasting than producing wine and brandy. I will now call upon Mr. Irvine to read the first paper, and we will then discuss it as shortly as possible, consistently with the importance of the subject he brings under your notice.

Mr. IRVINE then read the following paper:—

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

Permit me, Mr. Chairman, before proceeding with the subject I purpose bringing under your notice to-day as a wine-grower, and one who, like the other wine-growers assembled here, is largely interested in the industry, and who, too, is strongly impressed with the vast importance of the future of viticulture, to thank you, sir, for consenting to convene this Conference. I hope and believe that much good will result from this Conference, which may be fairly regarded as representing the intelligence of a great and growing industry, which is full of the promise, if wisely fostered, of the early assumption of truly gigantic proportions; and which, indeed, by wise and efficient legislation, may be expected to become a leading factor in that early restoration of the prosperity of the colony now so earnestly desired by all, and to secure which is the highest desire and aim both of Parliament and people. The very fact that this Convention has been summoned may be regarded as an indication of the recognition by the Government of the present importance and the future promise of the industry. It is our hope that this conference may be a happy augury of the regard that Parliament has for the welfare of the vigneron.

Climate and Soil.—Blessed with a climate which, you will admit, cannot be surpassed in the world—more equable and beneficent than even far-famed sunny France, and with a soil

quite as suitable and extending over an infinitely larger area, Victoria may claim to be regarded as the natural habitat of the vine, and it is no empty boast that the industry, as bearing upon our development as a nation, has a direct national importance, and that with a little fostering care its stability will be assured, and it will become one of which any nation might well feel proud. It is on these grounds that I venture to ask you, sir, to give attention and consideration at the close of this Conference to the suggestions which it may be agreed to lay before you. What viticulture requires at this most critical stage is deeds, not words—prompt, earnest, and energetic action. It is to be devoutly wished that whatever may be determined upon by this representative body, immediate action will be taken by the Legislature, through the very valuable and important Department of Agriculture over which you preside; and I venture to predict that should this be done, that action will redound to the credit of Parliament, and an important step will be taken towards the fulfilment of our destiny as a nation.

Board of Viticulture and Phylloxera.—With your permission it is my intention now to at once direct your attention to a matter that concerns our future welfare most materially, and will submit as a motion—

“That this Conference of wine-growers approve and request the Hon. the Minister of Agriculture to take immediate steps on the assembling of Parliament to establish an Honorary Elective Board of Viticulture and Phylloxera.”

You will, I think, admit that this is a most important question for this Conference to deal with, and it is necessary that some workable scheme should be submitted for approval and adoption for the constitution of such a Board on an elective basis.

Not a New Proposal.—The proposal is by no means a new one. It has been advocated for years by many wine-growers, but up to the present I have not seen any scheme put forward to give the idea practical effect; so, with your consent, sir, and that of the meeting, it is my intention, as briefly as possible, to deal with the reasons which induce me to believe that such a Board is of vital necessity. In doing so I submit the proposal with a desire to pave the way for discussion, in the earnest hope that something will be evolved from it, and that a scheme will be adopted which will not only meet the views of all wine-growers, but to which the Legislature will not hesitate to give the full force of law, that it may become an active and practical benefit to the viticultural industry. The present nominee Board came into existence, as most of you are aware, and held its first meeting on the 16th February, 1888—a little more than six years ago. It was created by the Department of Agriculture, through the then Minister, the Hon. J. L. Dow, a gentleman to whom the utmost credit is due,

not only for his very evident desire to advance the industry, but for the broad view he took respecting its future importance. It was brought into existence solely with the desire to benefit and aid an industry which was replete with the promise of a glorious and golden future, and he recognised the fact that a stage had been reached when a little practical sympathy and support from the State would be of much advantage. The members of the Viticultural Board consisted of the then president of each of the local wine-growers' associations, who assumed office for a term of three years, and which term has been extended for a short period from time to time, without the wine-growers being afforded the privilege of a voice in the selection of their representatives. Such a course, in view of the paramount importance of the interests at stake, and their direct bearing on the future welfare of Australia generally, cannot be regarded as the best means to win success ; and in order to command this in the future, broader and more statesmanlike legislation must be adopted, and no effort left untried to place viticulture on a sound and permanently prosperous basis.

The Crux of the Situation.—It is unnecessary for me to point out that the elective principle, the right of the people to a direct voice in the making of the laws which govern them, is the very base of our system of civil and social government. It is this principle which is the centre point of all those privileges which have been won at such cost by our glorious ancestors, and of whom we, as Britons, are so justly proud, while the nominee principle is the last dying remnant of the old feudal system.

Producing Industries.—We have heard a great deal through the press of late about encouraging industries, and undoubtedly something has been done in this direction ; but, sir, the real seat of production has been woefully neglected, for no efficient steps have yet been taken to assist viticulture on proper and practical lines to fulfil the promise of its birth, and to become, as it eventually must as the years roll by, the most important division in the portfolio of agriculture. A good example was set by a past Government in initiating a Board of Viticulture, but we are now past the inceptory stage, and we are here to-day to urge our requirements and to press our claims, and to assert boldly that the time is ripe for reform ; that delay must not be tolerated ; that apathy must give way to activity and progress, if we are to keep in the van of progression. It must not, however, be supposed that viticulture is a pauper industry, coming cap in hand crying for support. We only ask that bare but tardy justice be meted out, and that the merits of the industry may receive recognition, the bars to progress be removed, and that those who have embarked their all in this great industry be given kindly sympathy and encouragement.

Effects of the State Bonus.—Thanks and all honour to the sturdy old pioneers who first planted the vine in these southern lands, proving the suitability of the soil and climate, and laying the foundations of the industry on sound lines; but the time has now arrived when the State, having undertaken a duty, must complete its own act, and establish the industry on a basis which will stand the shock of time; and if this be now done there is no doubt that when we take our proper place amongst the nations of the earth it will be found that viticulture has played no mean part in building up a greater Britain in these southern seas—a nation that we as Australians will regard with pride, and the world at large will honour and respect. There can be no questioning the fact that Australia has a brilliant future before it. It has enormous mineral wealth and illimitable powers of production, but it is incumbent upon us, the pioneers, and the sons of the pioneers, to do our part in forming our destinies, and it is my firm conviction that nothing is more abundant with promise of future prosperity than viticulture, providing that efficient steps be taken to effect such reforms as will induce development. If timely aid be given, in a very few years our exports will be millions of gallons, whereas they are now but a little over a third of a million. When, however, it is remembered that in 1881 we exported under 6,000 gallons, it cannot be denied that we have progressed, and that, too, in the face of very considerable difficulties. We have, however, not done as much as we might. And why, may I ask? Simply because no Ministry has grasped the subject with that power and intelligence which the immensity of the interests at stake warrant. We find now that viticulture is hampered on the one hand with over-legislation, whilst, on the other, it languishes for lack of efficient legislation—over-legislation because a bonus has been granted to encourage people to plant vines, and lack of legislation through the same Parliament rejecting the proposal to erect Schools and Colleges of Viticulture, where technical education might be imparted.

Schools of Viticulture.—Is it not inviting disaster to encourage people by bonuses to enter into an enterprise of which they know nothing, without at the same time arranging to give them some instruction? Schools of Viticulture are required where technical education may be imparted to those who have been encouraged to plant vines, but have no knowledge either as regards cultivation or pruning, &c., or of the important work in connexion with the management and treatment of the wine.

The Export Bonus.—So, also, was there failure in striking out the bonus for the export of the bonus-produced surplus, thus leaving the unfortunate grower with an over-supplied local market, and no means of reaching the greater one of the world at large. Is this creating stability? I ask would any commercial

firm, working to meet its liabilities; commit an act so devoid of foresight and reason—building up to-day to destroy to-morrow; erecting a structure to witness its immediate fall, as the supporting buttresses, in the shape of the export bonus on the surplus they had created, were struck down? What can be expected but failure until these buttresses be restored in some form? It is not too late yet, and it is only asking that bare and tardy justice be done to a great industry and all connected with it, which was slowly but surely working out its own destiny and steadily achieving success (as the increase from 1881 to the present time proves), when it was unnaturally forced by Parliament, and people were encouraged to plant without knowledge and without a market for their produce. Growers must continue to be placed at a disadvantage, and disaster must result to many, who will lament the day they ever started to plant a vineyard, unless steps be taken by the Government to provide the opportunity for acquiring technical education in an industry so new to the great majority of British people, and also unless an effective channel be opened up for the bonus-produced surplus. This is only just to the old growers (as well as the new ones) whose unaided efforts in the past resulted successfully, but who, after all their enterprise and labour in opening up a new industry and demonstrating its possibilities, are now threatened to be overwhelmed by disaster. In urging this subject I may say, as an individual grower, I do not approve of the bonus system. It would probably have been infinitely better had none ever been offered, and had the money been expended in the establishment of colleges and practical schools, where that knowledge which is the result of centuries of experience in the old world might have been imparted, such schools might readily have been made self-supporting, and the score of cost need scarcely be counted with.

The Road to Prosperity.—It is only right and just that intelligent legislation should now come to our assistance and remedy the evils of over and under legislation in the past; and I am certain as that the sun will rise to-morrow that intelligent assistance will be money well invested by the State. It will result in providing employment and developing the resources of the country. If only one million of the money which has been frittered away in the past in costly unproductive works, and in assuming the manners and customs of a nation with as many millions of population as we have hundreds of thousands, and in a huge and extravagantly paid Government service, had been set aside to aid in the development of rural productive industries, there would be no cry of poverty and depression throughout the length and breadth of the land as is heard to-day. Work in abundance would have been provided for the workless, and peace and contentment reign instead of misery and poverty; and those

grave commercial disasters, which have brought disgrace upon us as a people and have clothed us in sackcloth and ashes, may in a measure have been averted. But if we are true to our manhood, we will now shake off the trammels of despair and arise rejuvenated, like the phoenix, to redeem our future and work out our destiny as a people. Let us take advantage of our magnificent and fertile territory, with its truly illimitable resources and grand climatic advantages, and work with industry and faith in ourselves and confidence in our future. Then will capital flow to our shores, and spread like the golden sunshine over the land to reward our efforts. I am aware, sir, that to some extent I have digressed, but the great importance of the matters touched upon are my excuse, for it is my desire, believing that the country is arousing from its lethargy, to impress upon you, at this most opportune moment, the necessity of conserving and protecting the interests of the industry whose claims we have met to advocate to-day.

New Board of Viticulture.—The present Board of Viticulture has, in a sense, been a convenient Board for different Governments, as, without responsibility or proper organization in the past, it has in a measure taken responsibility off the shoulders of the Government, and it was felt as long as wine-growers would tolerate its existence as a nonentity, so long would it exist, but no longer. In consequence of its faulty constitution the Board had no power, and its suggestions were consistently ignored; it had no power to give force to its recommendations and decisions, and thus prove the value of its existence; and to remedy all this, we ask you, sir, as the Minister of Agriculture, to draft a measure for submission to Parliament on the lines this Conference may agree to for the constitution of a new elective Board. The proposal, which I submit for discussion, is that the colony should be divided into eight districts—1, the Rutherglen and Murray Valley; 2, the Goulburn; 3, the Lilydale; 4, Geelong; 5, Bendigo and Loddon; 6, Mildura; 7, Great Western and Wimmera; 8, Dunolly and St. Arnaud. The Board, which should be an honorary and elective Board, might be called the Government Viticultural and Phylloxera Diseases Board. The members to represent each district should be elected on an acreage basis by the wine-growers in each district, only *bonâ fide* wine-growers to vote, and the local Wine-growers' Associations to become District Boards of Viticulture. Each district with 500 and up to 2,000 acres under vine culture should return one member to the Viticultural Board; 2,000 and up to 5,000 acres, two members; 5,000 up to 10,000 acres, three members; and 10,000 acres and over, four members. This would give a strong representative Board of about fourteen members. The Board's experts and those of the Agricultural Department should also be members but without

voting power, and the Board should have the power to elect its own officers, and should be affiliated with the Department of Agriculture. This, sir, is the proposal I submit for the consideration of this Convention, with the hope that something practical will result. I do not claim that there is anything new in my suggestions, but as yet I am not aware that any definite scheme has been submitted. No doubt many gentlemen here have given careful consideration to the subject, and it is my hope improved lines will be suggested. I would recommend that we form ourselves into a committee to discuss the scheme, and submit our united decision to the Minister, with the request that immediate steps be taken to give effect to the decision. It should not be a difficult thing to arrange for the election of such a Board. Lists of wine-growers, with their correct acreage, would have to be prepared, and the colony divided into districts. Returning officers could be appointed to conduct the election, so soon as it became law, and the Government Viticultural and Phylloxera Diseases Board would at once become a potent power for good, and with the aid indicated, the future of viticulture would be definitely assured.

Functions of the Board.—The functions of the Board would be to meet monthly and deal with all matters affecting viticulture, and with all grievances and disputes submitted to them through the local wine-growers' associations or district boards, and to decide what steps should be taken, if any, to recommend the Government to redress same. To arrange for the regular periodic inspection of all vineyards in the different districts by the local boards with a view of preventing or checking the spread of disease. To control and direct the viticultural experts, and arrange for practical instruction. To disseminate useful information by lectures by the experts, and by the issue of leaflets through the Department of Agriculture on such subjects as the best varieties of vines to plant, how to prune and cultivate same, cellar management, and wine treatment, &c. The Board would also have the important duty of advising and recommending (after inspection by the Board's experts) in all cases where compensation is claimed for the eradication of diseased vineyards. To secure the establishment of Schools of Viticulture on a self-supporting basis, at which large nursery stocks of the best-known kinds of vines, grafted on American phylloxera-resistant stocks, could be raised for disposal to vignerons.

Phylloxera-resistant Vines.—I may be excused for saying here that it is a certainty we will all have to adopt the American resistant stock some day, and that I fear before very long, unless the most stringent measures be taken to eradicate the disease where it has appeared. This was so impressed upon me that, on my return from Europe, two years and a half ago, in a report

submitted to the Government of the day at its request, I pointed out then the urgent need of establishing Schools of Viticulture, not only because of their actual necessity as a means of education, but in order that wine-growers generally could, in the event of phylloxera breaking out again, obtain supplies of resistant stocks. That this course was absolutely necessary has now been proved, and had it been adopted when recommended, growers and intending planters would have less reason for great alarm, but could go on increasing their plantations and restoring infected vineyards without loss of time. A large stock of these vines, which are the only effectual means of resisting the disease, should be available, for, depend upon it, we shall have to resort to them to insure stability and progress.

Wineries.—The consideration of the establishment of wineries is an important matter, and there is reason to believe much good would result from them if established with sufficient capital where necessary; but sufficient capital must be secured if failure is to be avoided. To endeavour to form a winery with limited funds would be merely leading all concerned into difficulty.

Cheap Money.—In connexion with this matter there is a closely relating subject, and that is cheap money. If by the establishment of a properly constituted Government Board of Viticulture the confidence of capitalists was increased, knowing the industry was under efficient supervision and subject to periodic inspection, a great fillip would be given to the industry and permanent benefit result, as cheap money would mean the expansion of viticulture on all sides, and the removal of doubts as to its stability.

Distillation.—Attention should also be given to the better regulation of the Distillation Act, so that small growers, who have no distillery and who do not require one, might arrange with larger growers who have a still to put through their faulty wines, the spirit from which could be stored in the distiller's bond, and when required to fortify sweet wines could be placed in under the supervision of the travelling excise officers.

Export Trade.—One of the most important functions of the Board would be to devise the best means of expanding the export trade in wine, and in this connexion it would be incumbent on them to point out the necessity of a uniform size of cask only being shipped. The admission duty free of a similar number of casks to those exported should also be advocated, and there are many other ways in which the mutual interests of all concerned could be largely advantaged. The matters mentioned and many others could be considered and could be dealt with by a properly-constituted Board, and are advanced merely as some of the reasons why the Government should immediately take in hand the creation of such a Board.

Credit to the Nominee Board.—In submitting to this Conference my motion for the establishment of an Honorary Elective Board I do not wish in any way to reflect on the present Board. The system, not the individuals, was at fault. I am aware that the Board has consistently advocated many matters touched upon by me, and have had the best interests of the industry at heart, but their hands have been tied and their advice overlooked. The very fact that no legislation has been introduced to give effect to the desires of the wine-growers is a proof that though well intentioned the Board has been powerless.

Promises of Viticulture.—It is now time we, as the representatives of an industry full of promise, should arouse ourselves and prove to the Government of the day that in all reason we are entitled to consideration. It has been proved to demonstration that the climate and soil of Victoria is suitable over an immense area for the growth of the vine, and the prospects are so unbounded that no Government with the welfare of the people at heart can afford to ignore them. When I say, in order to impress those who may not be aware of the fact, that the wine produced in France alone last year was valued at £40,000,000 sterling, and the industry finds employment directly and indirectly for more than half of the population of that prosperous country, viz., 23,000,000, you can form some conception of what I am impressed viticulture will do at no distant date in creating prosperity throughout Australia. The whole market of the world is open to us, and the consumption in Europe is so great that in the city of Paris itself 300,000 gallons are consumed daily. That is that this single city would consume in twelve days all the wine which the whole of Australia takes twelve months to make. Viticulture must progress, though without help it will take years to undo the mischief of the past, and much hardship must result both to old and young vignerons. It will bring untold wealth to our shores, and afford permanent and congenial employment in the years to come for millions of earnest workers. We cannot in the interests of our country and the common good stand idly by and see our efforts in the past checked, but we must manfully and full of hope in the future press forward feeling at this critical stage of our existence as wine-growers, attention must be given to our requirements, and that active and not passive legislation must govern and guide us in the future. As the Government, by encouraging under bonus the planting of vineyards, and then rejecting the proposal to aid in opening up a market, have committed themselves to the future development of viticulture, to redeem the past its efforts must be exerted in a proper channel. Unaided viticulture proved its worth, and now that an unnatural stimulus has induced production to an extent the local market cannot absorb, an outside channel must be provided. It must not now be allowed to languish. The

present restrictive border duties must be better adjusted to prevent our expansion being stunted and stifled; the barriers which obstruct the onward march to success must be removed; departmental neglect, expensive government and consequent excessive taxation must be checked; supineness must give way to energy and enterprise, and then will set in an era of sound and permanent prosperity. I maintain that it is the duty of the present, aye, of any and every Government, to take up the responsibilities of their predecessors, and if this be done then such a Board as we ask for will be the best means to encourage and stimulate the industry and secure its certain and rapid development. Success will then take the place of failure, and hope of despair. We ask nothing unreasonable, but simply protection and encouragement in building up future prosperity by the legitimate application of capital and labour.

A Forecast.—Before many years pass over our heads I predict that with wise legislation the viticultural industry will become the most important within the purview of the Agricultural Department; that it will grow as a sturdy giant and become a tower of strength for this country, effecting such a vital and benign influence upon us as a people, and proving such a rich storehouse of material wealth, that the whole State will be proud to rejoice in its progress, and glad to admit the important part that it is playing in the permanent settlement of the people on the land in an industry which employs more people to the acre than any other; that gives a larger return per acre than any I am familiar with; that provides healthful and remunerative employment to hosts, and that is productive of more general good to a great number of people than any other rural occupation. I feel that it is necessary to apologise for having taken up so much of your time, but, as the industry is great in its importance, so the subject is large in its claims for consideration; and though some vital things have been touched upon much yet remains. The gentlemen who follow will, no doubt, deal with many of the questions in a practical manner. If I have brought forward anything to impress you with the necessity of an elective Board of Viticulture with power to give effect to our wishes, the time has not in my opinion been wasted. In conclusion, one matter that we should all recognise and all I believe do so, and which I repeat, is the urgent necessity for the establishment of a viticultural school, where American resistant stocks may be raised in quantities, so that the doubt and fear which now oppress all may be dispelled. Such schools, too, would keep us conversant with the developments of viticulture all over the world, and would place us in the best possible position to skilfully and scientifically treat our wines. I trust that I have made myself clear, and that this Conference will agree generally with my remarks, and that all will

unite to work unanimously together in the best interests of all remembering that it is only by unity and co-operation that we can secure that strength which will triumph over all difficulties. We have such a good case that I am sure our honorable chairman will admit our claims and recognise the national importance of the wine-growing industry to Australia, and that he will go from this meeting determined to use every effort to aid us to achieve our destiny; and, then in years to come, he will look back with feelings of genuine pleasure and pride to the important part he has taken in laying firm the foundations on which the super-structure of one of the greatest of Australasian industries will yet be raised.

Mr. BEAR read the following paper—"An Elective Board of Viticulture and the Phylloxera Question"—:

As was recently pointed out in an admirable leader in the *Age*, dealing with the present viticultural situation in Victoria, the existing system of dividing the responsibility of managing our viticultural interests and affairs between a Board possessing no definite powers or authority and a Government Department which is either unable or unwilling to do justice to the important interests involved has proved a complete failure. I do not mean to say that it is the fault of the existing Board that its recommendations have not been carried into effect by the Government of the day, or that the Department has neglected to give them the consideration they deserved. I merely aver that the system itself is wrong, and that the principle of divided responsibility has failed to be of any practical benefit to the vine-grower, or to the wine industry in general. It has not been instrumental in opening up fresh markets, or of increasing the value of our viticultural produce for commercial purposes, nor has it devised or formulated any definite scheme for protecting our vineyards against the phylloxera. It may perhaps be contended that the Board was only appointed as an advisory or consultative body, but it is no excuse that because its advice was not always adopted it should sink into obscurity and cease to give any advice at all. In the present state of affairs two courses are open to us—either to abolish the Board altogether in order that the responsibility of looking after the interests of the vine-grower may fall solely on the shoulders of the Government, or to make it thoroughly representative in character and endow it with suitable responsibilities, powers, and funds, so that it may be enabled to perform its important duties with proper advantage and effect. It may be said, without risk of exaggeration, that the present position of affairs is little better than a farce; one that is being acted at the expense of the present and future interests of the colony, at a period in our viticultural

experience which demands the gravest care and consideration from the State. As to the expediency of abolishing the Board entirely, I think there will be but little difference of opinion. Both viticulture and horticulture, though usually classed under the head of agriculture, form special branches of rural economy, representing the higher, more scientific, and more remunerative forms of land cultivation, and as such need the supervision and services of the most practical and most advanced minds of men who have made these industries the object of their special care and attention. It is not to be expected that the Department of Agriculture should be able to concern itself directly with the thousand and one details associated with the wine and fruit growing industries, to understand which would require a more or less technical training. Nor is it advisable or necessary to create a special portfolio for a Minister of Viticulture and Horticulture. In the past the experience of our Ministers of Agriculture has generally been confined to wool-growing and ordinary farming. It might, however, happen that the Minister of the day were a bigoted teetotaller, under which circumstances the interests of the vine-grower would stand but a poor prospect of receiving the attention they required. In any case it can hardly be expected that a Minister of Agriculture who was not himself a vine-grower should be able to take a deep practical interest in the fortunes of the wine industry, and a merely "official" interest would be of no use. For the above reasons it will, in my opinion, be absolutely necessary to maintain a permanent Board of Viticulture, elected by the vine-growers themselves, whose constitution, powers, and responsibilities shall be defined by Act of Parliament. A Board elected under these conditions would or should be in touch and in complete sympathy with the wants and requirements of the vine-grower, and should be able to devise such remedies or measures as his interests may from time to time require. It might certainly be desirable that the Government should reserve to itself the right to appoint one or more representatives of its own as members of the Board, or of any of the special committees which the Board might appoint. There are, I believe, in the colony, gentlemen unconnected either with the Department or the Board who are fully qualified to draft a practical working constitution for an elective Board of Viticulture. I am of opinion that a powerful representative Board, constituted as proposed, would be able to appoint from among its members special committees to deal with the suppression of diseases in our vineyards, or any other questions of importance. Such committees would, I believe, be competent to devise a system of organization applicable to the whole colony needed to limit the spread of phylloxera, and to stamp out the pest as soon as it made its appearance in a new district, before it had sufficient

time to develop proportions of a threatening character. The provisions of the existing Act, consisting of eighteen clauses, deal almost entirely with the cure or after effects of the disease, and not with its prevention, and a fuller and more precise measure is, I consider, necessary at the present juncture. The arrangement I have suggested of empowering the elective Board to appoint its own committees, for special purposes would relieve the present Phylloxera Board of its functions, and place the responsibility for framing the necessary organization and regulations, as also of seeing them carried into effect, upon the shoulders of those who, being themselves vine-growers and having their own interests at stake, ought to be the best fitted to deal with this important question. Although upwards of six months have elapsed since the outbreak at Bendigo was discovered, apparently no attempt has yet been made to formulate any organized scheme generally applicable to the colony of such a character as will effectually check the spread or growth of the parasite in the future. I must say that I consider the Government ought long since to have made public its policy and intentions in dealing with this question. In Europe everything is made as public as possible, charts showing the infected areas are published periodically, and reports on all matters relating to the development of the disease are regularly forwarded to the viticultural associations of each country. There is nothing to be gained by a policy of secrecy or silence, which may be mistaken for hesitation or incompetency. A plain and candid statement as to the measures the Government proposed adopting would have produced a beneficial effect, not only among our vigneron, but also in reassuring public opinion as to the future stability of the industry generally. There is less reason for this delay, inasmuch as we have the immense advantage of the knowledge and experience gained during the last twenty years in the viticultural countries of Europe and America, which is set forth in different publications and reports accessible to any person who takes the trouble to procure them. To imagine for one moment that the recent official inspection of our different viticultural districts offers any real guarantee that these are at present free from the phylloxera would be the idlest illusion. If ten times the number of inspectors had been employed in examining the same area they could not have done the work thoroughly in the time. In any case, inspectors who travel over the ground at the rate of three or four miles an hour are about the last persons who would be likely to discover the disease in its earliest stage, or before it had manifested its presence on the dying plant by the discolouration of the leaf. Of course, any one can discover the existence of the phylloxera when it has established itself throughout a district. By that time, however, the damage is done, and it is then too late to adopt any measures that might

otherwise have been of some practical service. What the interests of the vine-grower require are measures not so much of a remedial as of a preventive character, and this can only be accomplished by means of proper discipline and organization, so that the very first indications of the disease may at once be reported to the proper authorities. If we have to wait until any locality has been attacked, as has been the case at Bendigo, before we adopt some practical means of ascertaining the fact at a very much earlier period of its existence, I am afraid that the outlook for Victorian vine-growers is not a happy one. Their present position may be compared to that of a defenceless lamb paralyzed with fear at the sight of its enemy about to spring upon and devour it. In my opinion, the proper person to discover the phylloxera or any other disease in his vineyard is the grower himself, and the proper authorities to see that he does his duty in this respect, or if need be, to assist him, are local surveillance committees or committees of inspection, having certain official powers, such as have been appointed in other countries for the same purpose. These may or may not be associated with and responsible to a District Phylloxera Board, according to the necessities and importance of the viticultural area to which they belong, the whole being under the direction and control of a central or superior Phylloxera Commission, under the presidency of the Minister of Agriculture or his deputy. The special nature and functions of these different Committees or Boards are fully described in the reports of the French Government relating to its phylloxera legislation. The policy of the French Government in dealing with this question has always been to encourage the formation among the growers themselves of associations or syndicates, whose object it was to keep a vigilant look out for any indications of the existence of the parasite in their particular commune or locality; others, called "Treatment Syndicates," were organized to apply a certain form of treatment prescribed by the Superior Board in any locality already affected. In furtherance of these objects the associations or syndicates subscribe a certain sum, which is supplemented by a Government grant to a similar amount. At the International Phylloxera Convention held at Berlin, in 1878, the seven contracting countries, viz., Germany, Austro-Hungary, Spain, France, Italy, Portugal, and Switzerland adopted a uniform code of international regulations for the better prevention of the spread of the disease. Within its boundaries each country has its own local phylloxera laws, thus it may be said that the whole of the viticultural countries of Central and Southern Europe are under a kind of phylloxera martial law. The result of this combined action has been that during the past few years the virulence of the disease has been steadily decreasing in Europe, and in certain parts the vineyards that had been destroyed, having been

regenerated by means of resistant stocks, are now again in a flourishing condition. I must say that it is difficult to understand the apparent indifference of some of our more important country associations on a question of such vital importance to their interests. Of this, however, we may rest assured, that unless we organize our forces and attack the enemy it will not be long in attacking us. The policy of indifference or *laissez-faire* is suicidal, for the enemy never rests for long, and before the first shoots of spring are on the vine he will be up and on the warpath in ever increasing numbers. There is one point in connexion with the question of an Elective Board of Viticulture having definite powers, functions, and responsibilities which I have not alluded to, and that is the question of finances. In order to render these adequate to the requirements of the industry it will be necessary that the growers should contribute a certain quota towards the revenue needed to defray the general expenses of the Board, the services of its members being purely honorary. There is, however, no reason to suppose that the vine-growers will be unwilling to meet their obligations in this respect, or to contribute towards the expense of protecting and advancing their own interests so long as they have a voice in the election of their own representatives and derive some practical advantages from their services.

Mr. WEST said that before he read his paper he wished to compliment the Great Western Association for the plucky step they had taken in calling this Conference together. They had rendered great assistance to the industry, and he would be much surprised if great advantage did not accrue from this meeting. He then read the following paper—"Hints on the Constitution and Functions of a Viticultural Board":—

In constituting a Board of Viticulture, I am strongly of opinion that its sphere of work should be confined to matters pertaining to the culture of the vine and all its products and to that alone. To tack on to it work in connexion with orchard products would not only weaken its effectiveness in regard to the control and encouragement of viticulture, but would also cause it to attempt work in connexion with fruit-growing that could be infinitely better done by a board of specialists called into operation for that particular purpose. In California, where the idea of a Viticultural Board was first obtained, this has been their experience. In 1880 the Viticultural Board was founded; in 1881 power was given to the Board to form an Advisory Committee of fruit-growers, to work under and with the Viticultural Board. Experience, however, soon showed that the result was unsatisfactory, and therefore, in 1883, the Horticultural Board, wholly composed

of fruit-growers, and dealing specially with the fruit-growing industry, was called into existence, and the results that have since accrued from the operations of both bodies have been great and far reaching in their effects. It is generally agreed that the Board should be elective. In thinking out the basis of its constitution and functions I have to offer the following suggestions:— That the colony be divided into seven districts, to be known severally as the North-Eastern (which would include Rutherglen and Wahgunyah), the Goulburn Valley, Bendigo, Great Western (including the Wimmera), Mildura, Dunolly, and the Southern District (which would embrace Geelong and the Western district, the Yarra, Metropolitan, and Gippsland districts).

From each of these several districts one representative to be elected by vine-growers and wine merchants who buy direct from the grower. These representatives to hold office for two years only, but to be eligible for re-election, and the qualification of these representatives shall be the same as that of voters. Every year one-half that number shall retire, to be decided in the first case by lot.

That in addition to these six representatives the Governor in Council shall have power to appoint one nominee to the Board, who may be the permanent head of the Department of Agriculture for the time being.

Vine-growers who shall cultivate not less than 2 acres nor more than 20 acres shall have one vote; vine-growers who shall cultivate over 20 acres, but under 50 acres, two votes; vine-growers who cultivate over 50 acres, three votes. Vine-grower shall mean the owner or occupier, as the case may be. Wine merchants who buy from the growers and have cellarage accommodation for not less than 10,000 gallons, one vote; who have cellarage accommodation for not less than 30,000 gallons, two votes; and not less than 60,000 gallons, three votes. Provided always that such vine-grower or wine merchant shall have his full name, address, acreage of vines, or cellarage capacity entered upon the voters' list for the particular district in which his vineyard or cellar may be situated; or if he be not a member of a vine-growers' association, that he shall have forwarded these particulars, together with a fee of 10s., to the Secretary for Agriculture.

That for the purpose of conducting the election for representatives, the secretary and president of each vine-growers' association, wine merchants' association, or combined horticultural and vine-growers' association shall at least once a year prepare a full list of members who are growers of more than 2 acres of vines, or of wine merchants who buy from growers and have a cellarage capacity of over 10,000 gallons and have paid their subscription to such association for the then current financial year.

In making this proposal it was worth considering that there might be districts that would not come within the scope of the vine-growers or wine merchants' consideration, and in order to provide for such districts, he would suggest the insertion of a provision, that if a grower be not a member of a Vine-growers' Association, he should send those particulars, with a fee of 10s., to the Secretary for Agriculture, who would then enter his name in the voters' list. He had made the fee 10s., so that a man should not shirk his local responsibility, and refuse to join because he could not pay the fee. If a man wanted to have a vote for the Board of Viticulture, he would not growl at the low fee of 10s. for having his name registered in the proper manner.

This list shall contain the full name and address of the voter, position, and area of the vineyard, or capacity of the cellar, and whether the voter be owner or occupier, and shall be completed and remain open for inspection for fourteen clear days at the office or residence of the secretary, or at a local post-office; it shall then be transmitted to the Minister for Agriculture, who may receive and deal with appeals in regard to the voters' list and the election, and whose decision shall be final in all matters appertaining thereto.

Representatives shall serve without fees, but may be reimbursed their actual expenses when attending to the duties of the Board. They shall meet once a month, and at their first meeting, and thence annually, appoint one of their number to be president and another treasurer. They shall appoint a secretary, to be provided from the staff of one of the Departments of the Public Service. Their office may be in the Government Buildings, and shall be open daily to the public.

The functions of the Board shall be to adopt such measures as may be best to promote the progress of viticulture in the colony. They may appoint both paid and honorary lecturers, and local honorary committees, for the purpose of visiting the several districts, and by lectures or otherwise disseminating information in regard to the cultivation of the vine and its products; it shall devote special attention to the collection and publication of all matter pertaining to the phylloxera and other insect and fungoid pests injurious to vines, and shall have the direct control of all operations for the eradication of these pests. It shall collect and preserve books, papers, pamphlets and records relating to viticulture for reference.

At least once in each year the Board shall call a Conference of Viticulturists for the purpose of hearing papers read, and discussions carried on in regard to all matters pertaining to the vine-growing industry. This Conference shall be held in each of the several districts by turn, at some place and date to be fixed at least six months in advance. At this Conference the Board shall present an annual report of its operations.

This was another departure. Mr. Irvine laid great stress upon steps being taken to train the rising generation of vigneron, and to train them thoroughly was a most important thing, because the fight to-day was not against the cheap labour of Southern Europe but against the brains of the world; and this colony could only take its place in the world's market by training the young men who would have the future destiny of this rising industry in their hands. That work might be accomplished without any expense to the State, which was already overburdened with its functions; the material was ready to hand. In order that the educational development of the younger men in the community, who will in the ordinary course of events be called on to carry out the viticultural industry, it shall be the duty of the Board to enter into an agreement with vigneron of high reputation and standing in the colony to receive pupils for practical training in vine-growing, wine-making, and distillation under the auspices of the Board, and subject to such regulations in regard to fees charged, instruction imparted, and management of the students, as may from time to time be deemed necessary; and they shall further provide that annual examinations of these students shall be held by a Board of Examiners, who shall award first or second class certificates of competency, as the case may be. In addition to this the Board shall provide at least one annual travelling scholarship, to be open for competition to all young vigneron in the colony. The conditions of the scholarship to be so framed that the successful competitor shall be sent to Europe to obtain a knowledge of the best methods in regard to viticulture adopted there; and, after he has completed his studies, to return to the colony and impart his knowledge to the vigneron of the colony for a specified time, as the Board may direct.

He thought there was a great opening in this direction. The same system had already been tried with regard to the art work of the colony, and men like Mr. Longstaff and others had been sent away, and were likely to make a great name for themselves and the colony.

Lastly, that experimental stations be established, at which all the known varieties of vines in the colony be cultivated to the number of not less than 50 vines of each variety, and their proper classification and naming, and the recording of exact knowledge in regard to their characteristics, products, and diseases be carried out.

The CHAIRMAN said that the papers that had been read were bristling with practical suggestions, but he did not think it was necessary to discuss them at any great length. He did not wish to shorten the discussion, but he thought it would be better to

adopt Mr. Irvine's suggestion to form themselves into a committee to consider the various questions, and they could then present some definite basis on which legislation could take place.

Mr. CAUGHEY observed that he had listened with very great attention to the various papers that had been read, and there was scarcely a single suggestion in those papers that had not already been brought forward by the Board of Viticulture and pressed upon the Government. In fact, if that Board had had the power that Mr. Irvine and Mr. West proposed such a Board should have, all those things that had been suggested would have been carried into effect long ago. Mr. Irvine stated that the present Board were a nominee body. He objected to that description. The members of the Board were the Presidents of the various associations of the country, and those associations were most particular as to whom they appointed to the position of president. The presidents were elected by the votes of the members, and the Government selected them as the proper men to represent the interest in town; therefore the Board could hardly be called a nominee body. As to one of the principal things the Board took in hand after they came into office—viz., the schools of viticulture—he was glad to see that they were supported in the steps they took by the papers that had been read, and if the gentlemen present were aware of the exertions of the Board to get that matter into full working order they would not blame them for not being able to carry it out. In the first place they went the length of getting 1,000 acres set apart, of which 200 acres were fenced off. Of the 200 acres, 20 acres were planted with vines. The Board urged over and over again that that 20 acres was not of the slightest use unless they had also a cellar and a school, and they pointed out that the school would be altogether self-supporting. They knew positively, from the number of applications they received for admission from students, that such an amount would be taken annually as would be sufficient to work the place, besides which the students would work from the first planting of the vines. Whether it was from impecuniosity or not he did not know, but while the various Ministers of Agriculture, Messrs. Dow, Graham, and Webb, were anxious it should take place, there was always some hitch, and they could not get the amount placed on the Estimates. The consequence was that the place was a white elephant to the Government at the present time. He might mention that the resistant stocks were planted there, and were available at the present time. They were planted there in spite of great opposition from some of the Rutherglen people, who had the idea that the American vines might introduce the phylloxera, but they had now overcome that fear. As to what Mr. Irvine had said about the bonus system not being carried out, the Government were not to blame for that. The

matter was introduced by the Government, but Parliament voted against it, backed up, he presumed, by the teetotallers. He agreed with the Chairman that so many things had been mentioned that definite conclusions could only be arrived at in committee.

Mr. CRAIKE said he agreed with Mr. Caughey in regard to the remarks made by Mr. Irvine and Mr. Bear. He took exception altogether to Mr. Irvine's remark that the faulty constitution of the Viticulture Board caused it to be a nonentity. The Board had never been a nonentity. It had done good work, and every point mentioned by Mr. Irvine had been brought prominently before the Minister. Unfortunately the whole difficulty was in the want of funds. He also agreed with Mr. Caughey that the Board was an elective Board as far as it was possible to be at that time. It was intended by Mr. Dow that the Board should continue upon an elective basis, and the reason that idea was not carried out was that it was the intention of the Government to introduce an Insect Pests Bill, in which the whole matter would have been dealt with, but from various causes it was put off from time to time. He was glad none of the previous speakers had accused the Board of any intention to remain without coming before the people for re-election. The suggestions made in the papers were very valuable, but he would point out that a new Board, elected in the elaborate manner proposed by Mr. West, would become as much a nonentity as the present Board, unless they could persuade the Ministry and Parliament to give effect to their advice when they offered it. That had been the fault all along. As to the School of Viticulture there had not been a year in which there had not been deputations from the Board, and they had been well supported by the Vine-growers' Associations in their demand for that concession, but the want of funds had always been the plea, and they were still in the same position, and he thought it unkind to blame the Board of Viticulture and call them a nonentity because they had not been successful. The details of the schemes referred to in the papers must necessarily be thrashed out in committee, but he thought Mr. Irvine's proposal to give four members to a district with 10,000 acres a great mistake, because one member could represent a district as well as four, and it would have the effect of over-riding the new districts planted under the bonus system. He thought the suggestion of the Board of Viticulture was a much better one—that was to take the vine-growing centres and leave it to the Department to map out exactly the number of square miles each member should represent. Mr. Bear made the remark that the Board of Viticulture had ceased to give advice at all. That showed that Mr. Bear had not had an opportunity of seeing what the Board had been doing, as the papers did not report their doings as fully as they might do, but he could assure that gentleman that they had not ceased to give advice. The Board were continually giving advice, but they were

not supported by the vine-growers throughout the colony. If they had a little active support from such men as Mr. Irvine they might persuade the Government to carry out the schemes that they were now charged with failing to carry out. In speaking of the phylloxera, Mr. Bear said that the inspection had been altogether insufficient to enable the Government to decide upon the best method of dealing with the outbreak of the disease at Bendigo. He would inform that gentleman that the Board of Viticulture approached the Government on the subject, but nothing was done. Had there been an inspection the outbreak at Bendigo would have been discovered years ago, and probably hundreds of acres of vines would have been saved to the colony. He quite agreed that the various schemes that had been propounded required to be thrashed out in committee, and if the papers that had been read had the effect of rousing the Department to the fact that a little more attention might be given to the advice of those Boards the time would not have been thrown away.

Mr. KAVANAGH observed that it was not to be expected that the members of the old Board would be very eloquent when called upon to attend their own funeral. Speaking as a member of that Board, he thought the vine-growers of the colony must admit that that Board had laboured, perhaps not successfully altogether but to the best of their ability, for the success of the vine-growing industry. The suggestions contained in the three papers that had been read were exactly in keeping with the suggestions of the Board of Viticulture, the members of which had been anxious for some time to fall in with the views of the Minister. As to Mr. West's suggestion that a rate should be imposed upon vineyards, and that the Government should supplement the amount so raised in order to provide a fund to deal with any outbreak of phylloxera, he thought the best way to interest people in the matter was to impose a slight tax on vineyards according to their acreage.

Mr. O'GRADY said that in his district the great objection to the Board of Viticulture was that they had not sufficient power. If land was vested in the Board the same as it was in the Council of Education they would have an income which they could use in the establishment of a college, and the fees from students would give them the means with which they could work. In his opinion the lack of power arose from the lack of means. Advice was nothing—they wanted power, and then the Board would become a recognised body, and would do more work. There were many things showing the urgent requirement for a college of viticulture. For instance, every one knew there were several varieties of grapes, but every one did not know the proper varieties to plant, and it was to such a college they would have to look to obtain that information.

Mr. IRVINE said he had listened very attentively to the remarks that had been made on the various papers, and he thought the

first thing to do was to submit the motion he had suggested. If that motion was carried the Conference could go into committee to discuss the matter, and come to the Minister with a tangible scheme. In justice to himself and other speakers, he felt bound to say that he gave the Board of Viticulture credit for the best intentions, and he laid stress upon that point. It was not the individuals it was the system that had no power, and no legislation had been introduced since the Board was created to give effect to the wishes of the vine-growers. He could not say anything plainer than that. He also said distinctly they were a nominee Board; they comprised the Presidents of the various Associations, and they were nominated by the Government. They were never elected, and he would challenge any one to say they were anything else but a nominee Board. It was not their fault that the Board had been a nonentity, but still it was one. What they had to do to-day was to resolve to do something, not to work on parochial lines but on broad lines, that would realize some advantage in the future. They did not want to waste time in discussing petty things. They did not want to divide the colony into too many districts, but it must be divided into a certain number. If the Board was constituted an elective Board with the same constitution as it had to-day, every petty little Association would want to have a representative, and the number would soon swell to 20 or 30. They would get no proper representation in that way. They must map the colony out into districts, and the Department must decide what were the best districts, and submit the divisions to the Minister. He had listened with great interest to Mr. West's scheme, which he believed was based to a certain extent on the Californian scheme, and he thought that out of the various suggestions made, the Conference could evolve a scheme which the Minister would receive with pleasure, and which would induce him to do something in the interests of this great industry. It was an industry which promised more for the prosperity of Australia than any industry they had hitherto touched. As to allowing representation according to acreage, he thought that was only a matter of common justice to those districts which by their enterprise had caused the industry to progress. A district with only 500 acres under vines had no right to equal representation on the Board with a district with 10,000 acres. In his opinion, the interests of a large district having four members should outweigh the interests of three or four small districts having one member each, and not one-fourth of the acreage. He begged to move the following resolution:—

“That this Conference of wine-growers approve and request the Honorable the Minister of Agriculture to take immediate steps on the assembling of Parliament to establish an honorary elective Board of Viticulture and Phylloxera.”

Mr. CAUGHEY.—How will an elective Board be in a better position than the present Board?

Mr. IRVINE.—With power—we ask for it with power.

Mr. CAUGHEY.—What about means?

Mr. IRVINE.—That question must come up in committee, and be submitted to the Minister. One way would be that the Board should be endowed with State lands the same as the Council of Education, or there might be a system of taxation.

Mr. MOORE seconded the resolution.

The CHAIRMAN observed, that although he could not say definitely until they had placed their propositions before him, still so far as he could gather from the papers read, and from the resolution, he did not think it certain that legislation must necessarily follow to give effect to their views. So far as he understood their views, it was quite possible to give effect to them by regulation. If that were the case, he felt certain if they condensed their ideas and put something practical before the Government, they would be prepared to give effect to it by regulation, rather than by legislation. He might add that the Conference must not, nor were they called upon to do so, disparage the work of the Board of Viticulture. Its shortcomings, to his mind, were principally due to the want of that power, scope, and opportunity that would be given to the Board it was proposed to form, which would thus be able to do much more than could be expected from the existing Board. Mr. Irvine had referred to several other matters in his paper, such, for instance, as the duty on casks. That was a matter in which he (the Chairman) did not think it was necessary to come to the Department of Agriculture for redress. The Minister of Customs had full power, if he thought it judicious, to allow a drawback upon casks. His own opinion was that, as wood for making casks was not very plentiful in this colony, the Minister of Customs, on fair representation being made, would be willing to concede that point.

The motion was carried unanimously.

Mr. POUNDS moved—“That the Committee to consider the resolution be a Committee of the whole, and that they should take it into consideration at the close of the day’s proceedings.”

Mr. WEST seconded the resolution, which was carried.

Mr. F. DE CASTELLA read the following paper:—

That the industry in which we are all directly interested has received a severe blow by the re-appearance of phylloxera in the colony is a fact that every one will admit. We must leave no stone unturned to prevent the blow from becoming a crushing one in order that we may preserve the position we have already acquired among the wine-producing countries of the world.

Fortunately for us phylloxera is not a new pest, but one which has been studied during the past 30 years in the leading wine-producing countries of Europe by the most eminent, scientific, and practical men of the day, with the result that the best methods of combating this formidable insect have long since passed out of the domain of experiment and entered that of practical, everyday viticulture.

Foremost among these methods stands the cultivation of phylloxera-resistant American vines, in place of the old varieties of Europe, at least as far as the root-system of the vine is concerned. The immense superiority of this method over all others is now so well known as to render it unnecessary for me to insist upon it. If proof be required, the example of France may be referred to. In 1890 France possessed over a million acres reconstituted in this manner and the number is continually increasing, whereas there is a decrease in the acreage treated by other means.

That the true solution of the phylloxera question lies in the employment of resistant vines can now be asserted with certainty.

Just as the northern spy and other blight-proof apple stocks have enabled orchardists to surmount the woolly aphis difficulty, so also does our complete safety from phylloxera lie in resistant American vines.

American vines are utilized in two ways, as direct producers and as stocks upon which to graft the best European varieties. In the first case the whole vine is American, in the second the root-system of the American is alone made use of. Direct producers were at first held in great favour and extensively planted, chiefly on account of their enabling the operation of grafting to be dispensed with. The experience of French vine-growers has, however, led to a complete change of opinion on the subject, with the result that the great majority of new plantations are now made with grafted vines.

Direct producers have many defects. They are less prolific than the old vines of Europe. The wine they yield is not equal to that of the best European sorts, and in the great majority of cases their most important quality—that of resistance to phylloxera—is not all that could be desired. The last defect is due to the fact that nearly all direct producers are hybrids, between some resistant American and a vinifera variety; from the latter they inherit in a greater or lesser degree the want of resistance to the attacks of the insect characteristic of all European vines.

This hybridization by the non-resistant vinifera is necessary in order to permit of a drinkable wine being produced, since the fruit of most pure American vines has a characteristic disagreeable flavour which renders it unfit for wine-making purposes. It also largely increases the yield, which, in pure American vines, is usually insignificant. Incomplete resistance is the greatest fault.

of direct producers; most of those obtained so far being what we might term three-quarter resistant, and therefore liable to suffer seriously from the attacks of the phylloxera in soils well suited for its development. I do not wish to be too severe on direct producers, as some of them, in soils where the insect does not develop very rapidly, are destined to be of great use to us. In such soils as the sandhills of the lower Goulburn and the Murray the resistance of such American vines as the Jacquez is ample, and the vinifera element they contain causes them to unite very readily with the vines of Europe, so that, even employed as stocks, they would give good results.

Although French nurserymen are in hopes of yet obtaining a hybrid which will combine the fecundity and excellence of fruit of the European parent, with the resistant qualities of the American one, they cannot as yet claim a complete measure of success; and we must be careful about planting them in any but soils where their resistance is likely to prove sufficient.

With resistant stocks the case is different. The character of the fruit as well as its quantity being unaltered by the American roots upon which it is made to grow, consideration as to quality or quantity of wine do not prevent the selection of thoroughly resistant sorts as stocks upon which the best European varieties can be grafted.

With stocks thorough resistance is of course the most essential requisite. Want of attention to this point was the cause of frequent failures in France, where, in the early days of American reconstitution, any vine of American origin was deemed eligible for use as a stock.

We must profit by the experience of the past 25 years in France, and employ no stocks but those which are capable of shielding us absolutely from the attacks of phylloxera.

Having recognised the absolute necessity of a high degree of resistance, two other considerations present themselves, viz.:—

The adaptability of American vines to soil and climate.

The affinity which exists between different stocks and scions.

The adaptability to the soil is the most important question of the day in France, and one which has been a frequent source of insuccess. In our case we are more fortunately situated, and I am confident that we will have no serious trouble as far as this important factor is concerned.

With few exceptions American vines will not thrive in soils containing 35 or 40 per cent. of carbonate of lime. In such soils these vines are liable, especially when grafted, to a constitutional disease termed chlorosis. The leaves turn yellow, and the vitality of the vines is so much reduced that they are no longer able to form or nourish the fruit. The great majority of Southern French vineyards are planted in limestone soils. In Victoria limestone

formations are rare, and our soils suffer from a deficiency rather than from an excess of lime. They are, therefore, exceptionally well suited for American vines.

Certain American varieties are better suited than others for certain conditions of soil and climate; but I have no hesitation in saying that, great has been the success of American vines in France, they are destined to be an even greater success with us, owing chiefly to our freedom from excess of lime.

The affinity existing between different stocks and scions is becoming of greater importance year by year, as the requirements of the different French and American vines in this direction are becoming better known. It has been observed that Hermitage does remarkably well when grafted on most Americans, especially on Riparia and Rupestris stocks. Mataro, on the other hand, grows very feebly when grafted on these same stocks, whilst both Aramon and Carignane do well grafted on Rupestris, although not quite so well on Riparia.

Although we must take advantage of all available information on this important point, here again our freedom from excess of lime gives us a distinct advantage over French growers. The same vine which gives unsatisfactory results when grafted on a certain stock in an unfavorable soil might do very well if growing in a soil better suited to the American root system.

Grafting enables use to be made of the most thoroughly resistant American sorts, which, but for this operation, would not be worth cultivating on account of the poor quality and quantity of their fruit. These advantages greatly outweigh the disadvantage presented by the necessity of grafting, an operation which is always more or less delicate and expensive in a country where the rate of wages is as high as it is with us, and vigneron are often far from efficient or careful in their work.

The grafting difficulty is, however, not so serious as might appear at first sight. It only increases the first cost of establishing the vineyard as, once in bearing, the vines on American roots require the same treatment as if growing on their own roots. Nor is this first cost very heavy. Although many thousand acres were reconstituted in France by first establishing the American vines and then grafting to French varieties, a more simple method is now almost universally adopted, which does not even necessitate the rooting of the American stock before grafting.

Phylloxera resistant vines are now obtained by simply making a nursery of grafted cuttings, the lower part which will produce the roots being American, whilst the upper part which will form the stem leaves and fruit is European.

The graft takes and the cutting strikes simultaneously, and at the end of a year one has phylloxera-resistant grafted vines ready for plantation.

The cuttings may be grafted in a shed during wet weather or in the evenings by any careful vigneron, and a large number can be got through in a short time. The graft is simply bound round with string or raphia, and planted in the same way as an ordinary cutting. If the vineyard proprietor studies his best interests he will do most of his grafting himself, as it will be more carefully done, and the success of the operation more certain. Grafting machines are going out of fashion in France, better results being obtainable with no other tools than the grafting knife, and perhaps a guide or two to make the angle at which the shoot is cut always the same.

Want of space prevents me from devoting more time to this important question—all I wish to point out is that the difficulties in the way of establishing a grafted vineyard are not considerable.

The question of the best American sorts to adopt cannot be gone into properly here. It will suffice for me to say that many of those most largely planted in France some years ago, such as Chinton, Taylor, Concord, &c., are now no longer sought after, most vineyards being now established on some of the pure forms of *Vitis Riparia* and *Vitis Rupestris*, or hybrids between these two. In limestone soils, especially in those of a chalky description, these cannot be used, and *Vitis Berlandieri* or a hybrid partly derived from it, or even having a strain of *Vitis Vinifera* has to be employed. With us there is nothing to prevent the employment of *Riparia* and *Rupestris*, which may be classed amongst the very best stocks. A hybrid between *Vitis Cordifolia* and *Vitis Rupestris* may perhaps be one of the best for us, being at the same time highly resistant, striking well from cuttings, and capable of resisting severe drought.

It has been suggested that the Government should take in hand the propagation and distribution of American varieties. I fear that it is now too late. The very considerable demand for cuttings will render it profitable to devote private enterprise to their multiplication.

Where the Government can be of great assistance, is by keeping some check upon those who propagate these vines for sale, as it is to be feared that the temptation will be great to induce unscrupulous persons to impose upon inexperienced growers, by selling worthless sorts as resistant ones. The only practical means of achieving this end is by disseminating the most reliable information on the subject among the growers of the colony, and by the establishment of a thorough ampelographical collection, where different vines may be identified, so that purchasers may take advantage of the protection the law affords, should they have inferior varieties sold to them under the name of a good stock.

At the Rutherglen school there are, I believe, a large number of American varieties, and the collection could be easily made up

to date. The establishment of a collection in each vine-growing centre is desirable, and could be established at very small expense.

The difficulty of detecting phylloxera in a vineyard on American roots is a fact which must not be lost sight of. In such a vineyard the diseased appearance of phylloxeric patches—one of the signs which greatly facilitates the detection of the insect—is absent. The resistant vines may have numbers of insects on their roots without suffering in any way, and yet constitute a source of infection to other vineyards in the neighbourhood.

In order to obviate this difficulty, I beg to suggest that it be made compulsory in all American plantations, that at least every tenth row consist of European vines on their own roots. Any phylloxera in the vineyard would at once attack these, and their presence would be very readily ascertained.

The necessity of adopting some means of preventing the rapid spread of phylloxera, in order to give time for the American reconstitution is evident. Careful supervision should be exercised over the circulation of rooted vines, cuttings, &c., from diseased districts, in order to prevent the infection spreading from district to district.

The best means of preventing the infection spreading from vineyard to vineyard in the same district, is no doubt the extinction system which has given such excellent results in Switzerland. The chief difficulties lie in the fact that in all countries where it has been adopted, it has been found necessary to impose a tax on vineyards, termed in Switzerland a compulsory assurance in order to provide funds to meet necessary expenses in the way of compensation to owners and payment of inspectors. The difficulty of obtaining competent inspectors is another point we must consider. But I am leaving the subject of my paper.

Before concluding, I wish to warn the growers of the colony against placing too much faith in the extinction system, and looking upon it as definite means of combating phylloxera. Even in Switzerland where the system has given the best results, owing to the cold climate and slow spread of phylloxera, they now propose to abandon it for American vines in the districts where phylloxera is most plentiful, and they look upon the date as not far distant when the extinction system will no longer be enforced in any part of Switzerland. In Victoria we have, on one hand, the scattered situation of our vineyards, which will tend to prevent the rapid spread of the insect, and, on the other hand, the fact that the warmth of the climate tends in the opposite direction or to favour its rapid dissemination.

The only true safety for the vine-growers of Victoria, as for those of every other country, lies in the adoption of the American vine.

Mr. H. B. DALY (Dunolly Association) read the following paper on "Wineries, Market for Wines ; Phylloxera"—

The Minister of Agriculture having asked the Board of Viticulture whether in its opinion it be advisable to hold a general conference in the interests of the wine industry, the Board met, and having considered the question at considerable length, returned an answer in the affirmative. The Minister then appointed this, the 10th day of May, as the day on which to hold the Conference, and the Board-room of the Lands Department as the place wherein it should be held. He also intimated the subjects to be dealt with at this Conference, namely, three in number—first, wineries ; secondly, a market for our wines ; and thirdly, diseases of the vines, particularly by the destructive pest, phylloxera. I will deal with these subjects as they are named, and first—wineries. I am of opinion that local wineries, if they can be established, would be of immense value and utility to young growers, who on starting to grow wine would not have the means to buy casks and build cellars, and who could at once sell their grapes to these wineries and receive the cash for them, enabling these young growers to at once proceed with their work without stop or hinderance, while the manager of the winery could make the grapes into wine in his own style, and thereby turn out a marketable article ; while, if the wine were made by the young inexperienced grower, it might be entirely worthless ; so far, local wineries are good. There should also be attached to the local winery a local distillery, this would utilize the marc and the lees and any wine in the district which might be considered off, so that the wine industry in the district, having a winery and distillery combined, would be safe and complete, so far as human foresight could provide. Now this view of the question is the thing wanted. But can it be accomplished ? It may be carried out in some districts, but certainly it will be difficult to do so in every wine-growing district in the colony, for the following reasons—there is not sufficient capital among the wine-growers in some districts to establish a winery, and even if there were a great many wine-growers would rather sell their crop of grapes, as they would not become large shareholders in the wineries, not having the desired capital to spare. A large outside capital would be required. Can this be secured ? Besides the cellars, distillery, machinery, and working staff would be a very large item, too much altogether for many districts in this country. Then, again, these local wineries would not get sufficient wine to pay expenses, as it could not be expected that the large growers who have erected cellars, bought machinery, and established a good business in wine are likely to forfeit all this simply to establish wineries in each district. Again, supposing it to be possible to establish the local wineries (which I sincerely trust it

will), would our object be then attained? Which is to have one uniform Victoria wine, a wine that the English merchant could say was just the article he wanted. How can this be done? When we have eight districts in Victoria, all equally entitled to equal consideration as to wineries, all represented on the Viticultural Board, and all making to-day a different quality of wine. If that be so, and I think no one will dispute it, I ask again, how are we to have a uniform sample of wine for the English market? But if this uniform sample of wine is not an absolute necessity, then by all means let each one of the eight districts try and establish a local winery, and let us have our eight samples of wine; but if it is necessary to have one sample, then I have come to the conclusion that instead of eight local wineries we must try and establish one great central winery in this city of Melbourne. This would be much more easily established than eight local wineries. The same staff that would work a local winery would work it, the wine-growers of the colony would take shares, outside capital would be easier procured than for local country wineries. The whole of the wine-growers who desired to do so could send to this central winery their grapes or their must, and all these, when fermented in the same vat, would surely be one uniform wine. There would be no difficulty whatever in sending either grapes or the juice of the grape to this central winery, this central winery could have on hand a number of vat-like casks, which would sit in a truck on the railway, with the bung-hole in the upper end, with an attached funnel, so that the must might ferment as it would, none would be lost, and this vessel, when filled by the grape-grower, would be returned to the central winery. This central winery would have great advantages, it would be the receptacle of all the grapes and wine that the wine-growers of the whole colony would feel disposed to sell, in fact of all the wine in the colony that could be spared from home consumption, and hence the export wine market of Victoria. And lastly, supposing that I am altogether wrong, and that the local wineries are the thing and the only thing wanted, then I assert you would require a central depôt to blend the wines from the various country wineries in before sending them to the English market.

In concluding this part of this paper I beg to say that Victoria will never become a great wine-producing country until either local wineries or a central winery be established, as men will plant grapes only when they know for certain that they can dispose of them and get the money for them the day they are ripe. Now, as to the market for our wines, I consider that there is little to be said on this subject, as I am of opinion if we grow the proper grape and make a good sound wine there is already a market for more than we can grow. I had myself invitations both from London and India to send wine to these places, and

I am more than satisfied that the people of England know by this time the great superiority of our wine over those of France, and hence their value. I think, therefore, our outside market is secured. Let us now take into consideration our home market, I mean the wine market established in Victoria and the Australian colonies; I am happy to say that this market, notwithstanding the opposition it has had to encounter on all sides, is making satisfactory progress. In the district to which I belong a very large proportion of the wine grown is consumed locally, but when we do get orders for wine, where carriage has to be paid, we find that the heavy carriage is a great bar to the sale of our wines. I do not complain of large quantities, but only of small lots. Now the small lots pay us best, hence we desire to encourage that trade, but I regret to say the present management of the railways has put an absolute stoppage to the sale of small quantities. If a two-gallon jar or case filled with wine were carried on the railways, same as a case of fruit, the wine trade would be much more prosperous. These heavy charges on the railways deprive the people of the wine which they require, deprives the grower of the sale, and the railways themselves of an additional income; so that the present management of the railways is bad for the wine-grower and for all concerned. I will just give one example. I sent a two-gallon jar filled with wine to a customer of mine, on the railways; when the wine arrived at its destination the man to whom I sent it had to pay 4s. 3d. carriage, while the wine itself cost only 6s. I got no more orders from this customer. Some time after this transaction, I, with others, had the honour of being on a deputation before the Minister of Railways, and this matter was brought forward amongst other things; when the Minister heard all we had to say, he, eyeing us scornfully, *cum torvo vultu*, asked us did we desire that the railways would be made the retailers of our wines? In a word, I regret to say, if my memory does not deceive me, that the Minister of Railways used language to the deputation which was unbecoming his position and undeserved by the men who waited upon him, it was absolutely untrue. I only relate this as showing that the Railway Department is a great obstruction to our home market for wine, and this obstruction too has been given in evidence before the Tariff Commission by some of the wine-growers of Rutherglen. In concluding this subject, I will merely say that if the Railway Department can give the wine trade fair and just consideration our Australian wine trade would be all that could be desired, hence our wine market at home and abroad would be of such dimensions that our rapid increase of wine-growing could not keep abreast of it; and hence it would become, what it is now recognised to be by the leading men of the world, one of the foremost industries in Australasia.

As to the third and last subject, namely, phylloxera, I will only say that there is a great deal of unjust criticism hurled at the powers that be, both by the press and the outside public. Why should this be so? The Government, the Phylloxera Board, and the wine-growers generally considered the pest phylloxera a thing not to be met with again in Victoria, as it had been so effectually stamped out of the Geelong district—the only place in which it existed in this colony. But so soon as it was known for certain that the pest did exist at Bendigo there was no time lost in doing all that human industry and skill could do to combat it, and it is hoped that its existence will be stamped out before it extends to other districts. Our local Board at Dunolly have formed themselves into a Disease Board, and intend to do their duty to all diseases of the vine, as well as to the phylloxera; they only desire the Government to carry out such legislation as will give them power to keep down the diseases of the vine and fruit, which they intend doing without cost to the State. They think if such power were given to them, the introduction of American phylloxera-proof stalks, and the assistance of the Government experts, they could successfully carry on the wine industry; and they trust to the Government to distribute as great a quantity of phylloxera-resisting vines as possible this ensuing spring that they may make a start before it is too late, as it is the opinion of some that phylloxera will still spread, regarding compensation to vigneronns who have suffered or will suffer loss by phylloxera. This is, in my opinion, a vexed question, and one I desire to have this Conference to discuss.

In conclusion, I will beg to add that, in my opinion, this paper would not be complete if some reference were not made to the Viticultural Board. As I understand it, this Board has been called into existence by a previous Minister of Agriculture, that it might act as a board of advice to him, and in selecting it he generally invited the presidents of the country wine and fruit-growers' associations to become its members. It has, therefore, no legal basis, except what is generally known as common law; it has no code of rules laid down by Act of Parliament; it has no money placed at its disposal; it cannot, therefore, do what its members desire to do for the good and progress of the industry which it tries to represent, hence it is called a useless Board, and it is criticised adversely by the press and people. Then its members feel humiliated and disgusted when they see all this unjust criticism. Still they attend the meetings once a month, at their own expense of both time and money; and I believe it has been the feeling of the Board to resign in a body, but they did not wish to do anything which might tend to injure the wine industry, nor did they think it would be worthy of them to do so, and they are glad to meet this Conference to-day and

lay their case in their hands, and if this Conference says they are an unnecessary body, let it say so and dissolve the Viticultural Board in an honorable way. But if, on the contrary, it says the Board is necessary for the forwarding and ultimate perfecting of the wine industry, then let this Conference ask the Government for such legislation as will give the Board full and legitimate power to do that which it was intended to do, namely, to bring the wine industry to that perfection in Victoria which God and nature designed it to be brought to.

Mr. VAHLAND (Bendigo) said he was appointed one of the local Phylloxera Board at Bendigo, and had an excellent opportunity of studying the question of phylloxera there. Unfortunately, the conclusion had been come to that once phylloxera had come into a vineyard, that vineyard, whatever its size, must be destroyed. His own vineyard was 25 miles from the present outbreak, but at any moment he might be in the same position. He thought the Government should deal as liberally with those now affected with the phylloxera as they did years ago in the case of those affected at Geelong. If a district had been devastated by a sudden flood, sympathy would at once be shown for the people in that district, but because the action of the phylloxera was gradual the sympathy was alienated. He thought this Conference should not lose sight of the question of compensation. As those affected were quite innocent as to the origin of the pest, and as they could not get a living off their land if devoted to any other purpose than vines, he thought they should be dealt with liberally and justly.

Mr. GROSSÉ said that on the 8th of December he discovered the insect in his vineyard. On the same day, within an hour, he wrote to Melbourne to have the Secretary of Agriculture informed and an inspector sent to the vineyard as soon as possible. On the same day the Secretary of Agriculture wrote a letter to Mr. Hopton, the inspector, who went up on the Monday, and on the Tuesday they were in the vineyard uprooting the vines. A crowd had collected at the vineyard, but Mr. Hopton was very careful not to announce what he saw, but before he left in the afternoon he informed me privately and confidentially that I was correct in my opinion, that it was the dreaded phylloxera. Mr. Hopton had been sneered at in the *Age* newspaper as incapable, but he (Mr. Grossé) wished to give his most emphatic testimony as to Mr. Hopton's ability and energy. Being an interested person he could not say anything on the subject of compensation, and Mr. Vahland had dealt fully with that subject. He thought there could be no complaint as to the methods that

had been adopted by the Government; they had tried all the infallible cures that had been brought forward by different persons, and nothing further could have been done in a dry season like the last, following the wettest season they had ever had in the district. The ground, after being very wet in the winter, was in the summer baked almost to cement by the heat; the men who had to uproot the vines had to use picks and shovels, and nothing more could have been done. If the Government decided on a general uprooting of those vineyards, now would be the best time to start. He himself believed that the only cure was the thorough eradication of the affected vineyards. He had hopes that phylloxera would soon disappear from the colony and never return.

Mr. BUCKLEY (Rutherglen) read the following paper on the "Government Proposals for the Development of the Vine-growing Industry":—

The Government proposals for promoting the development of the wine-growing industry, as foreshadowed in Mr. Martin's able memorandum, which appeared in the metropolitan journals of the 5th August last, embodied two leading principles, viz.—(1) The payment of an export bonus on wine and brandy, and (2) the payment of a bonus on the cost of the necessary plant and buildings erected as wineries and brandy distilleries in vine-growing centres; and, although the former was abandoned in the regulations subsequently issued, it should be recollected that it was the most promising, and should have been made the principal, and indeed, the indispensable feature of the famous bonus proposals of Mr. Dow in 1889. Unfortunately, the Ministry in office at the time, while deserving every credit for a desire to encourage the viticultural industry, lacked that absolute essential in carrying such proposals through Parliament, viz., a stable backbone; and weakly consented to the passing of the planting bonus, which, by itself, was a positive evil, and to the rejection of the much more important bonus for the establishment of exporting companies and the extension of our foreign trade in wines. The inevitable result was that production was unduly stimulated and increased at an enormous rate without any market being provided for the augmented output. Had both bonuses received the sanction of Parliament, or, better still, had the positions been reversed, and the export bonus only been passed, there would have been ample time during the four or five years that must elapse before the newly-planted vineyards could come into bearing to permit of exporting companies being established on a firm footing, and securing such an extensive business connexion as would enable them to dispose readily of the increased produce of the future.

If this course had been adopted the industry at the present time would have been a source of wealth to the community and a ready means of absorbing a large proportion of the surplus labour of the colony ; and, as scarcely any other industry furnishes such scope for labour in proportion to the capital invested in it, its importance in this respect could hardly be over-estimated. But, although on that occasion success was on the side of the local optionist and prohibitionist, the utter uselessness and mischievousness of whose tactics have been recently shown in the substitution of a multitude of sly grog-shops for respectable licensed houses at the Great Northern and Korumburra, and in the fact that the model prohibition settlement of Mildura promises ere long to claim the record for pre-eminence in the consumption of "strong waters;" still, it is not yet too late to repair the evil, and if the Government now decides to grant a bonus on the export of wine and brandy it will be the means of enabling houses already in the business, or which may hereafter be established, to reduce their prices to the English buyers, and so secure an increased flow in the tide that is already, although not at a sufficiently fast rate, setting in our favour. The Rutherglen Association, which Mr. O'Grady and myself have the honour to represent, recommends a bonus of 3d. per gallon on wine and 1s. per gallon on all pure grape brandy exported, which, if we accept last year's exports as a guide, would amount to £4,000 per annum. No doubt, as the quantity increased under the influence of the bonuses, the amount to be paid by the Government would also increase ; but it could, and in my private opinion should, be reduced on a sliding scale after the lapse of, say, three years.

Once the industry is thoroughly established it will, like that of dairying, need no further assistance, and should then be required to "gang its ain gait."

The second feature of Mr. Martin's proposals, dealing with the establishment of wineries and country distilleries for the purpose of making pure grape brandy, which feature has been reproduced in the regulations, should lead in time to the formation of companies on a wholly or partly co-operative basis in all the leading vine-growing districts in the colony. But in the carrying out of these regulations the Government should (in certain directions particularly) construe them in a reasonably elastic manner. In some districts, especially new ones, a winery pure and simple may be the chief and, perhaps, the only form of establishment desired or necessary. In others, again, such as Rutherglen, where all the vine-growers have wine-making plants of their own, a company that will devote its chief and, perhaps, its sole attention to brandy distillation may be the one thing needful. This being so, the Government should not adopt too rigid an interpretation of the regulations so far as regards the precise nature of the business to

be carried on, provided that it embodies these essentials in all such cases, viz., that it must be calculated to improve the status of the vine-growers, to lead to an extension of the area under vines, to increase the capacity of its district for the employment of labour, and in so doing to benefit the colony at large. If these requirements are complied with, a little latitude in the choice of the means to be employed may well be permitted.

We are now in the Rutherglen district endeavouring to establish a company for the making, maturing, and export of wine, but primarily for the production of high-class grape brandy. To the latter feature we look for the speediest and best returns, since brandy can be sold and exported within twelve months or less from the time of the vintage, and since the market for good brandy in almost every civilized country in the world is practically inexhaustible. In Victoria alone (*vide* Hayter's *Year-Book* for 1892) the excess of imports of brandy and spirits of wine over the exports amounted to 211,809 gallons, and this takes no account of the quantity of Victorian brandy consumed in the colony, which would probably bring the total consumption up to 250,000 gallons at least, especially if account be taken of the quantity of wine spirit included under the headings "cordials and bitters," "spirits perfumed," and "other spirits undescribed."

Mr. Bosisto recently stated that no other spirits can be compared to that of wine for the preservation of delicate scents, and another member of the Tariff incidentally mentioned at Rutherglen that pure wine brandy of a high class costs £1 per bottle in France. The coarser spirit extracted from the grape skins at vintage time will also be a source of profit, being largely used in various processes in the arts, and so will the cream of tartar and other minor products. At present the wholesale but unavoidable waste of the spirit in the skins means a heavy annual loss to the country, a Californian estimate of the loss so sustained being no less than 12 gallons of brandy to every ton of pressed pomace or skins. As regards the tartar, it may be of interest to mention that the quantity annually thrown away by our vigneron, based on an actual analysis and on wholesale prices in Melbourne, would realize, at the very lowest estimate, £1,200, and this is one of the many leakages by which growers' profits are reduced, and which, by the establishment of local distilling companies, will no longer be allowed to exist. It is, therefore, all-important that in our district brandy distillation should take precedence of everything else, and we have no doubt that others amongst the older vine-growing districts in the colony will find it necessary to follow on the same lines.

As we are first in the field, however, and have the largest area of vines to work upon, and as our success will contribute largely

to the success of similar ventures, and will furnish experience and data for the guidance of vigneron elsewhere, we trust that the vine-growers of other districts will interest themselves in our company by becoming shareholders, if even to a small extent, since our success or failure will in all probability mean their success or failure likewise.

The matter has been taken up enthusiastically at Rutherglen, and I can safely say that scarcely a vine-grower of any note in our district now holds aloof from the company. About 8,000 out of the 10,000 shares reserved for Rutherglen have been taken up, and we have no fear of the balance of the local shares not being subscribed, as applications are constantly being received, but still a certain portion of outside capital is needed to insure an effective start. The expenses of working will be small, the *Argus* estimate of the cost of distillation being only one halfpenny per gallon on the wine used. We shall save in railway freight about three halfpence per gallon on this wine by distilling on the spot, and we shall further save very considerably by having absolutely no cartage charges, either in receiving wine from other parts of the colony or in despatching wine or brandy from the company's cellars to London, provision having been made for the purchase of a site fronting the railway.

Under these circumstances we confidently look for support to our fellow vine-growers and the public, believing that if our venture is made a pronounced success, as it can readily be, others of a like kind will follow in other parts, and with equally good results, and the establishment of such companies throughout the colony on a secure and permanent footing will do much to turn again the tide of prosperity in our favour, to give food and clothing to our unemployed, to bring back traffic to our railways and shipping to our ports. It will do something, even if it is but a little, to strengthen the hands of those who have preceded us in introducing our wines to the British public, in converting those wines from being merely objects of curiosity, and but seldom seen in many parts of the United Kingdom, into commodities in common and every-day use; something to draw more closely the bond of brotherhood and the ties that spring from a feeling of a common interest between ourselves and the citizens of the old land to which we are proud to belong; and, as the result and symbol of all this, I trust that, before many years are over, it will be no uncommon thing for Britons on the other side of the sea and Australians on this, at their social gatherings, to drink success to each other's fatherland and to each other's nation in bumpers of Australian wine.

At the last meeting of the Rutherglen Association a motion was passed to ask the Government to send to France for full

particulars as to quarantine there, and to take every precaution as to the introduction of wines. It had been proposed that Rutherglen should be made the centre of the distribution of phylloxera-resisting vines throughout the colony. On the plan proposed of grafting cuttings and propagating them, he thought it would be far easier to do that at a moist place like Macedon. He thought the Government might, on the viticulture ground at Rutherglen, establish one depôt for the Rutherglen district and Barnawartha, and another at Mount Macedon for all the other districts of the colony, and at each of those they could propagate as many cuttings as they thought requisite. He did not agree with Mr. De Castella that the introduction of vines should be left in the hands of private parties; he thought the Government should introduce all the cuttings and seeds, and when they did so they could send a number to Rutherglen and Macedon for distribution, but once they got into a certain district they should not allow them to be sent to any other district—each district should be isolated from other districts. He thought it should be prohibited to use a fruit case a second time; it had been proposed at Rutherglen that no more old ones should be imported. He saw no objection to a rate being struck on the vineyards to carry out the work of the new Viticulture Board, provided it was limited to a rate for the purposes of inspection and eradication. It was only right the Government should undertake that; a man whose vineyard was being destroyed could not be expected to root it out. He thought the disease would spread all over the colony, but if due precautions were taken they might get fifteen or twenty years within which to replant their vineyards. If they did that it would not injure them. When the disease first broke out in Geelong the Government agreed to compensate the wine-growers there, simply because it was thought that a united effort would stamp it out altogether; it was never contemplated that if the disease went through all the vineyards of the colony the Government would compensate, and the vine-growers could hardly be asked to compensate amongst themselves. He thought the best thing would be for the Government to limit itself to inspection and eradication, and let each vine-grower take the risk of his vineyard being destroyed. He might perhaps get one year's value of his vineyard as compensation, but that was the utmost. He thought there was no analogy between cattle disease, which would be easily stamped out, and phylloxera, which, though stamped out in one district, may in few years break out in an adjoining one. Mr. Grossé had said that none of the present vineyard-owners were to blame as to the disease; that might be true, but some one of them must have got the disease through the winged insect or through cases, and it had spread to the vineyards without the assistance of cuttings.

Mr. CRAIKE (Geelong) said that when the phylloxera was at Geelong they had no sympathy from the people at Rutherglen, who thought it would be stamped out; and that there would be no more trouble. He thought there was an analogy between pleuro and phylloxera, because the Government had to attend to the stamping out of both. The British Government, in dealing with rinderpest, never thought of taking a man's property and killing it and burying it without paying him; they gave him two-thirds of the value of the cattle, and the disease was completely stamped out. He disagreed with Mr. De Castella that phylloxera would never be stamped out, because it had been stamped out of Geelong; he was afraid that the mistakes made there were being repeated at Bendigo. The first mistake made at Geelong was taking out only the diseased vineyards, the result being repeated outbreaks of the disease, and experience there pointed to the fact that all vineyards within two miles of a diseased district became infected. He had no confidence in the way the inspection was being carried out. He thought there should be a thorough inspection of all the vineyards in the colony. His impression was that the disease came, as in the Geelong case, through a nursery. He was sure Mr. Hopton was thoroughly competent; but it was too much work for one man. Rutherglen had not been inspected, and he thought that the most dangerous district in the colony. At Bendigo he thought the vines should be taken out at once, including all vineyards in the Emu Creek. The new Phylloxera Board had not held a single meeting since it had been gazetted, the chairman having been engaged on the Tariff Board. He thought that it should be called together at once, and the matter immediately dealt with. If the vines were taken out compensation must be paid according to the Act. The difficulty would be as to those at a distance of one or two miles. It would be very ruinous to the rest of the colony if the Bendigo people were allowed to do what they liked. There were 24,000 acres of vines altogether, 18,000 of them being newly planted, so that the relation of the Emu Creek district to the rest of the colony was a mere flea-bite, and the expense should not stand in the way. He thought a certain tax should be put on the vineyards as a sinking fund to meet the cases, supplemented by a Government grant. He had advocated the same course at Geelong and if it had been carried out there would now be a fund sufficient to pay all compensation claims. He thought the general taxpayer should not be called upon in the matter. He thought it would be folly to pass an Act that fruit cases should be only used once. The risk from phylloxera had been reduced to nothing. The nature of the insect was to lay the eggs on the leaf, not in the case.

Mr. FRANÇOIS DE CASTELLA (Kyabram) thought the Conference should adopt some definite policy as to phylloxera. He quite

agreed that it was very hard for the Bendigo vine-growers to see their vineyards eradicated without compensation, as they had been taken unawares. As he pointed out before, he considered it quite certain phylloxera would appear eventually in every district in the colony, as it had spread over every other country; but they could take measures to keep it in check, in order to get time to constitute their vineyards on American roots; if they did not do that they would have them all destroyed. As to compensation, it was a very difficult thing to know where to draw the line. He thought the Bendigo vine-growers were entitled to every consideration, but if phylloxera broke out in all other parts of the colony where was the money for the compensation to come from? One of the first things to be done was to isolate the districts and to prevent the circulation of the cuttings, unless the person forwarding the cuttings accompanied the package with a permit from some central authority, such as the Board of Viticulture, proclaiming that the vineyard from which they came was free from phylloxera. He did not see why the vine-growers should not be compelled to execute the inspection themselves. If they noticed a disease they should be made to communicate with the authorities, and to engage competent inspectors to decide whether it was phylloxera. In Switzerland and France any person who did not report the appearance of the disease was liable to a fine. In Switzerland the expenses connected with phylloxera legislation were met by a tax on vineyards, or what they called "compulsory insurance," and he did not see why that should not be adopted here. As to the action taken at Bendigo he held that if the reports of it were circulated in France it would bring the country into ridicule. Summer eradication was never pursued in any country where phylloxera was thoroughly understood and treated in a reasonable way. Instead of well-known insecticides being applied, salt had been used. In the latest papers he had received from France dealing with phylloxera our policy in using salt as an insecticide was ridiculed. The policy in future should be as much as possible on the lines of prevention. He did not consider that in any country phylloxera could be eradicated, but they could prevent the spread of the disease, and in the meantime replant on American roots. In any case the policy could not be settled in a few minutes; it would have to be carefully considered, with a view to submission at a future Conference.

Mr. P. DE CASTELLA (Yarra Valley Association) raised the point whether, if he planted a vineyard next year and in four years had phylloxera, he would be entitled to compensation. He understood that in the case of Geelong the board recommended that all vineyards that were rooted out for the good of the public were to be compensated for; but those that were already doomed merely had to be rooted out at the expense of the Government. There were,

no doubt, hard cases, but, as Dr. L. L. Smith, a member of the board, said, it was the same as with other diseases, in severe cases they must take severe measures. He thought it right to have a tax on every vineyard; it would not be very heavy.

Mr. VAHLAND moved the following resolution:—“That this Conference recommend to the Government that it, the Government, should deal not only justly but liberally with the vineyard proprietors whose property, unfortunately, had to be destroyed on account of the phylloxera insect having been found in their vineyard.” He used the word “liberally” advisedly, because the state of the wine market was very different from what it was twelve years ago. In Geelong they used to receive from 5s. to 7s. 6d. a gallon, and, consequently, a year’s compensation was very different then from now, when they could only get from 1s. to 2s. a gallon. It was no fault of the vine-growers in this instance; they could not possibly know that the disease was there unless they dug up the vines. He knew some of the unfortunate vine-growers, who were hard-working people, whose living would be taken away.

Dr. L. L. SMITH.—Can you tell us how the vines got diseased in Bendigo? Would you compensate a man if he did not give notice to his neighbour?

Mr. VAHLAND.—No, he would not; immediately it was found, notice was given. The people were in ignorance, and if the Phylloxera Board had done its duty they would have known about it years ago.

Mr. F. DE CASTELLA thought it was quite conceivable that the people should be dealt with liberally, but they must not tie their hands. He thought there should be a committee of the Conference to draft the phylloxera policy; after that they could talk about compensation. He moved—“That this Conference appoint a committee to draft, in conjunction with the Board of Viticulture, a complete phylloxera policy.”

Mr. WEST, in seconding the resolution, regretted that amongst the excellent suggestions made by Mr. Irvine, on behalf of the Great Western people, as to cultivating self-reliance and self-respect, one of the most absurd and stupid proposals in the direction of the spoon-feeding of the people that had ever been made by an intelligent body was brought forward, viz., that the Government should immediately set to work to raise nurseries of phylloxera-proof vines in order to distribute to the vigneron of this colony. Mr. Castella had shown that two particular vines were used for the purpose of resistant stocks universally throughout the world, the Riparia and the Rupestris. Any vigneron could write by the next English mail to the leading seedsman in France and Germany, and get the seeds of those varieties at the low price of 4s. per pound, and a single pound of seed would

yield about 4,000 vines. They could be sown during the month of September next, and by this time next year a man would have tens of thousands of resistant stocks at a cost of less than a £5 note. What they wanted was intelligent direction and instruction distributed throughout the country as to those matters, and that was about all the Government should be asked to do. They should help people to help themselves, but not go further and adopt spoon-feeding from the cradle to the grave, as they were doing to-day in Victoria. The question of compensation opened up a serious difficulty, and leading statesmen would not dare to take it up on the lines of compensating to the full extent, in view of the present state of the finances of the colony. During the last two years the colony had been drifting hopelessly on the road to insolvency; they had accumulated a deficiency of over two millions, and in June next they would have to face another deficit of £300,000, and the reason was that every section of the community came forward to dip in the lucky bag of the Government. Was it going to last for ever, and so destroy the self-respect of young Australia? If they were going to compensate for the destroyed vineyards, it must come manfully off their own shoulders. They must say—"It is a national danger to us, and we shall not ask the overburdened taxpayer to find the money, but do it ourselves." When they have done that and given the greatest possible evidence that they were in earnest, they would take good care that the same disastrous blunders should not be perpetrated again, as was done at Geelong. There was a total of 281 acres infected there, and it cost no less than £30,000 to eradicate the phylloxera from them; and they were now as bad as ever with phylloxera again in another district—they might pay another £30,000 to Bendigo, and in five years have to begin again at Rutherglen, and so it would go on. The time would come when the intelligent men of this country must take a stand on this question, and fearlessly say that they would not come to the Government in every case of this kind, but would loyally help themselves.

Mr. HANS IRVINE said that the grounds of Mr. West's remarks were totally wrong. He (Mr. Irvine) had stated distinctly in his paper that such schools might be readily made self-supporting, and resistant stock made available. He never intended that the vine-growers should obtain their stocks gratis.

Mr. WEST said he contended that Mr. Irvine had placed the burden of finding the resistant stocks on the Government.

Mr. IRVINE asked how many wine-growers were in a position to propagate from seed and to graft on those without knowledge. Very few men had the practical knowledge of the nurserymen or vigneron in the old country. The ordinary vigneron hardly knew how to make a seed germinate. He had given Mr. French

an order for Baron von Mueller to get him £10 worth of seed, and his order was still in the Department, his object being to let any of his neighbours who asked him have them gratis. He did not approve of the bonus by the Government having forced the industry unnaturally; it rested with themselves to put it on a proper footing by the establishment of a viticulture school or college. It was right for them to put it on the best footing, giving intelligent labour and raising the seeds so that he could send to-morrow for 10,000 cuttings grafted on American stock, but they did not ask that from the State for nothing.

Signor BRAGATO thought that some of the statements made at the Conference about the phylloxera were misleading. Mr. Castella's paper was very valuable, and, in his (Mr. Bragato's) opinion, could not have been better. It was no use sending to Europe for seeds—they had to send for cuttings, but the seeds would deteriorate in character. They might get the Riparia or other varieties by seeds, but he was positive, because he had tried it, they would find that out of 2,000 seeds they would have one variety for each seed; that was proved at the present time in America. In the State Forest, Texas, there was only one variety of vine seed. If they sent for a selection there by seeds it should be very unsatisfactory. He was not himself experienced in American vines, and he thought there was nobody in Australia who had had experience in them. They might get a selection of seeds from America, but who could guarantee that they would resist phylloxera—no one would guarantee that in France after 30 years' experience. He would impress on them that if they intended to reconstruct their vineyards with resistant stocks they should import the cuttings. There was no danger in that because they had the means to disinfect them with well known chemicals, and it was quite safe to import them, provided they were disinfected. He did not think it just to forbid the Bendigo district to sell cuttings or trees. It was possible to import the phylloxera on potatoes or on flowers; in Europe it generally came with the potato, so you would also have to forbid them selling potatoes and other vegetables, and that would be very disastrous to many gardeners in that district. Everything could be disinfected at a small place at the station. He did not think it would be wise to compel people not to put fruit in the same cases twice. Hot air (240°) through the inside of a box, with a disinfectant, would kill all the eggs of the phylloxera. He thought the Government should not have one nursery, but four or five in the different soils. As Mr. Castella had said, one vine would do in one kind of soil and one in another. The Riparia would do in one soil, but if you put it in a lime soil it would not do. Some districts had calcareous soil, and they could supply a vine suited to that; others had loamy soil, and there were suitable vines for that.

Mr. DRAPER said he had grown the American vines from seeds. They would be very weak for two or three years from the seedlings; he believed the cuttings would be the best way. He had five or six of the American varieties, and had had them for several years and had had experience in growing them, and he would say—"Send for the cuttings instead of the seed"; they could not possibly graft them for two years on the seedlings.

Mr. KAVANAGH said that some years ago a Parliamentary committee in France reported on phylloxera, and recommended that submerging the vineyards for 40 days during the dormant state would kill all the phylloxera that was in it. He thought that a very important matter. In the Goulburn Valley there were thousands of acres that could be flooded during the proper time at a very cheap rate. That committee also reported that, although the phylloxera got on the vine roots when they were planted a wide distance apart (10 x 10), it had no effect to deteriorate or reduce the quantity of crop grown on the vines. He gave the Government every credit for the assistance they had given the vignerons throughout the colony. Without the bonus system there would have been thousands of acres less planted. In many instances the Government could assist an industry to the benefit of the State as well as the individual.

Mr. DE GASSE said he had personal knowledge as to the submersion of vineyards on the river banks. Syndicates had been formed amongst the vignerons themselves for the purpose. At first the experiments were made for 50 days of submersion in the winter time. It was done as much as possible before the pruning and early enough to give time for the operation. It did not kill the phylloxera the first year, but it was greatly diminished; the second year it had more effect; but the third year a few vines were still found affected, but they were living as well as the others. This had to be done every year, and it was practicable only where cheap irrigation could be applied. If the ground was level it was easy and cost very little; 50 or 70 acres could be flooded in a fortnight or a week, but the water had to be kept on for 40 days. At the last meeting of the Viticulture Commission, at Montpellier, all these subjects were broached, and the experts came to the conclusion that 40 days' submersion was necessary, and that it was possible to give a fortnight's submersion just after the vintage and leave it there for one month, and then start again for another fortnight.

Mr. HEADDEY pointed out that not one vineyard in a hundred could be submerged. As to importing seeds, the vines were not cultivated to produce the seed, but for cuttings. If he sent to a nursery for a hundred trees they sent any sort, and there were only two or three sorts out of twenty vines that were resistant. How could they tell that they would get them? He did not believe

they would get them unless they sent a man to cut them and grow them from those particular vines.

Mr. POUNDS supported the resolution. He agreed with Mr. West as to bringing out seeds, because if there was truth as to hybridization there would be no certainty as to resistant stocks, and a private individual would not be able to secure the same interest in the selection on the part of his correspondents abroad as the Government through its agency in London, who could command in Germany, France, and Italy the very best care in the selection of either seeds or cuttings. He thought that one of the most important things at the present moment was to procure the most reliable information from the European countries as to the treatment of phylloxera, so as to be ready to have a thorough inspection of every vine in the colony next spring. He had with him the *Vignerons' Journal* of the latest date, and he noticed that although the phylloxera existed in Germany for twenty years there had been only 181 hectares, equal to 22 acres, destroyed during that time, and in Austria-Hungary they destroyed 181,000 hectares during the same period.

Mr. DE GASSE.—That must be a misprint.

Mr. POUNDS.—In France there were 60,000 acres under the carbon treatment. In Germany a system of zones had been created ever since the discovery of phylloxera, and no vines rooted or cuttings were allowed to be transferred from one zone to the other except under very stringent regulations, and he thought something of the same sort should be adopted here.

The CHAIRMAN, before putting the resolution, desired to make a few remarks. The phylloxera disease had got to Bendigo, and how it got there was purely a matter of speculation; but they knew it was there, and they must do the best they possibly could to eradicate it. Mr. Craike had spoken as if no action had been taken; but Mr. Grossé had told them that immediately it was reported (and he would compliment that gentleman as to being so patriotic as to come to the Department at once, without knowing whether he was going to receive compensation or not) action was taken. Mr. Hopton went to Bendigo, and the Department did not like to create a commission to go all over the country till they knew to what extent the disease had spread. Had it been confined to two or three vines, or even half-an-acre, surely it would have been better to have had those eradicated and have said as little as possible, in order that securities in connexion with vineyards should not be affected at the banks and other places; but of course when it was recognised that large areas of different vineyards were affected then there was no necessity to keep it secret. The Department and its officers took every possible means of dealing with the disease as it then existed, not forgetting the interests of the people owning the vineyards. The

conclusion was that there was only a certain portion of the vineyards that were actually destroyed by the disease, and the remaining portion had a crop on them. Would it have been right to put men in to destroy the whole lot? Was it not paying much more attention to the interests of the vine-growers to allow them to take the crop off before complete eradication? They had not delayed the eradication of the diseased vines, but of those that were bearing a crop, and about which they were not certain whether they were diseased or not. The time had now arrived when it would be much cheaper to eradicate the vines than when the ground was in a solid state from drought. The Government were taking steps to eradicate all vineyards where the phylloxera was found, in the interests of the colony as a whole as well as of the vignerons themselves. Mr. Vahland's motion as to compensation contained the very elements of what the Department intended to do—to deal justly with the people who have suffered; but the question was, "what was justice?" The Act provided now that the owners of all vineyards eradicated would receive compensation to the extent of the value of one year's crop. If they took Mr. Vahland's own words "that a vineyard where the disease had been discovered was doomed," to what extent beyond the one year's crop would a man suffer in having his vineyard eradicated—he would get this year's crop and be paid for the next. That, to his (the Chairman's) mind, was dealing justly in accordance with the present law. He did not think the analogy as to diseased cattle held good; there was an analogy in regard to sanitary matters, in that case the authorities could step in and order a house to be pulled down, and a man had either to suffer pecuniary loss or to spend money in making the required improvements. Mr. West made use of a common expression about the people being sufficiently self-reliant to refuse to be spoon-fed. He disagreed with Mr. West entirely—presuming that it applied to bonuses in the past; it was because those bonuses had not been paid before, and because the encouragement necessary to increase their products was not given earlier, that they found their industries in their present depressed state. It was not the combined effort of the dairymen of this colony that increased their industry, but the encouragement and help that the State gave—he regretted it had not been given to other industries, including the vine-growers. Had it been done, vine-growing might now be in as flourishing a condition as the dairying industry. It had been said that bonuses were in the interest of one particular class, and why should others contribute—there never was a shallower remark made; they could not do anything that would legitimately encourage production without its being a gain to every man in the State. On production in this colony depended the whole of our financial, our social, and our commercial systems, and their

stability depended on production being strengthened. They must economize in one direction and increase production in the other. He thanked the members of the Conference for attending.

MR. DE CASTELLA'S motion was put to the meeting, and carried unanimously.

Dr. MUELLER read the following paper "On the Necessity of greater Uniformity in the Alcoholic Strength of our Wines, and of the greatest possible reduction of the latter":—

Mr Chairman and Gentlemen.

I claim no authoritativeness for the few short remarks I am about to submit to you. You must take them for what they are worth, though I may be pardoned in saying that they are the result of more than 30 years of active connexion with our industry. You will all agree with me that next to producing good and wholesome wines we must aim at making these wines the popular beverage of the Australian people, and by adapting them to the tastes of European wine drinkers, which tastes have been formed by European wines; we must gradually build up an export trade to Europe and to other countries where European wines are drunk. Whilst these propositions will have your concurrence, I am not quite so sure of your agreeing with me when I say that the principal obstacle in the way of our attaining these objects is the want of uniformity in our wines, and their unnecessary alcoholic strength. There are of course exceptions, but throughout Victoria north of the Dividing Range as well as New South Wales and South Australia the so-called light wines contain far too much alcohol, and this is one of the principal reasons why they are not more generally consumed. A man who wants to quench his thirst on a hot summer day or raise his drooping spirits with a pint of wine, than which he could not drink anything more effective and wholesome if of the right sort, will not venture on a second pint, if after the first he experienced dulness and heaviness in the head, and finally an irresistible desire for a nap under the first shady gum tree. This, I feel sure, would be the effect of that first pint in nine cases out of ten, whereas of a wine such as our people want a man ought to be able to take a bottle and go on his way rejoicing. Alcohol, always an evil when taken in excess, becomes doubly so in a hot climate, and we should therefore as a matter of conscience offer as little of it as we can in the light wines intended for ordinary daily use as an article of diet, and even in our liqueur wines—our sherries and ports—dispense it as sparingly as we can. In doing this we not only benefit ourselves by increasing the consumption of our wines in Australia,

but we also confer a moral boon on the community by substituting milder wines for the fiery ports and sherries imported, and in our light wines giving them a beverage on which it is difficult to get drunk, since long before this "happy condition" is attained the wine becomes insipid and is discontinued. Such at least is the experience in the wine countries of Europe, where little if any drunkenness exists.

Strange to relate, and furnishing another instance of antipodean paradox, the very opposite demand is made on the Australian wine-grower by the firms who are now carrying on the great bulk of our export trade. They buy nothing but dry red wines, but not such as are usually drank in Europe. What they require is best described as essence of wine (analogous to the essence of coffee), wines highly alcoholic and inky, into which as much alcohol and colouring matter have been crammed as our rich grapes will yield. It would be absurd to suppose that these wines, absolutely nauseous to a cultivated palate, are placed on the table of the British consumer as they leave our shores. Some great metamorphosis is evidently effected in Mr. Burgoyne's hospital that renders them acceptable to that somewhat fastidious individual known as John Bull. What it consists in is Mr. Burgoyne's business, and no doubt a lucrative one to him. This Australian essence goes a long way in making first-class clarets out of *vins ordinaires* that can be bought at the London docks at 6d. a gallon. As Mr. Burgoyne's wines are sold as Australian products, the Australian grower should be the last to quarrel with this gentleman, who at the present juncture no doubt renders most valuable services to our industry, as he not only takes much of our surplus stock, but actually renders a lot of nondescript wines saleable that would not be so without him or some other person doing his work. But, Mr. Chairman, the very important question must necessarily suggest itself here, shall we always content ourselves with employing the *abundance de richesse* of our strong musts in furnishing for export these essences of wine, for which the demand can only be a limited one, or had we not better resort to methods that will enable us to satisfy the cultivated tastes of European wine drinkers by placing on the markets of Europe wines of a uniform character and strength, exactly similar and, if possible, superior to those European wines, by which for centuries past a special taste has been formed in Europe? It is manifestly foolish on our part to attempt, with our limited supplies and crude methods, to create a taste for our wines in Europe; for a few generations would be required to experiment on, and the Australian bullocks would starve whilst the grass in Europe to feed them on would be growing. But I have no hesitation to say that this grass would never grow. A wave of sobriety is passing now over the civilized world. The coming race will drink wine but eschew

alcohol in excess of any kind, and the habits even of the present generation bear favorable comparison with those of previous ones.

As regards our wines, I have been in the habit of sending small consignments to Europe and also to India with a view of having them submitted to the best judges, and invariably the verdict on light wines has been that the alcohol was too much in evidence, and that there was deficiency of bouquet and a consequent one of the true wine flavour. These wines were the best I could procure, both from my own cellars and from neighbours, and they were all made in the usual manner from must as it had run from the press. It was only by a few wet vintages that I was taught the lesson from which I have since profited to the extent that my European judges have no more faults to find. The must I was obliged to ferment in these years (of which 1891 was the last) did not ever average the specific gravity usual at German and French vintages and fermented out completely in less than six weeks. Instead of furnishing a wine only fit for the still, as I thought it would be, it produced a sound dry wine of excellent bouquet and flavour, almost identical with the best European wines I have ever tasted, and in a cool underground cellar it has kept sound up to this day, improving as it ages, and forming an excellent blend with our ordinary dry wines, with which, when intended for export, it can be fortified to any degree that may be thought desirable for keeping it sound and meeting the tastes of our European customers. Bouquet and flavour are not destroyed by judicious blending, and these are the two great requisites which are usually deficient in our wines and cannot be secured except by fermenting must of low specific gravity.

I therefore have no hesitation in strongly recommending a reduction of gravity and the adoption of a uniform standard not exceeding that of France and Germany (excepting, of course, in wines for Mr. Burgoyne). Our grape juice generally is too rich in glucose and also in colouring, tannic, and extractive matter, whilst frequently deficient in acids, especially the free ones, so indispensable for bouquet. All vinologists are unanimous in declaring it indispensable to success that, wherever we find these elements are not such as we know from experience they must be to make a good wine, we are not only justified but actually compelled to adjust them properly before fermentation sets in or whilst it is going on. Thus by early vintages we reduce glucose and increase acids, by a short vat fermentation we keep out excess of colouring and astringent matter, and finally, if need be, we reduce the gravity of our must by that of Mataro, Sweetwater, and other largely-bearing varieties, or, even if these prove inadequate and we have abundance of acids, by the addition of a few gallons of pure rain or distilled water. This is considered perfectly

legitimate by the best authorities on the subject. A Guyot or a Von Babo would simply laugh at a man who, finding his must too heavy for a light wine, hesitated or omitted to dilute it. In Germany and also in France they often suffer from want of glucose, and have to supply it artificially.

It will probably be some time before scientific wine-making finds favour with our growers and can be practised by many of them. Underground cellarage is an absolute condition of success with delicate light wines, and this is only exceptionally to be met with now. But in the wineries, which it is the intention of the Government to establish in the several wine-growing centres, it would not be difficult under the management of well-qualified experts to show how close we can go in reproducing here the very best of European patterns for light wines, and that year after year in our glorious climate we can get them of uniform quality.

Before a depôt can be established in London with any chance of success we must make sure of a steady supply of wines of superior quality exactly suiting the taste of the British public, and this supply must come from the wineries and must actually be manufactured in them from grapes bought from the growers. It would be a big undertaking requiring much capital, but if properly managed it would be remunerative and under any circumstances confer a great boon on the wine industry.

Mr. C. O'GRADY read the following paper :—

From the very supposed discovery of the phylloxera in Bendigo, the action of the Department or of its officers is most condemnable—their acts in that direction proves the greatest ignorance on their part. I will not put the blame on the one or the other, because I really do not know who is to blame. There is or was a Phylloxera Board, the responsibility should be laid on them, and whatever they recommended should have been carried out to the letter by the Government; if the Government has any doubt on the board's knowledge, let that body be suppressed. The appointment of a local board as executive is wrong, for the members, to gain popularity, would naturally favour the local interest, not the interest of the country at large. The resolution of the local board in recommending compensation is a proof of my theory. A mistake has been done in Geelong in compensating, the same policy must not be followed. An infested vineyard, or the one close by, has but only a short life to live, it can be compared to a mob of cattle attacked with pneumonia or anthrax, if the affected ones are not destroyed and the others treated preventively they will all die. To prevent the spreading of the disease, the Government has the right to destroy or quarantine them. If quarantined, the owner has to support the keeping and treating; if destroyed, the owner is not compensated. As

for the eradicating, if eradication is possible, of the phylloxera, there have been many letters written and devices offered as salvation; of the lot of them, including the officials, there has been only one (Mr. F. de Castella's) that showed any practical means (I mean before this day). He did not try to be a scientific inventor; he recognises that after all the experiments made by specialists in Europe there was only three treatments—submersion, sulphur of carbon, and American vines.

Submersion is very good where practicable. Sulphur of carbon is the best in our case for the present—cost about £4 per acre, not £15 or £20 as was mentioned by one of the phylloxera officials. That treatment, in the case of deep soils, has the inconvenience of sometimes not penetrating far enough, but still it is better than trying to saturate the soil with a salt solution. How many inches of that liquid would it require to go 6 feet?

If it is really the phylloxera that is at Bendigo, how is it that the winged insect has not been found? If the experts cannot discover it after having recognised the subterranean ones there must be something wrong, or they are not up to their business or it does not exist—too much red-tape is put into those researches. Fancy the Department giving instructions for all the vineyards to be inspected in the autumn, when it should be at the beginning of the summer when vegetation is in full work, then the phylloxera spots, if any, could be detected and then later on the subterranean parts inspected, but not when the leaves are drying and falling.

As the phylloxera cannot be efficaciously eradicated the best means to surmount the difficulty is to have American vines—they can be disinfected so efficaciously that no insect will be found attached to them; this is the only remedy to delay the phylloxera invasion, and it is only selfish ignorant ones that are not ready to profit by the experiences and results shown in Europe.

In three words—(1) Surround the Bendigo district with a line 20 miles outside the most distant vineyard from the infested spots. (2) Oblige all vigneron in that circle to treat their vines with sulphide of carbon as would be directed; if refusing to treat them, uproot them; and uprooting places to be treated at high doses. No fruit or cuttings to be transported, those vineyards to be exempt of rates.

I move that the Phylloxera Board be recommended to not make any experiments but work in a sensible way in using the recognised treatments, but not salt solutions—that American disinfected cuttings be allowed to be imported under examination of the Government.

Dr. L. L. SMITH said that the opinion had been expressed that the wine industry could be improved by the bonus system. His view was altogether different; the point was not to cause an

increase of supply but an increased demand. If every vine-grower in the colony knew that his produce would find a ready market there and then, every man would go in for producing the article—the supply was too great already. One speaker had said they were selling wine at 1s. and 1s. 6d. a gallon, and could not get rid of it even at that. All Governments of all countries have helped their vine-growers, because it was a national industry. His view of how the Government should “spoon feed” was to try and find a market for their wines. He did not think the Government should help with 3d. a gallon. The main point was, as with the dairy interest, to get experts who knew what the world wanted, and produce an article to their taste, then the world would buy of it. What Dr. Mueller had done was much to the credit of his ingenuity and power of observation. They needed experts and proper cellar-men with practical and theoretical knowledge to produce those wines. In Austria and Hungary they did just the same. There their vineyards had gone to ruin, and the Government took them in hand and “spoon fed” them. What had it done there? It had made Austro-Hungary one of the greatest wine-producing countries; they were now exporting their wines, and it was by the “spoon feeding.”

Mr. WEST.—Not by bonuses.

Dr. L. L. SMITH.—Mr. West must not try and get out of his statement about spoon feeding. What did they do there? They formed their schools of viticulture. Ten years ago he advocated that in Parliament; not that their sons should be taught by professors from Austria, but that they should be sent to such place to learn the high art of wine-making. It was an art that required the greatest care and attention and knowledge. He had said—“Send your sons to the schools of viticulture, there to learn the science of wine-making and cellar work.” The professors from there had to learn a lot as to the climate here, whereas a young man going from here would have that knowledge, and would bring back the requisite information from abroad. Dr. Mueller said they wanted uniformity, that one word indicated the real ground of success in wine-making. He (Dr. Smith) had recently been in Europe, and had mixed with people there who had a practical knowledge of wine-making, and the one thing they desiderated was uniformity. One wine merchant there said he would send to Victoria for a certain class of claret; he wanted 1,000 cases of it; and he and his customers also say—“That is a beautiful wine, send more cases of it.” When they tasted it they said—“That is not the same wine as I had before; there is something wrong about this wine.” It was uniformity they required, but how were they to get it? He thought the way was to get four of the best cellar-men who had completed their education, say, in Hungary—men who had got their diplomas, and had gone

through many years' study and practical experience; get them here and say—"We will not individualize our wines, but we will district them." Take the Lilydale district, the Bendigo district, the Great Western district, and so on; not one man's wine, but the wine of the district. A cellarman would be appointed for one particular district, and there go in for the highest quality of wine, and he would show to any one visiting how it was done. Each district would have its own particular class of wine. He had visited Germany and found it just the same there; they said they wanted the wine of such and such a district, and every man's taste was educated accordingly. He thought they should not go in for the names of clarets and ports, but have a name of their own and stick to it. He was also in California, where they also had wines known by the peculiarities belonging to particular districts. As to fortifying, he wanted to tell the wine-growers that they were going to their destruction; they would say—"No" to that, but he (Dr. Smith) knew they were beginning to mix stuffs with their wine—the mixing might not matter so much, only they were being found out at home. One of the greatest tasters in London had said that Victoria could compete against all makers till they came to the Château Lafitte, but he (Dr. Smith) found in sending home some wines a little while back that they were not the same wines—they had been "doctored." He had been to a wholesale chemist, and found that saccharine was being imported for the vine-growers. They might say it was a libel and impossible, but he was telling them a few home truths. They must have their wines pure—if they were going to make a name for them it was no use doctoring them, because it would be found out. Although Dr. Mueller talked about suiting the market, directly they resorted to this fortifying and mixing other matters, the discriminating taste at home would find it out. They did not want our strong wines there, and whether they had a depôt or not, or whether they were going to utilize the Colonial Institute as he had suggested, he would say they must have some one at home to represent them. Mr. Burgoyne's name had been mentioned, and he (Dr. Smith) had nothing to say against that gentleman; but he had tried to get an agent for Victoria who said he would give 2s. 9d. cash for the inferior and 4s. for the best wines landed in the docks. This agent asked that you should give £2,000 for buying show cards and so forth; that was Messrs. Gilbey and Co., and they had 2,600 agents immediately ready to take the wine to every place. In the case of Mr. Burgoyne, it would be putting in the hands of one man all the power of regulating the whole market, and at the same time putting his finger to his nose at us if he did not want our wines. He would be selling Australian wines, and if the Victorian wine was not cheap enough we would have to do the best we could.

With a proper system of cellarage with wineries good work could be done, but in the wineries they must have proper cellar-men and experts, not according to our ideas, but for him to give to our wines the taste of the people we want to purchase them.

Mr. CRAIKE read the following paper on "Wineries—are they required?"—

There appears to be a difference of opinion among vine-growers as to the desirability of establishing wineries, and as to whether they would succeed if established. And as the holding of this Conference affords an excellent opportunity of hearing the views of representative wine-growers from all parts of the colony, both for and against the proposal to establish such institutions, I have selected the subject for my paper with a view to prove that wineries are very much required, and are likely to prove as beneficial to the wine industry as the butter factory and creamery have proved to the dairying interests.

It has for years been conceded that the principal drawback to establishing a profitable export trade for our Victorian wines has been the want of uniformity of type, and consequent difficulty of keeping up a supply of the same quality and character year after year.

This is due I think to—1st. The large number of small growers who have neither the cellar accommodation nor the capital to mature their wine till fit for export; and 2nd. To the very common mistake of planting too many varieties of grapes. In white grapes we have Aucarot, Tokay, Baxter's Sherry, Pedro Ximines, Verdeilho Chasselas, Reisling, Gouais, White Hermitage, Pino Blanc, and others; and in red, Sauvignon, Hermitage, Mataro, Malbeck, Grenach, Dolcetto, Burgundy, Leverdun, Carignan, Frontignac, &c., &c. The majority of these varieties are represented in nearly every vineyard of any size in the colony, and, as the wines produced from each are put on the market under the distinctive name of the grape they represent, we have, instead of two or three distinct types of red and white wines, some twenty different varieties to perplex and confuse the English buyer.

It is primarily with the view of remedying this state of matters that it is proposed to establish wineries, so that the produce of the many hundreds of small vineyards may be collected in large central cellars in the various wine-growing districts and classified and blended by experienced experts, and kept under careful treatment till fit for export or local consumption.

A secondary yet most important object is to convert coarse and inferior wines into brandy, thus relieving the market of rubbish that ought never to be offered for sale, and the blending of which to a confiding public does so much to retard a healthy local demand for our wines.

I shall now endeavour to draw the attention of the Conference to a few reasons, which I think go far to prove the affirmative of my query—"are wineries required?"

1st. The production of wine in Victoria has long ago overtaken the local demand; our cellars are full, and the grower has to accept very low prices even for his best wines.

2nd. This production is likely to be more than doubled within the next three years, owing to the extensive planting during the last three seasons in response to the encouragement offered by the bonuses given by the Government; 1,415 new vineyards have been planted covering 12,000 acres, and may be expected to give a return of, say, 200 gallons per acre at five years from planting (or within three years from now), this will give 2,400,000 gallons of wine in addition to the present output.

3rd. Of the 1,415 new vineyards planted under the bonus regulations over 900 are of 10 acres and under, and it may safely be affirmed the majority of the owners are new to the industry, and are probably not aware of the amount of capital required to build cellars, purchase plant, and casks to store till fit for market, and it is to be feared a vast proportion of the wine made will be forced on the market in a crude and immature state, thus intensifying the present very unsatisfactory state of matters.

4th. Assuming that 1,000 of the 1,415 new vineyards have been planted by men having no experience in wine-making, what a manifest advantage it would be to have their vintages superintended by experienced experts, and their wines purchased and taken off their hands directly the fermentation was completed.

5th. Another and perhaps the best reason of all for the establishment of wineries would be the immense increase in the value of the wine produced. If the 2,400,000 gallons were forced on the market already overstocked, it would undoubtedly reduce the present low prices still further, and would in all probability have to be sold at distilling value, say, 6d. to 9d. per gallon, whereas by blending and maturing under expert treatment it could be exported at 2s. 6d. to 3s. per gallon at two years and a half old; at 6d. per gallon (which I believe is about the present price for distilling), 2,400,000 gallons would give £60,000; and, allowing 400,000 gallons for loss by evaporation, &c., in maturing and racking, the 2,000,000 gallons left at 2s. 6d. would give £250,000, a saving to the colony of £190,000 a year. It is also certain that the produce of the old vineyards would be greatly enhanced in value when the present glut is removed by the increased export that would result from the establishment of wineries, thereby further adding to the wealth of the colony. It is, I think, unnecessary to say more in proof of the benefits to be derived by establishing wineries in each of the principal wine-growing centres, although a good deal more could be said on the saving of capital to the small grower in erecting cellars, purchasing

casks, &c., and the economy in working one large cellar instead of hundreds of small ones. These are matters of detail, and could be pointed out in the prospectus of intending companies; but I think it is important to say a word as to the practicability of establishing wineries. Efforts are being made at Rutherglen and I think at Mooroopna to start companies, but much difficulty is experienced to raise a sufficient capital through the growers holding back or only giving a lukewarm support. I think if it were shown that at least two-thirds of the calls on shares taken up by small growers could be paid in kind (either grapes or wines), many would come forward and take up 50 or 100 shares who are meantime afraid to do so owing to the amount of cash they would have to pay in calls. It might also be pointed out that every new vine-grower must necessarily find cash to build cellars and supply casks which would be saved had he a winery to send his produce to, and part of which could be applied to taking up shares in a winery company.

In conclusion, I would say that if wineries are to become an established fact immediate steps must be taken if they are to be of use to the army of new vine-growers enrolled through the bonus system, whose vineyards will commence bearing next year; and I think the Government could greatly assist in rousing the growers to action if they were to send their experts to deliver lectures, and explain the details of the winery scheme in districts where it is proposed to establish them.

Mr. WILLIAMS said that the Numurkah Association with which he was connected thought the offer made through Dr. Smith should be accepted.

Mr. HANS IRVINE said that Dr. Smith referred to certain things for a certain time, but they did not give a guarantee to take a single gallon of wine. He (Mr. Irvine) saw the Messrs. Gilbey when he was at home, and, whether it was Colman's mustard or Epps' cocoa, firms like theirs would not sell any one's produce unless they got £500, and they would not guarantee to sell a single tin in a year. If he could find any firm that could do it properly for 2s. 6d. and 4s. a gallon, he would himself give not £2,000 but £10,000.

The CHAIRMAN said that, so far as the suggestions as to the Viticulture Board were concerned, the Department would be in accord with them. As to phylloxera, they would have to lay some practical suggestions before the Department, and they would receive the fullest consideration as coming from this Conference, and he might add that they would receive the consideration of the Government, because they were as much impressed as he was with the necessity of encouraging every industry that would bring wealth to the country.

The Conference adjourned to go into a committee of the whole.

FRIDAY, 11TH MAY, 1894.

D. MARTIN, Esq., Secretary for Agriculture, in the Chair.

The CHAIRMAN called upon the Chairman of the meeting held the previous evening to bring up the report of that meeting.

MR. HANS IRVINE (as Chairman of the previous meeting) said that he believed the meeting of the evening had not been held in vain, for it was recognised that the Conference was held for a purpose, and had that meeting been put off till morning it would have been a mistake, as time was saved. What had been done at that meeting was done in the broad spirit of give and take, and anything that the Conference might object to in their report, if feasible or sound, would be met in a proper manner, and it would result in something valuable to be laid before the Minister. He (Mr. Irvine) would call upon Mr. Bear, as secretary of the meeting, to read the report of that meeting.

MR. BEAR read the following:—"Re Constitution of an Elective Board of Viticulture, minutes of meeting of committee appointed at Conference on the 10th May, 1894, held at the Treasury Buildings, at Eight p.m., the same day. Present—Mr. Hans Irvine, in the Chair; Members: J. West, F. de Castella, C. Craike, J. Pounds, T. Moore, F. Grossé, Dr. A. Mueller, W. Vahland, H. Daly, S. Thompson, C. French, R. Bragato, and J. W. Bear (Secretary)."

TITLE OF NEW BOARD.

Proposed by MR. H. IRVINE—"That the new Board be entitled the 'Government Viticultural Board.'" Seconded by MR. WEST, and carried.

ELECTORAL DISTRICTS.

Proposed by MR. MOORE—"That the colony be divided into the following nine viticultural districts:—(1) Rutherglen and Murray Valley; (2) North Eastern; (3) Goulburn Valley; (4) Lilydale; (5) Geelong; (6) Bendigo and Loddon; (7) Mildura; (8) Great Western and Wimmera; (9) Dunolly and St. Arnaud." Seconded by MR. WEST, and carried.

NUMBER OF MEMBERS.

Proposed by MR. WEST—"That each of the above districts be entitled to elect one representative as a member of the Board, and the Government to appoint one nominee." Seconded by MR. MOORE, and carried.

VOTING QUALIFICATION.

Proposed by Mr. WEST—"That the voting qualification be fixed as follows :—From 2 to 50 acres of vines, one vote ; from 50 to 100 acres, two votes ; over 100 acres, three votes. Growers residing at too great a distance from any centre to become a member of the local association, and entitled to vote, provided they register their name, address, and other particulars required with the Department of Agriculture, and pay an annual fee of 5s." Seconded by Mr. CRAIKE, and carried.

VOTERS' LIST.

Proposed by Mr. WEST—"That the secretary or president of each association shall, at least, once a year prepare a list of voters who shall have paid their contribution to such association for the then current financial year ; such list to contain the name and address of the owner or occupier, position and area of vineyard. The same to be open for inspection at the post office or secretary's address at least fourteen days before the election is held, a copy of the same to be forwarded to the Minister of Agriculture." Seconded by Mr. VAHLAND, and carried.

SERVICES OF MEMBERS.

Proposed by Mr. WEST—"That the services of the members be honorary, their travelling expenses in attending the Board's meetings and its business to be reimbursed. A secretary to be appointed from one of the Departments of the public service, and to elect a president and treasurer yearly. The qualifications of members to be the same as that of ordinary voters." Seconded by Mr. CRAIKE, and carried.

FUNCTIONS OF THE BOARD.

Proposed by Mr. WEST—"That the functions of the Board be to adopt any measures of a progressive nature calculated to benefit the wine-growing industry ; to appoint, where it may seem expedient, honorary, local, advisory committees ; to appoint experts to visit the viticultural districts and to give lectures, special attention being directed to the study of the phylloxera and other diseases of the vine, and to have the control of the operations for the eradication of the same ; to control and manage operations relating to the interests of the vine-grower ; to establish a reference library consisting of the best works on viticulture and wine-making ; and to collect and exchange certain pamphlets and papers relating to the wine industry.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

That a conference be called by the Board at least once a year, the same to be held in each district in turn, the date of said conference to be fixed six months in advance, and an annual report of its operations to be presented by the Board on that occasion.

EXPERIMENTAL STATION OR VINEYARD.

That an experimental station be established at which all the known varieties of vines in the colony be cultivated to the number of not less than 50 vines of each variety, and their proper classification and naming and the recording of the exact description in regard to their characteristics, products, and diseases be carried out. Seconded by Mr. DALY, and carried.

VITICULTURAL EDUCATION.

Proposed by Mr. WEST—"That, in order that our youth shall receive full and proper training in the arts of viticulture and wine-making, it shall be the duty of the Board to hold an annual examination by a Board of Examiners at which first and second class certificates shall be awarded; that an annual travelling scholarship, open for competition to all young vigneron in the colony, be competed for, the successful competitor to be sent to Europe for a period of three years in order to complete his viticultural education, and that on his return he shall be engaged to impart his knowledge to others for a certain time as the Board may direct." Seconded by Mr. DE CASTELLA, and carried.

The CHAIRMAN.—This, I take it, is the report of the committee, and the proper course is to present it to the general body for adoption or otherwise. I will submit each proposition separately, and it will be open for each member to speak to the motion.

Mr. CASTELLA moved—"That the report be taken as a whole."

The CHAIRMAN.—All the members were not present, but I will put it to the meeting.

Mr. DALY moved—"That the resolutions be received and adopted."

A MEMBER protested against the report being taken as final. There were no representatives of the Central Vine-growers' Association or of the Rutherglen body present at the meeting. That was the result of previous arrangement, as they did not think there would be an evening sitting. That being the case, it was very evident that the Rutherglen district was out of that, and had no say in the matter. He put it to the meeting to say whether it was fair that Rutherglen should be ignored. He thought the

Rutherglen people would favour the general principles, but he was sure they would object to the basis of representation. He had asked the other day whether there were any figures, but they were not forthcoming. The meeting would be surprised to find out, on comparing the areas under vines, the differences there were, and, unless that was looked at, it would cause annoyance in the future, as a district with, perhaps, 10,000 acres would have only one representative the same as small places. He would recommend that the question of representation be discussed.

Mr. CRAIKE seconded the motion. He said it was arranged at the breaking up of yesterday's meeting that they were to meet in the evening. It was no use wasting time to go over the whole thing item by item. He was surprised that so important a place as Rutherglen was not represented at the meeting last night.

A MEMBER said it was because they did not think that anything effective could be done.

Mr. WEST would not favour the idea of sending the Rutherglen people away with the idea that they were ignored, but the question was fully discussed last night, and there had been a splendid spirit of patriotism shown. Were the members of the Board going to represent their own districts only or the best interests of the colony? The time had come when a man should sink the interest of his own district only. In California they had now about 160,000 acres under vines, and there were only nine men and nine districts in connexion with the Board. Some of the vigneronns there had twice the number of acres of any man here, but they had been loyal to the country, and to-day the industry there was an example to the world. He would ask the Rutherglen people to keep up to that patriotism that they had shown in the past.

A MEMBER said that Rutherglen had something like 9,000 acres, and then there was Nathalia, he did not know the acreage, and there were other places that were small and there was such a vast difference between them that something should be given to them. According to the proposed scheme, they had only three men given to them out of seventeen.

Mr. VAHLAND thought it would be well to show how it was that one man was given to Rutherglen. It was at first thought that there would be thirteen members on the Board and Rutherglen was to have had two representatives; but then it was thought that for the sake of cheapness eight would be a better number so that every one would think—"Well, if I do not go there will be no quorum," and so every one would attend the meetings. He held entirely with Mr. West that they should not insist on the representation on the area under vines in certain districts. It was a national work, and the Board should legislate for the whole of the colony. He would have no objection to granting two or three members to Rutherglen as they could not alter a vote, they

would still be in a minority, and therefore their influence would be as good by one representative as by three. He thought Rutherglen ought to be satisfied as it was proposed at present. It was not a matter like the laws of the Medes and Persians. There would be an annual conference of wine-growers, or at any rate of the Board, and whatever representations they made the Minister would take notice of.

Mr. CASTELLA was not present last night, but Mr. Irvine had told him that the representation would be by acreage and that would give Rutherglen four members. His own district would be satisfied with two. It had always been a sore subject with the old Viticulture Board that Rutherglen had only one member, representing as it did about five-eighths of all the wine grown in the colony, and Mr. Irvine had told him (Mr. Castella) that Rutherglen was entitled to more than one.

Mr. O'GRADY said he had been sent by the Rutherglen people to carry out their views. In the past they thought they had been unjustly dealt with by having only one member on the Board of Viticulture. He was not present last night, but he understood that the basis of representation would be on the acreage system. Had he been present last night he would have been outvoted, but he must show his people that he had tried his best for them.

A MEMBER said that in any scheme which was proposed by them they did not seek to take advantage of any other district, and they did not base it altogether on the acreage system. If it were decided to allow up to 3,000 acres one representative, from 3,000 acres to 8,000 acres two representatives, and 8,000 acres and upwards three representatives, that would give Rutherglen three, Goulburn Valley two, Barnawartha, Bendigo, and Great Western one (but in a very short time they would have two), Dunolly one, Lilydale one, and Geelong, which had been an important wine-growing district, was entitled to one. If that scheme were brought in that would be eleven members, and Barnawartha and Bendigo would soon be over 3,000 acres, and then they would have two each.

Mr. CRAIKE said last night it was a matter between the Viticulture Board and the Conference. He could not see what the acreage had to do with representation. Had that been carried out, it would have meant that Rutherglen would have had three members, and by taking in some of the Murray Valley district they would have had six or seven members. It was seen that that would increase the Board to tremendous dimensions, so that if the vine-growing went on as it had done they would soon have a Board of 25 members. Mr. West advocated having a small body with a view to economy, and for the sake of having good work done. He (Mr. Craike) had advocated Rutherglen having two members, and it was carried last night; but the effect was

altered by the representation of Dr. Mueller, who said it would give Rutherglen two members and the North-Eastern district none, and so it was altered.

Mr. CASTELLA moved, as an amendment—"That Rutherglen should have two representatives on the new Board."

The CHAIRMAN suggested that the report be adopted, with the exception of the amendment.

Mr. VAHLAND proposed that Mr. Daly should withdraw his motion for the present.

A MEMBER said that with regard to the proposal to pass the whole of the resolutions, with the exception of the representation, he thought the Rutherglen people would be agreeable to that.

The CHAIRMAN.—"That the committee's report, as read, be received and adopted, with the exception of the clause having reference to the number of representatives for each district." Carried.

Mr. WEST moved—"That the districts be the following :—(1) Rutherglen and Murray Valley ; (2) North-Eastern ; (3) Goulburn Valley ; (4) Lilydale ; (5) Geelong ; (6) Bendigo and Loddon ; (7) Mildura ; (8) Great Western and Wimmera ; (9) Dunolly and St. Arnaud ; and that one representative be allowed for each district."

Mr. VAHLAND seconded the motion.

Mr. P. DE CASTELLA thought in mentioning the Lilydale district it should be mentioned in a larger way, as they were vineyards in Eltham and Yarra Glen. He did not see why Mildura should have a representative, as it was a teetotal place.

Mr. CRAIKE moved an amendment. He opposed Mildura having a representative, and he would move—"That Mildura be left out, and Rutherglen have two representatives."

Mr. WILLIAMS seconded the amendment.

Mr. IRVINE said the only difference was that of Mildura being excluded and Rutherglen having another representative. He objected, that it was a national business. Mildura was a teetotal place, but there were many people there who drank liquor. He thought they should include Mildura. As for Rutherglen having two members he had always favoured that idea, and in his proposal he had provided for giving it three, and, shortly, four members ; but he thought that if it was altered at the next yearly conference of delegates they would soon put it right. What was necessary now was to take effective measures to support the industry. He regretted that the Rutherglen people were not represented last night, but it was distinctly understood that there would be a meeting. He (Mr. Irvine) asked the Minister to mention it, and he did so. They must not take a parochial view of the matter, and Rutherglen, he was sure, would step into the breach and say they would act for the country as a whole. They had had a

chance of showing why they should have another member. He himself had given way last night because the majority must rule, but he would leave the districts as they were, and let the matter come up again at some other conference. He would support the nine districts, and let Rutherglen have another representative. At first it was decided to have eight districts, but it was increased to nine in deference to Dr. Mueller.

Mr. CRAIKE said he would withdraw his amendment, as the feeling of the meeting was to give Mildura a representative.

A MEMBER was of opinion that Rutherglen should have three members, but he was content to accept a compromise. He thought Mildura should have a representative. His object in addressing the meeting was to bring under notice a resolution passed by the Central Vine-growers' Association, who thought they were entitled to have a member on the Board. They represented large interests, not perhaps as growers, although there were many growers among them, but merchants' interests. Many of the interests of the merchants and growers were identical. He would move as an amendment—"That the Central Board of Vine-growers have a representative on the Board."

The President of the Rutherglen Association said he was sure his constituents would accept the proposals of the meeting. He was glad to see that Mildura was to be represented.

Mr. F. DE CASTELLA thought it would be better if, instead of calling the Mildura district "Mildura," it were called the "Mallee district," as there were many places in the mallee where vines would be planted in time to come. He would move that as a resolution.

Mr. IRVINE objected to giving any more representatives or interfering with the division of the districts. He was sure the Board, when appointed, if they thought the Central Vine-growers' Association should have a representative, would see to it. The majority of the gentlemen connected with that association were represented through their districts, but, no doubt, if the Board thought it wise for them to have a representative, they would see to it. He did not think they should go outside the nine districts.

Mr. P. DE CASTELLA seconded the amendment. On account of the distillation there were many merchants who would be interested in the brandy business, and he thought they should have representation.

The CHAIRMAN put the amendment—"That the Central Vine-growers' Association be allowed one representative." Lost.

Mr. IRVINE had great pleasure in moving—"That the districts determined on should be accepted with the addition that Rutherglen should have another member, in view of their having about 9,000 acres in vines."

Mr. DALY seconded the motion.

Mr. WEST said that, as the spirit of the meeting seemed to be in favour of that, and as he had no cast-iron opinions on the subject, he would withdraw his amendment.

The CHAIRMAN put the motion—"That Rutherglen be allowed two representatives." Carried unanimously.

Mr. MOORE said that there was one thing which should not be forgotten, which was the question of ways and means, and the question was, how was it to be solved?

Mr. BUCKLEY would move, in connexion with that matter—"That all land devoted to viticultural purposes by the Government be vested in the Board, and that they have the right to levy a small rate on all vineyards for the purpose of carrying out the work of the Board." They had had a board of advice long enough. He thought unjust blame had often been given to the Board, because the Government took no notice of their reports. He was sure the late Board had done their very best for the industry, and yet nothing good had been the result because the system was wrong. He thought it would be better to give the new Board their own lands and let them have their own revenue and work like the School of Agriculture. Let them have a site for a college in each of its centres, and let them show to other districts that schools can be worked. They should be allowed to levy a small rate for the purpose of inspection and for the purpose of dealing with phylloxera.

The CHAIRMAN said that no sites were permanently reserved. The site at Dunolly was temporarily reserved, and at Rutherglen also.

Mr. CAUGHEY asked if the Board were appointed and carried on under regulations, would those actions be permanent?

The CHAIRMAN.—The proposals now being made, if carried, would require an Act of Parliament.

Mr. IRVINE thought one thing must not be overlooked, and that was to ask the Government to give power to the Board to carry out its acts. That must go as a recommendation to the Minister, that the Board is to be constituted with powers.

Mr. WILLIAMS thought that, perhaps, Mr. Buckley had lost sight of the grant in aid, which used to be £1,000 but had been cut down to £500.

Mr. BUCKLEY moved—"That in all important vine-growing districts lands be set apart for the purpose of the establishment of viticultural schools, and that such lands be vested in an Elective Board, and further that power be given to the Board to rate vineyards in proportion to their acreage for the purpose of carrying out inspection, eradication of diseased vines, and other measures authorized by the Act appointing such Board, and that the amount of such rate be augmented by subsidy from the Government at the rate of pound for pound."

Mr. VAHLAND seconded the resolution. He thought the Board should have power to levy a rate. If the vine-growers would not help themselves they should not go the Government to do everything for them. If they subscribed £1,000 he did not think the Government would have any objection to subscribe another £1,000, and that would be a good fund to start the Board with. He thought there should be in the resolution a provision for compensation to be paid for vines to be rooted out. He thought the Board, when established, should have power to carry out those things without going to the Government.

Mr. P. DE CASTELLA said he thought that any men planting vineyards after this should not be paid compensation, as they went into the business with their eyes open. What had been done in the past was different from what had to be done in the future.

Mr. F. DE CASTELLA thought that would be dealt with in the phylloxera proposals to be considered further on.

The CHAIRMAN put the motion. Carried.

Mr. VAHLAND would like again to bring up the matter of American resisting vines. He understood that some seed had already been sent for; but, if Mr. de Castella and Signor Bragato were correct, that was the wrong method of getting the vines; they should send for cuttings, and, as the Government were in a better way to command the genuine article than private individuals, he thought it would be as well for the Conference to settle which was the article to send for, and the Government should take the matter in hand, so as to provide the cuttings at the best possible time.

Mr. F. DE CASTELLA said that, with regard to the whole question of the importation of cuttings or seed, it was important as far as the Government were concerned. He thought there was no immediate hurry, as it was now the spring at home, and if they wrote home for the cuttings the vines were just bursting into leaf, and they could not get cuttings for about eight months. With regard to the advisability of getting cuttings, there was a great deal to be said. Certain persons had pointed out that it was better to have cuttings than seed; but he must say he could not agree with the condemnation of the importation of seed. No doubt the vines from seeds sometimes did not have the exact character of the parent vine, but that was because of their being hybridized by the pollen from other vines. The matter had been threshed out in Switzerland, and they had determined to adopt seeds instead of cuttings. He would read from the report of M. Jean Dufour to Department of Agriculture, Canton de Vaud, Switzerland, March, 1887, as follows:—"Is one sure to obtain by means of seeds the American types one wishes? This is an objection which deserves to be closely examined. It is possible that propagation by seeds does not give in the same measure as propagation by

cuttings—absolute security—as far as the conservation of those characters is concerned which are inherent, not to a large class of plants, but to certain types, or one might almost say to certain individuals, when dealing with immunity from phylloxera. An American vine, isolated amongst native (European) ones, is exposed to be crossed by many of them. Should insects or wind convey pollen from the European to the American flowers, hybridization may take place. The seeds subsequently gathered on the American vine will give plants whose resistant qualities will be generally weakened by the influence of the European blood (sap?). But all American seeds are, fortunately, not gathered under such unfavorable circumstances. When received from large American nurseries where few European vines exist, or directly from America, we can look upon the plants raised from them with less suspicion. Those anatomical characters which belong to the best American roots, and which are responsible for their resistance, are, like many others, hereditary. The seeds of these resistant types reproduce, therefore, resistant vines. If the seeds are crosses between two resistant sorts—*Rupestris* and *Cordifolia*, for example—they will yet produce plants which are able to brave the phylloxera with impunity. All crosses are not unfavorable as far as we are concerned. Our only danger lies in sowing seeds which are crosses between two sorts, of which one is resistant and the other not so. Here, however, we are protected by the minute study of the young vines obtained from seed. We can, in this way, distinguish between pure types, crosses between two resistant types, and crosses between a resistant and a non-resistant one.” It went on to say that by a careful selection, based on the anatomical character of the plant and leaf, vines could be selected which were phylloxera resisting from those which were not. If 1,000 seeds were planted of one vine they might give 700 young plants, and among them there might be perhaps 400 which possessed in a full degree the anatomical characteristics of that vine, and there might be others which departed from the type, and that would lead to the belief that they were hybridized. There might be some more vigorous than others, and by discarding all but the most vigorous there would be perhaps 300 true plants, good for cuttings, and in the space of, say, three years be capable of giving many thousands of cuttings from which they could start their reconstitution. The danger of importing cuttings was the same here as in Switzerland. Switzerland was an old vine-growing land, and the authorities in France agreed that they were fully up to date in all questions, and they refer to the cultivation in many parts as model cultivation. The vine-growers of Victoria could not go wrong in adopting the same methods as they had done. There was a great deal to learn, and

there were many admirable propositions put forward in that country which would be useful in guiding them. The chief objection was that it was establishing a dangerous precedent if cuttings were allowed to be imported. It would bring about a great danger from the spread of phylloxera, and if they could get satisfactory results from seed he did not see why they should introduce an element of danger. He would now tell what was done on the subject last night. It was agreed that the subject was such a large one that they could not bring forward any detailed proposals in so short a time. It was suggested that there should be a settled policy for the dealing with it, so a committee was appointed, consisting of Messrs. Craike, Vahland, Grossé, Bragato, Martin (Secretary for Agriculture), French, and himself. He (Mr. De Castella) would move—"That, in consequence of the danger of delay in the constitution of the new Board, and of its not being in working order sufficiently soon to deal with the vital question of phylloxera, it is recommended that the following committee be appointed to draft out a complete phylloxera policy which will guide us as to the means we are to adopt in combating the pest. Names of committee are as follow:—Messrs. Craike, Vahland, Grossé, F. de Castella, French, Bragato, and the Secretary for Agriculture." The following was a short outline of some of the more important elements of such a policy:—

"(1) That reconstitution on American resistant stocks being recognised as the only complete solution to the difficulty, steps be taken to encourage the employment of these vines by the dissemination of useful information on the subject, and by the establishment of collections where a check can be kept on the authenticity of these vines. (2) That steps be taken to give as much time as possible to vigneronns for the important work of reconstitution, and with this end in view that—1st. The spread of the insect from district to district be prevented by more strict supervision being kept over the circulation of cuttings, and rooted vines be prohibited; 2nd. That some similar system to the extinction system be adopted to prevent the spread of the disease from vineyard to vineyard in the same district, and to localize outbreaks within the narrowest possible limits." The committee also proposed to consider the question of compensation, and the levying of rates on vineyards. It was a big question, and one that no time should be lost about. He was of opinion with regard to the tax on vineyards, or compulsory insurance, that something should be done in the way of relieving the poor vine-growers by causing the vineyards to be rated by the shire councils at a more fair valuation, instead of them being rated high for the benefit of the councils, and their improvements being taxed in an unjust way. If the amount were devoted, not to the shire council who had no right to it, but to the establishment of a fund to meet the dangers

to which the vignerons were exposed, and for compensation, that would be right. Compensation should not be given too lavishly in the future. The Bendigo people had suffered great hardships, but people were now going into the matter with their eyes open, and if they did not reconstitute their vineyards they must not expect compensation for a few years.

Mr. BUCKLEY seconded the resolution. He thought there was danger in bringing in cuttings, and seedlings would be better. He thought that the seeds should be confined at first to Macedon. He knew they would grow under a verandah, but not in the open ground. The danger of hybridization would be great, and there would always be that danger, and consequently the danger of a weakening of stock in their districts.

Mr. F. DE CASTELLA said as regarded the hybridization in thickly-planted districts it would only be at first because they would produce from cuttings after the first seedlings. The assistance of seeds would only be required for the purpose of bringing the resistant vines into Victoria. As to having them at Macedon, it was always the rule in bringing cuttings from one district to another that the districts should be alike, and whether shallow districts would be the better of cuttings from Macedon or not, they would not be likely to do well. It was well known that phylloxera could not exist on the seed of the vine. It was not possible that the Government could provide all the plants required for every one, but they could keep a check on the persons selling them, so that they could not sell a vine that was worthless for a good one.

Mr. FRENCH said it must be understood that when the seeds were raised at home they were not raised in a haphazard manner. Every seed would grow and would be left to the mercy of millions of insects; but, where raised in a proper manner, if the hybridization should take place it would only alter the fruit a little, but it was doubtful whether the character of the vine would be so altered as to render the vine non-resistant.

Signor BRAGATO said that some years ago it was proved that the resisting qualities of the American vines were through the thick pores of the wood. A gentleman in Bordeaux planted the seeds, and the cuttings of the seeds, none of them, gave the same type as the stock. It would take at least five or six years to have a cutting so that it could be grafted. Each vegetation would be stronger than the previous. Although the summer was not hotter it was thoroughly proved that the pores were not identical with the stock the seeds were produced from, so he thought it would be necessary not to allow the cuttings instead of seed. Those people who preferred the cuttings should have them under Government supervision. It would be safe to have cuttings sent from uninfected districts. On the continent there were many districts where the vines

were not affected, and, for safety, they could be disinfected here and not received by private individuals, but under the supervision of the Government; and a nursery could soon be raised that would supply a growth of cuttings.

Mr. P. DE CASTELLA thought that what Mr. Grossé had in his vineyard was now a matter of ancient history. The chances were that the seedlings which were spoken of in Bordeaux were hybridized, but now precautions were taken to prevent that by means of linen bags and so on. He thought on account of the experience of the early days the raising of objections to the introduction of seeds was a failure, and he thought they should rather take the experience of Switzerland as their guide.

Mr. GROSSÉ said in those places the nurseries were still carried on, and Mr. Lillimuir was still supplying all over Europe.

A MEMBER suggested that the Government should write to the Viticultural School at Montpellier and get the best possible information on the subject; he held it was a subject that should be gone into very carefully.

Mr. BUCKLEY thought there was one danger in making first nurseries in vine-growing districts. If the disease broke out there, would the other districts be willing to take the cuttings? He thought it would be better to confine it to, say, Macedon, and then distribute to the centres and let them radiate throughout their own districts and no others. There could be a thousand seedlings at Macedon raised for one in Rutherglen. The seedlings sent to Rutherglen should be only used in Rutherglen, and so on, so as to prevent introducing phylloxera from one district to another. It would be better for them to radiate from one uninfected centre such as Rutherglen was.

Mr. F. DE CASTELLA said he had already made provision for that by planting in vineyards where American vines were a small number of European vines so that the phylloxera could be detected. There was absolutely no danger of spontaneous generation of phylloxera on seedling vines. It would appear rather on European than American vines, and he had provided for that by the test vines, say, every tenth row. With reference to asking for information from the College of Montpellier, it would be a good thing. The vigneron had a good deal of information, but they could not have too much, and he thought that if the result of their deliberations were sent home and criticism were invited that would be a good thing too.

The CHAIRMAN put to the meeting—"That the committee's report be adopted." Carried.

Mr. CAUGHEY mentioned that, with regard to the school at Rutherglen, if steps were not taken time would be lost. While all were in accord that the school should be established, the subject had been on the tapis for nearly six years. The plans were

all drawn out for the cellar ; there was the vineyard itself, which would be in full bearing next year, and the place would be ready for the teaching of scholars from the beginning to the end of viticulture. The question was, were the Government, after having laid out £2,000 on the place, going to leave it to become a white elephant, or were they going to get it into such order as to make it of value to the Viticultural Board? If schools were to be established there should be one to show all the others how to manage. He would move—"That in the opinion of this Conference the Government should be urged to proceed with the cellar at Rutherglen."

The President of the Rutherglen Association supported the motion. There was an urgent necessity for having the school established. In the matter of having the American stock the school would be of advantage in making experiments in reference to the different kinds of resisting stocks to suit the various kinds of grape. That would be the place where those experiments ought to be tried. It was in the schools where those things should be done, and then the information disseminated among all the wine-growers. The schools would be the places to get the practical experience of others, and that was a thing the want of which had been a serious drawback to the industry. If the schools had been established years ago the vignerons would have been further ahead than they were now. Then the schools would be the places where it would be known where to find the proper kinds of grapes. Sometimes on going to one man's vineyard he would say he has one kind of grape, and then when another vineyard was visited the same grape was quite different, but at the schools people could go and get the true varieties.

Mr. WEST thought that this was virtually work for the new Board. Principles had been laid down for the guidance of the Board, and one of those was the establishment of an experimental station, and he thought the matter could be left to the Board. Having organized the new body it might safely be left to them to carry out the work.

Mr. P. DE CASTELLA said, as a member of the old Board, he had been three times to Rutherglen to see the school, and he supposed if he went a fourth time it would be still in the same position. The idea now was to save a year. Last year there was only £30 taken, and this year it was £40. The school was there now, and the old Board was ready to do the work, and it was a pity to lose another season.

Mr. WEST presumed that the old Board carried on till the new Board was appointed.

Mr. CAUGHEY asked whether the old Board were to get no credit for what it had done. They wanted to point out that the

sooner the place was made to pay the better. There were already about three years lost. He thought if the gentlemen present approved of the schools, as the Rutherglen school had been gone on with so long, the Minister should be urged to go on with the cellar.

Mr. CRAIKE said that last night Mr. Webb had said that any resolution of this meeting should receive his best attention, and he (Mr. Craike) thought the hearty support of this meeting should be given to the old Board. The new Board might not be appointed for four or six months, and it might be too late for next year's crop. He thought it was a great disgrace to the colony that the grapes were being given away. There were all the appliances at the school and they were losing money. The new Board could do no better than the old Board had done, but all the members at the meeting could give their support to the movement.

Mr. IRVINE said they all agreed with the proposal, but Mr. West pointed out that the machinery clauses drafted last night referred to it specially. It was simply a matter of detail for the new Board. They recognised what the old Board had done, but they had had no power, and they wanted a new Board with power. The old Board did not advance anything as their own opinions, but for the whole of the vignerons, and there was no reflection intended to be cast on the old Board.

The President of the Rutherglen Association mentioned that the Minister had said that there might be some things which might be brought in under regulations, and, if that could be done, why wait? If they could only get the matter of the cellar under the regulations they should do it, and therefore all present should support the motion.

Mr. WILLIAMS thought it did not matter how soon or how late the new Board was appointed; in the meantime the cellar should be gone on with in the interests of the industry. There were plenty of vineyards at Dookie and other places, but it was the cellar management that should be gone into, and though it had been advocated for the last six years and the plans were prepared nothing further had been done.

Mr. POUNDS said that the Minister had called them together to make recommendations, and yet now it seemed that everything was to be left to the new Board. There was nothing in the motion giving the Board power. He thought they should have plenary powers, and if everything was left to the Board there must be election and so forth. Irrespective of whether the Board would deal with the subject at once, they did not know who might be the members. They had the pleasure of being present with those who were on the present Board, and any representation coming from this Convention should come with weight and should cause the Government and the officers of the Department to

consider the recommendations. He thought there should be a school with proper equipment and a teaching staff to give the highest education possible in the colony; but he thought it would be advisable that better teaching should be given in the existing colleges, as primary teaching, and there should also be power for the residents in the neighbourhood to be admitted for instruction, partial or complete, so that they could get certificates and afterwards go to the college of viticulture at Rutherglen and have their education completed, if they desired.

A MEMBER thought it was a matter of urgency. The Board would do anything that could be done to get the school at Rutherglen, and it was generally admitted that there should be a school with the best technical education in vine-growing and cellarage to be given. He was sure it would be a great success financially speaking, and if accommodation could be given it would soon give a bonus that would keep the whole college going.

Mr. CAUGHEY would point out that it would take some time to advertise for tenders and to get the buildings erected, and the new Board would perhaps be appointed, but still it would be a pity for the old Board to take no action until the next vintage. He would therefore move—"That in the opinion of this committee the Government should be urged to proceed with the cellar."

The CHAIRMAN.—Money would have to be voted for the purpose.

Mr. CAUGHEY agreed to that; but it must be admitted that it was a matter of urgency, and it was believed that the schools would be of the greatest assistance to the vine-growing industry.

Mr. WILLIAMS asked if the Chairman could inform the meeting if £1,250 was passed last year for the work?

The CHAIRMAN.—No. I will now put the motion. Carried.

Mr. POUNDS moved—"That this Convention recommends that arrangements be made forthwith with the existing agricultural colleges for the formation of special viticultural classes under experienced instructors to give thorough practical and theoretical instruction in field and cellar management, and to form experimental plots of vines of all varieties obtainable, and that careful observations of their suitability for cultivation, distinguishing those best suited for wine-making, should be made and published." He thought such schools would form primary schools of instruction in viticulture which would train up young men suitable for cellar management. It was easy to grow the vines, but the difficulty was the cellar management. He thought it would be taking advantage of the existing opportunities. They had the area in vines and the machinery, and everything that might be necessary for practical teaching, and if his proposal were adopted it would form a large number of students who had

passed through the elementary studies. Rutherglen was properly equipped, and if this were done arrangements could be made for non-resident students to be admitted. That would increase the range of men who could be gradually educated in the higher branches.

Mr. CRAIKE thought that would be going the wrong way to work. The college was under the Council of Agriculture, and he thought it not wise to ask the Government to interfere. It would be better to ask the Council of Agriculture to make the necessary arrangements.

Mr. POUNDS thought that that council was, to an extent, on its trial, the same as the Viticulture Board, and he thought it was a matter of consideration as to how far the Viticulture Board could have control over the colleges or have some use of them. He understood the question had been a question of funds, and it would be a question for the Viticulture Board to make recommendations to the Minister. Those present were there at the invitation of the Minister, and they might leave it to him to adopt or reject as he thought fit, but he (Mr. Pounds) thought a mere expression of opinion might do good.

Mr. IRVINE asked did not the last speaker think the Council of Agriculture would shelve the matter?

Mr. POUNDS did not think so, because they had practically made all the equipment for the instruction, and had the instructors. He did not know what had been done at Longerenong, but he understood they had nearly all the machinery necessary to carry it out. He did not think it would delay the establishment of the college at Rutherglen for an hour, but he thought it would supply them with men who had received primary instruction and be of use to them. It would be the same as grammar schools to the university or colleges.

Motion lapsed for want of a seconder.

Mr. WEST moved—"That this meeting of delegates approve of the principle of an alteration being made in the Local Government Act with a view of giving councils the option of making their rates upon the unimproved value of the land." At present it was made on improvements, and to all new industries like viticulture and orchard growing it was unfair. He thought some resolution should be passed to that effect.

Mr. CRAIKE asked what was meant by giving the option? He thought they should be compelled to do so.

Mr. WILLIAMS seconded the motion. It was similar to one passed by the horticulturists some time ago. In seconding the resolution, however, he would add that it should be made compulsory.

Mr. WEST said he moved this because there was always merit in giving an option in a matter, and in the existing state of public

feeling it would be impossible to pass an Act that would make it compulsory all round. The cities would be against it, but if it were made so that it were optional with municipal districts then such districts as Rutherglen and Great Western and Goulburn Valley would feel the pinch of the shoe and adopt the principle, and gradually other places would adopt it.

Mr. BUCKLEY thought it was necessary to speak on the subject. It seemed to be forgotten that the valuations were often made the basis of bank advances to land-owners, and if the valuations were reduced so as to bring vineyards down to the value of grass land he could say from experience, for he had had applications for the improved value for the purposes of advance, if the valuation was reduced from £1,000 to £100 the chance would be reduced of the owner getting an advance. At the present time vigneronns used the roads more than stock raisers or growers of cereals, and if a distinction were made what would be done? Throw other people into the industry and swamp out those in it at present. If an advantage were given to the vine-grower over the cereal grower, it would be an inducement to others to go into it.

Mr. WILLIAMS thought it would be quite right to do so.

Mr. BUCKLEY did not think so, unless provision was made for them. It would not attain the object intended, for if, in a district like Rutherglen, in the course of time the rates dropped off the vineyards, they would fall on the other land held by the same people. The municipalities would not reduce the total rates, and, if they had to raise the same revenue, they must raise it from grass land, and the same people who had it struck off vines would have it put on their grass land.

Mr. WILLIAMS said that in no instance in his district would the banks or financial institutions make any advance on the improved value—they took the average value for the district.

Mr. IRVINE said he never knew a case where the banks went beyond the face value of the land. He had a small block of land just in the township, and some time ago he was speaking to another gentleman who had between 7,000 and 8,000 acres, and paid between £7 and £9 in rates on land which he admitted was worth ten times more than his (Mr. Irvine's), and for which he paid £17 on his small block, so that the other man was getting the benefit of his labour.

Mr. P. DE CASTELLA thought that, suppose a gentleman holding, say, 5 acres of land chose to have an orange grove on it, he should not be taxed any more than a man with the same acreage of land who had only thistles on his land.

Mr. F. DE CASTELLA said they had to pay a tax on the improved value of the land, and also a tax to combat the phylloxera. He thought the tax should be reduced.

A MEMBER considered the tax on improvements was a very hard thing. The vineyards were generally thought to be worth about £4 a year per acre, and the tax was paid on that amount. Agricultural land was worth about 5s. a year per acre, and yet the agriculturist used the roads the same as the vigneron. The tax on improvements should be altered, as any man willing to make 1 acre of his land worth as much as 10 or 20 acres of his neighbour's should not be rated for that.

Mr. BUCKLEY said that if vineyards were exempted then orchards must also be exempted, and also buildings. Supposing two gentlemen came to a district each with £1,000, and one bought a large block and put it into wheat, and the other bought a few acres and went in for vines, one man should have an equal right with the other man to go into whichever industry he chose.

Mr. P. DE CASTELLA thought that the prosperity of Rutherglen was due entirely to the vineyards.

The CHAIRMAN put the motion, which was carried.

The President of the Rutherglen Association moved—"That this Conference urge upon the Government the necessity of giving an export bonus of 3d. a gallon on wine and 1s. a gallon on brandy, under Government supervision, and also that the differential excise duty on all brandy other than pure grape brandy be the same as the imported article."

Mr. WILLIAMS seconded the motion.

Mr. GRAHAM supported the motion. He thought the resolution might come in with the last four resolutions passed by the Central Wine-growers' Association. He thought that all those resolutions might be taken together, and it would save time. It would be necessary for a deputation to wait on the Minister, so he would ask that the resolutions be included.

The CHAIRMAN put the motion, which was carried.

Mr. GRAHAM moved—"That the freight charges per railway on wine casks, either up or down the line, be the same as that now charged on returned empties, and that the present minimum rate on case wines, demijohns, bottles, kegs, and empties be reduced." It was absurd that a hogshead of 60 gallons should be carried for 1s. 6d. and a pipe for 4s.

Mr. MOORE seconded the motion.

Mr. WILLIAMS said it was a matter that the Board of Viticulture had fought over with the Minister of Railways, and they had been defeated over it. If the old casks were carried up at a lower rate why should not the new ones be carried at the same rate? They must be sent down full, in time, and give freight to the railways.

Mr. P. DE CASTELLA said that in 1880, at the time of the Exhibition, he had tried to adopt a uniform size of cask for Australian wine, not Victorian wine alone. It was unpleasant selling wine

in casks of all sizes, but mostly pipes. He had proposed that it should be the decimal—50 gallons. The casks had to be made here as there were very few old ones coming in, and then people could order what size they liked. Ultimately every country would have the decimal system. He thought it would be well to discuss that question.

Mr. IRVINE was impressed with that only a few months ago by a gentleman from Belgium who said to him—“We never buy by the gallon, we sell by the hogshead, 47 gallons. If you put in more you lose.” No large importer, like Mr. Burgoyne, stipulated that, but in a bonded store if a cask is over a certain size they charge about 1d. a week more. In shipping to a small purchaser in the home market if you ship ten casks and they range from 63 to 75 gallons, he complains and says—“Why do you not keep to one uniform cask?” He (Mr. Irvine) believed that 50 gallons would suit all nations. In Bordeaux 47 gallons was the rule; they sold by that and not by weight. As to the freight charges he did not see why they should insert 120 gallons. There were questions of railway charges that required consideration by the Railways Commissioners who were preparing a new schedule, and the Conference should not attempt, except as a recommendation, to interfere. Some few months previous some casks were offered to him at Lilydale, representing about 2,450 gallons, and the freight on them to Great Western amounted to £5 5s.; at the same time he got six 1,000-gallon casks at Geelong, and the freight cost him only £2 5s. Consequently the freight charges on empty casks were absurd. If one shipped from Sydney the empty casks were carried up the Hunter River for nothing as the boats were glad to get them full back, and he thought the Railway Department should have a uniform rate and not make a difference between the new casks and the old. He thought the other proposal, No. 6, they could leave to the Government, as it would be interfering with the Tariff. He had never seen casks running over 70 or 80 gallons; no one shipped them home. He had shipped pipes but never would do so again, as he had always had an accident with them. He would like to see some gentleman engaged in the shipping trade draw attention to the uniformity of casks.

Mr. WILLIAMS said he thought the Conference was right in making recommendations to the Railways Commissioners; the Board of Viticulture had done so. At present the minimum was 3s. if he got up a small cask of wine, but if he sent for two cases of fruit, 80 lbs., he got it up for 1s. It was a handicap on the wine industry, and he considered it was within the province of this Conference to state to the commissioners that they thought the industry suffered in consequence of the freights.

Mr. POUNDS said that if 200 gallons of wine were sent 130 miles it cost £1 4s. 8d., but if an equal quantity in bottles was sent

it amounted to £5 16s. 8d. A case occurred where a small demi-john was sent to town and the freight was 4s. He was quite sure that a recommendation coming from the Convention that the minimum freight on bottles and casks and small cases should be reduced, he would not say to what, would meet with recognition. The weight of 200 gallons in wood was about 1 ton 5 cwt., and in cases about 2 tons 5 cwt. He would like to call for a reduction in the minimum on empty-bottle and full-bottle rates. He knew they had Mr. Webb's sympathy in the matter, for he wanted to help the producers' profits by reducing the railway freights.

Mr. IRVINE said that last year he paid between £400 and £500 for bottles, that was with breakages which were heavy. In buying second-hand bottles they cost 4d., and they cost 4d. a dozen for freight for quarts and 2½d for pints, that is if bought in the market. The breakages added a little to that. He wrote to the commissioners and pointed that out to them, and they called for returns at once, and they had them.

Mr. POUNDS said the freight for wine in cases was 17s. 8d. per ton, an empty hogshead going up was £1 16s. 11d. Empty bottles going up cost £1 3s. 5d., and filled the cost was £1 16s. 11d. per ton.

A MEMBER said a great many people sent down wines in quarter-casks, and the freight was a downright tax. All the profit went in the high rate of charges. They had impressed that on the commissioners and they promised to give attention to it, but nothing came of it. He would impress upon the meeting the necessity of getting the minimum reduced for the sake of the small growers.

Mr. POUNDS said that if fifty cases were sent away by the same train to fifty different persons they must be different consignments, and one was put to a great deal of trouble to obviate that. If he wanted to send a case of wine from Dookie to some one living 5 or 6 miles outside of Melbourne that had to be part of a consignment to Melbourne and be then reconsigned.

The CHAIRMAN put the motion as proposed by Mr. Graham and seconded by Mr. Moore. Carried.

Mr. POUNDS mentioned that at the meeting of the Central Wine-growers' Association there was a recommendation that there should be a 20 per cent. reduction on all implements used by the wine-growing industry, and that oak staves be admitted free. There was supposed to be an inclination on the part of the present Ministry to improve the Tariff in the interests of the cultivators of the soil, and he would like to know whether the meeting would support a motion of that kind.

Mr. GRAHAM thought it was a matter for the Tariff Commission.

Mr. O'GRADY said there was a matter which his association wished brought forward, that was the establishment of a central wine depôt in London.

Mr. P. DE CASTELLA said there was also the distillery question. The Board of Viticulture had been asked by the officers of the Customs Department to give their ideas that was of importance to the colony. He would move—"That the Honorable the Minister of Customs should be asked to grant the request of the Mildura vignerons to be allowed to erect a distillery in their district as a novel experiment."

Mr. WEST would second that, with the exception of the last few words.

The CHAIRMAN put the motion, which was carried.

Mr. POUNDS said the gentlemen present knew the Honorable the Premier was preparing his programme for the coming session of Parliament, and was watching the tendency of public opinion. There would be no chance of their having another conference before the meeting of Parliament, and, although the Tariff Commission was preparing a report, there was only one direction mentioned in that, and he was of opinion that it might have a beneficial effect on the Ministry if the Conference took notice of the duty on agricultural implements.

Mr. IRVINE thought it would be better to leave it to the Tariff Committee.

Mr. POUNDS said that was an instruction from the Central Wine-growers' Association.

Mr. IRVINE said one of the principles laid down for the next Board was to consider the question of improving the export trade, and they would, no doubt, bring up a report on the subject.

Mr. WEST would be sorry to give a vote on a question of the sort, as he had not given consideration to it.

Mr. CAUGHEY mentioned that certain colonial people were now trying that question, and they would soon have the advantage of the South Australian people's experience as to their success or otherwise.

Mr. O'GRADY stated that his association asked him to bring the question forward, and therefore he mentioned it. It was a large question and he had not gone into it, but would have liked to have had discussion on it.

Mr. WILLIAMS moved a vote of thanks to the Honorable the Minister of Agriculture for his attendance and assurance of support, and thought the thanks of the Conference were due to Mr. Martin for the interest he had taken in the industry and the great courtesy he had shown on all occasions to the vignerons.

Mr. IRVINE seconded the motion, and hoped that Mr. Martin would go from the meeting prepared to do what he could for the industry, based on the resolutions before him. He felt sure that

the wine industry would be the means of doing a great deal in quilding up the future prosperity of the colony.

Mr. WEST also wished to bear testimony to the good the Department of Agriculture was doing for the country. He had watched it with interest, and he believed there was a large sphere of usefulness opening up, and he trusted that Mr. Martin would long be spared to carry out the work of the Department.

The CHAIRMAN.—Gentlemen, personally, I thank you for the kind manner in which the vote has been proposed, seconded, and carried. It is naturally flattering to me to hear such remarks about my administration. I have always shown an interest in the wine industry, and I intend to push it on as far as my abilities will allow me to do. I shall have great pleasure in conveying to the Minister the kind vote passed by you in his favour. I thank you for the manner in which the deliberations have been carried on during the last two days. There is no meeting over which I have had the honour to preside where so good a feeling has been shown as in this meeting. There has been evinced a desire to give and take on all sides which has enabled us to come to an amicable settlement. Many of the resolutions are of a very important character, and I am sure they will receive the earnest attention of the Minister.

Conference closed.

APPENDIX.

VINE-GROWERS' CONFERENCE.

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD AT THE TREASURY BUILDINGS, AT TEN A.M., 11TH MAY, 1894.

PRESENT : Mr. D. Martin in the chair, Messrs. P. de Castella, Daly, Craike, F. de Castella, French, Hans Irvine, J. West, Buckley, O'Grady, Vahland, Carlyle, T. Moore, R. Bragato, A. Caughey, W. Graham, Williams, Pounds, Grossé, J. W. Bear (Secretary).

1. ADOPTION OF REPORT.

Proposed by Mr. Daly—"That the resolutions agreed to at the meeting of the committee, with the exception of the clause relating to representation, as per minutes read by the secretary be adopted." Seconded by Mr. Vahland, and carried.

2. REPRESENTATION.

Proposed by Mr. H. Irvine—"That one representative be elected for each viticultural district, except Rutherglen which should be entitled to return two representatives." Seconded by Mr. West, and carried.

3. RATING AND COLLEGES.

Proposed by Mr. Buckley—"That in all important wine-growing districts lands be set apart for the purpose of the establishment of Viticultural Schools, and that such lands be vested in such elective Board, and that further power be given to the Board to rate vineyards in proportion to their acreage, for the purpose of carrying out inspection, eradication of diseased vines, and other measures authorized by the Act appointing such Board, and that the amount of such rate be augmented by subsidy from the Government at the rate of pound for pound." Seconded by Mr. Vahland, and carried.

4. PHYLLOXERA POLICY.

Committee appointed at the meeting held on the previous evening to deal with this question as follows:—Messrs. Craike, Vahland, Grossé, F. de Castella, French, Bragato, and Martin. Proposed by Mr. de Castella—"That the provisional report of the committee, as read, be adopted." Seconded by Mr. Buckley, and carried.

5. SCHOOL OF VITICULTURE, RUTHERGLEN.

Proposed by Mr. Caughey—"That in the opinion of this Conference the Government be urged to go on with the building of a cellar at Rutherglen, according to the plans already prepared; and that immediate steps be taken to establish the school with a view to receiving scholars, and to utilize their services in all the operations of the present vineyard." Seconded by Mr. O'Grady, and carried.

6. TAX ON UNIMPROVED LAND VALUES.

Proposed by Mr. West—"That this meeting of delegates, representing the various country associations, is of opinion that the existing Local Government Act should be so amended as to give municipal councils the option of levying their rates on the unimproved value of lands." Seconded by Mr. Williams, and carried.

7. BONUSES ON WINE AND GRAPE BRANDY EXPORTED.

Proposed by Mr. O'Grady—"That the Government be requested to allow a bonus of 3d. per gallon on all wine and of 1s. per gallon on all pure grape brandy exported under Government

supervision ; also that the excise duty on any other brandy be the same as on that imported into the colony." Seconded by Mr. Williams, and carried.

8. REDUCTION OF FREIGHTS (RAILWAY) ON CASE WINES, KEGS, ETC.

Proposed by Mr. Graham—"That the freight charges per railway on wine casks, either up or down the line, be the same as that now charged on returned empties ; that the present minimum rate on case wines, demijohns, bottles, kegs, and empties be reduced." Seconded by Mr. Moore, and carried.

9. MILDURA DISTILLERY.

Proposed by Mr. P. de Castella—"That the Honorable the Minister of Customs be asked to grant the application made by Mildura to be allowed to establish a distillery in that settlement." Seconded by Mr. West, and carried.

10. SIZE OF CASKS.

Mr. P. de Castella proposed—"That a uniform hogshead of 50 gallons capacity be adopted by the vine-growers of Victoria, at all events for export purposes, the variety of different sizes at present in use caused great confusion and inconvenience, and were the cause of complaints from foreign buyers, who were accustomed to the regulation sizes in use on the Continent." After some discussion the matter dropped.

11. DUTY ON VITICULTURAL IMPLEMENTS.

Mr. J. E. Pounds proposed—"That the Government be requested to make a reduction in the existing duties on all viticultural implements and appliances imported into the colony, also on American oak staves." But after some discussion the matter dropped.

J. W. BEAR,
Hon. Sec.

